

WARM-UP

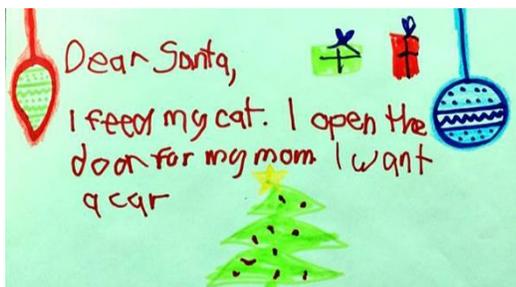
Ex.1. Look at the picture. What springs to your mind when you see it?



Source: <https://bloximages.chicago2.vip.townnews.com>



Source: <http://wgn.com>



Source: <https://www.canadapost.ca>

Ex. 2. Discuss following issues

1. Who is the person that you would ask for advice?
2. Nowadays people ask for help or advice on Internet, but they used to do it in newspapers or magazines. In a lot of them even had some special "advice column" or "from readers column". What is your opinion about it? What are different methods to verify information?
3. People believed that if something is in the media, it must be real. What kind of threat and advantages can it bring?
4. Should we tell kids the truth about Santa Claus and gift? If so, when and how?
5. "What you believe is not you can prove, but what you do" – do you agree?

WATCHING

Ex. 3.a The task takes about 20 minutes. You can alternatively go to the Ex.3b and skip Ex.4

Watch the video and summarize it briefly: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCEjPinn2gE&t=2s>

READING

EX.4. Now, read the exact letters which Virginia and Frank have exchanged.

DEAR EDITOR: I am 8 years old.
Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.
Papa says, 'If you see it in THE SUN it's so.'
Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?
VIRGINIA O'HANLON.
115 WEST NINETY-FIFTH STREET.

VIRGINIA, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no VIRGINIAS. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished. Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, VIRGINIA, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

LISTENING

Ex.3.b. Alternatively, you can just listen to the letter: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aevy8jIBZmM>

Ex4. Listen to the interview with Virginia O'Halon 66 years after the letter was sent. Then answer the questions below.

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1648761717/>

1. To whom was the letter addressed?
2. How old is she while speaking?
3. Was that an easy task to answer her?
4. What did she feel after receiving a letter?
5. What did she think while time was going by?
6. How many children did she have? Does she have any grandchildren?
7. Why does Virginia think the letter is so valuable?
8. What did the letter change in her life? What kind of influence did it have?
9. According to the story, why Santa is associated with religion, poetry or fairytales?

VOCABULARY

Ex.5. Look at some phrases used in the letter and try to rewrite them keeping the same or similar meaning

“they have been affected”, “how dreary”, “childlike faith”, “real and abiding”

Ex.6. Now, match the phrases with their meaning

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| A. Baby stuff | I. It's completely fantastic, sweet or cute |
| B. It's precious | II. To break into the house silently |
| C. Sneak into the house | III. To earn regularly |
| D. To make things better | IV. Believe because of previous truths and facts |
| E. To have a steady income | V. Childlike |
| F. Rely on this for the truth | VI. Improve |

HOMEWORK

Ex.7 Try to find some more information about Virginia O'Halon. For example, google the story of Santa visiting her. Write short story about it.