

Tracy Tam: Santa Command

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Teacher's Resource Guide * Grades 3-5



Tracy Tam doesn't really believe in Santa Claus, at least not like the rest of us do. She also doesn't believe that Santa can possibly deliver all of those presents in one night, to children around the world, without a little help from science. A flying sleigh can only be powered by jet engines, after all, and Santa's magical abilities can only be the result of altered DNA. How else could he know what every little girl and boy wants for Christmas and who has been naughty or nice? In order to test her theories, Tracy sneaks onto Santa's sleigh then ends up at Santa Command, where a team of (gasp!) humans monitor Santa's big night. When Tracy attempts to hack into their computers, she accidentally introduces a virus into the system. As a result, three states get knocked out of sync with the rest of the world (oops!). Santa won't be able to deliver all the presents in time! Now, Tracy must fix time and help Santa, but she has no idea how. How can a girl who doesn't believe help Santa and save Christmas before it's too late? With a little Christmas magic, of course!

Included in this guide are vocabulary words from the story, discussion questions, writing prompts, and an art project that can be done alone or in groups.

Vocabulary

While reading the book, encourage students to define these and other unknown words using the context of the story.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4.A](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.4.A](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.4.A](#)

scenarios – pg 1
hypothesis – pg 15-16
stifled – pg 84
guarantee – pg 94
glimpse – pg 99

modified – pg 101
enthusiasm – pg 121
weary – pg 137
emerged – pg 145
scrawled – pg 184

Discussion Questions

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1](#)
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3](#)

1. Tracy is the main character, but the book opens with a chapter from Phil's point of view. Why do you think the story opens with Phil and Santa Command? What do we learn right away about Santa from this chapter?
2. This story is told from three points of view – Tracy, Phil, and Jared. What is the main goal of each character? Do they reach their goals?
3. Tracy believes that “Even magic needs a helping hand.” (pg 15) What do you think that means?
4. In the beginning of the book, Tracy does not believe in magic. How does she change by the end of the book? What are some of the things that cause her to change?
5. Tracy and Jared are two of the main characters in this story. How are they alike? How are they different? Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the characters.
6. In chapter 15, Tracy crashes the main computer at Santa Command, then she runs away without telling anyone. Would you have made the same choice to run away? Why or why not?
7. In chapter 19, Tracy discovers a magical portal that leads to the North Pole. Why do you think they have this portal at Santa Command? What do you think they use it for?
8. What event(s) make Tracy decide that helping Chris and the people at Santa Command is more important than helping her cousin. Would you have made the same choice? Why or why not?
9. Chris made the decision to let Santa Command to take over as Santa. How do you think he feels about the way they deliver presents?
10. Chris uses his magic to help people and to make them happy. What would you do if you were given magic dust?

Writing Prompts

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1](#)
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3](#)

1. Many of Tracy's choices lead to more trouble. Make a list of some of her choices. Would you have made different choices? If you had, what do you think the outcome would have been?
2. Phil and Beth both work for Santa Command. On Christmas Eve, their jobs are crazy, but what do you think their jobs are like the rest of the year?
3. Pretend you work for Santa Command and you are giving a tour of the building to someone. What do the different rooms look like? Which is your favorite room? Make up a room that isn't in the book. Draw or describe that room.
4. On page 209, Sasha says, "You think Santa Command is crazy. You should see Tooth Fairy Central. Now that place will blow your mind." What do you think she means? What do you think Tooth Fairy Central looks like?
5. Santa Command uses technology to make things appear magical. What are some ways you could use technology (phones, computers, tablets) to make things appear magical? For example, you could edit a video to make it look like a cat can breathe fire.

Art Project

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1](#)

Tracy Tam sneaks into Santa Command to gather evidence for her science project. Use clues from the text to create Tracy's project. What do you think her title was? What pictures did she take? What samples did she collect? What was her conclusion?

