

Vale Middle School Reading Article

Christmas Entertainment Trivia (1380L)

Instructions: COMPLETE ALL QUESTIONS AND MARGIN NOTES

Read the following article carefully and **make notes in the margin** as you read.

Your notes should include:

- Comments that show that you **understand** the article. (A summary or statement of the main idea of important sections may serve this purpose.)
- Questions you have that show what you are **wondering** about as you read.
- Notes that differentiate between **fact** and **opinion**.
- Observations about how the **writer's strategies** (organization, word choice, perspective, support) and choices affect the article.

Your **margin notes** are part of your score for this assessment.

Answer the questions carefully in **complete sentences** unless otherwise instructed.

Student _____ **Class Period** _____

Christmas Entertainment Trivia

There are more classic movies, productions, and songs played during Christmas than any other time of the year. Can you name five classic holiday movies? Theater productions? You can find out answers to these questions and more as you test your Christmas entertainment trivia knowledge with the quick facts below.

What are titles of some of the Classic Holiday Movies?

- *Miracle on 34th Street*
- *It's a Wonderful Life*
- *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*
- *The Santa Clause*
- *A Christmas Story*
- *Home Alone*
- *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*
- *A Christmas Carol*
- *Scrooged*
- *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*

Do you know the history of Holidays at Rockefeller Center?

In New York, it's not officially Christmastime until the tree is lit at Rockefeller Center. The first tree appeared in 1931, during the Great Depression, when workers placed a tree in the dirt of a construction site. That year, the tree symbolized Christmas as much as it did hope and the invincible human spirit.

In 1933, the current tradition began with a tree decorated with 700 lights placed in front of the newly completed RCA Building. The Rockefeller Plaza Outdoor Ice-Skating Pond opened in 1936. The decorating themes and festivities have varied from year to year. In 1941, two reindeer borrowed from the Bronx Zoo were housed in cages beside the Prometheus Fountain. In 1942, during World War II, three living trees

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graced the Center.

In an act of patriotism, one tree was decorated in red, another in white, and the other in blue. However, because of wartime restrictions on electricity, the trees were not illuminated. In 1949, the tree was painted silver. In 1951, the entire nation witnessed the tree-lighting ceremony when it was televised on *The Kate Smith Show*. And by 1964, the ceremony had become an annual event, with celebrities such as Johnny Carson, Hugh Downs, Ed McMahon, Barbara Walters, Debbie Reynolds, Marlo Thomas, and Phil Donahue hosting the show.

Today, the annual Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center is typically adorned with more than 25,000 lights but no other ornaments except for the star on top.

Who is Rankin-Bass?

Rudolph, Frosty, and Kris Kringle were all brought to life on television, thanks to the work of Rankin-Bass. The television production company founded by Arthur Rankin, Jr., and Jules Bass achieved fame in 1964 when they created an animated adaptation of the song "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." Narrated by Burl Ives, with an original orchestral score by Johnny Marks, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer was an instant hit and today is one of the longest-running Christmas specials in television history.

Rudolph's success was soon followed by several other holiday hits produced by Rankin-Bass:

- "The Little Drummer Boy," 1968, narrated by Greer Garson, featured the Vienna Boys' Choir
- "Frosty the Snowman," 1969, narrated by Jimmy Durante, with Jackie Vernon as Frosty
- "Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town," 1970, narrated by Fred Astaire, with Mickey Rooney as Kris Kringle
- "Frosty's Winter Wonderland," 1976, narrated by Andy Griffith and starred Shelley Winters as Crystal
- "Rudolph's Shiny New Year," 1976, with Red Skelton as Father Time
- "Nestor, the Long-Eared Christmas Donkey", 1977, featured original music by Gene Autry
- "Jack Frost," 1979, with songs written by Al Jolsen and Mel Tormé

What is *The Nutcracker*?

In 1890, following the success of the Russian ballets *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*, composer Peter Tchaikovsky, choreographers Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov, and set designer Ivan Vsevolozhsky created what would become one of the best-loved ballets of all time.

The Nutcracker, a full-length ballet, was based on *The Nutcracker of Nuremberg*, by Alexandre Dumas, which he adapted from *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, by German writer E.T.A. Hoffman. In December 1892, the ballet opened at the Mariinsky Theatre of Russia to mixed reviews.

It wasn't until 1944 that an American ballet company performed the masterpiece. Choreographed by W. Christensen, the San Francisco Opera Ballet produced the first full-length American production, with Jocelyn Vollmar dancing as the Snow Queen.

So you've had your fill of Christmas entertainment trivia, and you're hungry for more. Go to this website: <http://tlc.howstuffworks.com/family/christmas-trivia.htm> to learn more about holiday symbols, Santa, traditions, Christmas tree trivia and more.

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1. Name one holiday movie that is not on the list provided in the article.

In a **complete sentence**, what event in New York City signifies the beginning of Christmas?

Why was the Rockefeller Christmas tree painted red, white, and blue in the 1940s? Answer in a / **complete sentence**.

2. In a **paragraph**, explain the meaning of Rankin-Bass and why the company is important.

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3. Describe one of your own family's holiday traditions in a well-written **paragraph**. Do your holiday traditions include any of the items mentioned in the trivia article? What would you like to add to your holiday activities?

4. Answer each of the following questions using **complete sentences**.

What occurred for the first time at Rockefeller Center in 1951?

How many lights typically adorn the Rockefeller Christmas tree in modern times?

When was the first tree placed at Rockefeller Center? What did that tree symbolize?