
NOT BORING MEDIA

THE TOWN WHERE EVERY DAY IS CHRISTMAS

High-Interest Nonfiction Reading Passage

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ Reading Passage
- ✓ Comprehension Questions
- ✓ Answer Key
- ✓ Teacher Guide

GRADES 4-6 • LEXILE ~750L • DOK LEVELS 1-4

Reading they'll actually do.

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WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ High-interest nonfiction reading passage (300-400 words)
- ✓ 6 comprehension questions spanning DOK levels 1-4
- ✓ Complete answer key with explanations
- ✓ Teacher guide with standards, pacing, and extensions

Questions or feedback? Leave a review or message us through TPT!

THE TOWN WHERE EVERY DAY IS CHRISTMAS

Imagine living in a place where Christmas music plays year-round, streets have names like Candy Cane Lane, and the town itself is shaped like a Christmas tree. Welcome to North Pole, Alaska—population 2,200—where the holiday spirit never ends.

North Pole isn't actually at the North Pole. It's located about 1,700 miles south of the geographic North Pole, near Fairbanks, Alaska. The town got its festive name in 1953 when a developer hoped the name would attract a toy manufacturer. The toy factory never came, but the Christmas theme stuck—and eventually became the town's entire identity.

Today, North Pole has fully embraced its holiday persona. Street lights are decorated like candy canes all year long. Roads have names like Snowman Lane and Santa Claus Lane. The local McDonald's is the only one in the world with a giant Santa statue out front. Even the town's ZIP code was chosen carefully: 99705—selected with holiday enthusiasm.

The biggest attraction is the Santa Claus House, a massive Christmas store that draws visitors from around the world. Inside, you'll find one of the world's largest Santa statues—a 42-foot fiberglass giant that towers over visitors. The store sells everything Christmas: ornaments, gifts, and official letters 'from Santa' that get mailed to children worldwide.

But living in eternal Christmas isn't all candy canes and cocoa. The town gets about 100 inches of snow per year, and winter temperatures can plunge to minus 40 degrees. The sun barely rises during the darkest months of winter. Residents joke that at least their decorations match the weather.

Every year, the town receives hundreds of thousands of letters from children addressed to Santa Claus, North Pole. Volunteers answer many of them, keeping the magic alive for kids who believe.

'People say we're crazy for living here,' says one longtime resident. 'But there's something special about a place where Christmas never really ends. It brings out the best in people.'

Word Count: 322 | Lexile: ~750L | Grades 4-6 | Source: Smithsonian Magazine

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Name: _____ Date: _____

1

Why was the town originally named North Pole?

- ☐ A) Because it's located at the actual North Pole
- ☐ B) A developer hoped to attract a toy manufacturer
- ☐ C) Santa Claus requested the name
- ☐ D) It was named after a famous explorer

2

How tall is the Santa statue at the Santa Claus House?

- ☐ A) 12 feet
- ☐ B) 24 feet
- ☐ C) 42 feet
- ☐ D) 100 feet

3

Why might the developer's original plan have made sense for attracting a toy company?

- ☐ A) Alaska has cheap shipping costs
- ☐ B) The Christmas theme could be good marketing for toys
- ☐ C) There were many skilled workers nearby
- ☐ D) Toy companies prefer cold climates

4

Based on the passage, which statement about North Pole's climate is accurate?

- ☐ A) It has mild winters due to its southern location
- ☐ B) Extreme cold and heavy snow are normal
- ☐ C) It rarely snows despite the town's theme
- ☐ D) The climate is similar to most U.S. cities

5

What does the volunteer letter-writing program suggest about the town's relationship with its Christmas identity?

- ☐ A) Residents resent the extra work
- ☐ B) The community actively maintains the magic beyond just decorations
- ☐ C) Only business owners participate
- ☐ D) The program is required by law

6

If North Pole wanted to attract more year-round residents, what challenges would they need to address based on the passage?

- ☐ A) Only the extreme climate, since everything else is positive
- ☐ B) The harsh winters and limited daylight, while maintaining the Christmas appeal that makes the town unique
- ☐ C) Removing all Christmas decorations to seem more professional
- ☐ D) Building more toy factories

ANSWER KEY

The Town Where Every Day Is Christmas

1. B) A developer hoped to attract a toy manufacturer

DOK 1 — Recall. The passage states: 'The town got its festive name in 1953 when a developer hoped the name would attract a toy manufacturer.'

2. C) 42 feet

DOK 1 — Recall. The passage states there is 'a 42-foot fiberglass giant that towers over visitors.'

3. B) The Christmas theme could be good marketing for toys

DOK 2 — Inference. A town called 'North Pole' with a Christmas theme would naturally connect to toys, since toys are associated with Christmas gifts and Santa's workshop.

4. B) Extreme cold and heavy snow are normal

DOK 2 — Inference. The passage mentions '100 inches of snow per year,' 'winter temperatures can plunge to minus 40 degrees,' and 'the sun barely rises during the darkest months.'

5. B) The community actively maintains the magic beyond just decorations

DOK 3 — Analysis. Volunteers choosing to answer children's letters shows the community embraces its identity beyond commercial tourism—they actively participate in keeping the magic alive.

6. B) The harsh winters and limited daylight, while maintaining the Christmas appeal that makes the town unique

DOK 4 — Extended Thinking. The passage shows both the appeal (unique identity, community spirit) and challenges (extreme cold, heavy snow, limited winter daylight). Successful growth would require addressing practical concerns while keeping what makes the town special.

TEACHER GUIDE

The Town Where Every Day Is Christmas

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1 — Refer to details and examples in a text
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.4 — Determine meaning of words and phrases
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.8 — Explain how author uses evidence
- C3 Framework — Historical thinking skills

PACING OPTIONS

- Quick Read (10-15 min): Passage + questions 1-4
- Standard (20-25 min): Full passage + all questions
- Deep Dive (35-40 min): Add discussion + extension

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Would you want to live somewhere with a year-round theme like North Pole, Alaska? What would be the best and worst parts?
- The town's Christmas identity started as a failed business plan but became its greatest strength. How can failures sometimes lead to unexpected successes?
- Volunteers answer children's letters to Santa. Why do you think people donate their time to maintain a 'magical' belief for strangers' kids?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Design your own themed town—what theme would you choose, and what would the street names, attractions, and local businesses be?
- Calculate how many hours of daylight North Pole gets during winter solstice versus summer solstice, and create a visual comparing this to your hometown.
- Write a persuasive letter convincing someone to either move to North Pole or explaining why they shouldn't.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Struggling: Pre-teach vocabulary, partner reading
- Advanced: Add research, compare to related events
- ELL: Visual supports, pre-teach context

SOURCE

- Smithsonian Magazine / Santa Claus Indiana tourism