

- 1 Are you sick of getting _____ or new pyjamas at Christmas? If you lived in Iceland you would certainly be grateful if your presents contained something to _____. Even a _____ Christmas jumper would be a welcome gift because it would prevent you from being eaten by Jólakötturinn the Christmas Cat!

- 5 Old Icelandic folklore states that every Icelander must receive a new piece of _____ for Christmas or they will find themselves in mortal danger. An enormous black cat is said to _____ around the snowy streets on Christmas Eve, _____ through windows, looking for people who haven't kept this simple rule. Not wearing something new on Christmas Eve? _____ will eat you!



- 10 However, perhaps worse still is Jólakötturinn's owner: Gryla. Traditional tales tell of a giant ogress, who is part troll, part animal, that lives up in the _____ with her cat, her third husband and her thirteen children. At Christmas Gryla and her sons, who are also known as the Yuletide Lads, come down from the mountains. Gryla looks for naughty children that she can _____ and put into her _____ to boil them up and eat them. The only way to escape this terrible _____, is for the children to apologise for their bad behaviour.

- 15 Perhaps one of the nicer Icelandic tales concerns Gryla's sons. The Yuletide Lads are actually like thirteen _____ or Father Christmases. Icelandic children put a _____ in their bedroom window each evening for 13 days before Christmas. Every night, one Yuletide Lad visits, leaving sweets and small presents—or rotting potatoes—in their shoe, depending on if they have been _____ or nice.

Although these tales are only stories, Gryla, her sons and the Christmas Cat ensure that Icelandic children everywhere are as good as _____ at Christmas.



Discuss the following questions with your group. Write your answers in full sentences in your Reflective Reading Journal. (Except for **GROUP CHAT questions!)**

1. What stories, tales and traditions do we have here in the Christmas and New Year? Discuss and make a list in your group.
2. Summarise the three tales mentioned in the article about Christmas in Iceland. Write a sentence or two describing each one in your journal.
3. Would you prefer a shoe full of presents every day for thirteen days or do you prefer exchanging gifts on Christmas morning? Why? Why not?
4. Do you think it is right or appropriate for parents in Iceland to tell their children about these scary stories to make them behave? Discuss in your group and be prepared to share your answers with the class.



**GROUP
CHAT**

TextPplorers Blankety Blank: ANSWERS: Why Children are as Good as Gold at Christmas

Are you sick of getting socks or new pyjamas at Christmas? If you lived in Iceland you would certainly be grateful if your presents contained something to wear. Even a hideous Christmas jumper would be a welcome gift because it would prevent you from being eaten by Jólakötturinn the Christmas Cat!

Old Icelandic folklore states that every Icelander must receive a new piece of clothing for Christmas or they will find themselves in mortal danger. An enormous black cat is said to prowl around the snowy streets on Christmas Eve, peering through windows, looking for people who haven't kept this simple rule. Not wearing something new on Christmas Eve? Jólakötturinn will eat you!



However, perhaps worse still is Jólakötturinn's owner: Gryla. Traditional tales tell of a giant ogress, who is part troll, part animal, that lives up in the mountains with her cat, her third husband and her thirteen children. At Christmas Gryla and her sons, who are also known as the Yuletide Lads, come down from the mountains. Gryla looks for naughty children that she can capture and put into her cauldron to boil them up and eat them. The only way to escape this terrible fate, is for the children to apologise for their bad behaviour.

Perhaps one of the nicer Icelandic tales concerns Gryla's sons. The Yuletide Lads are actually like thirteen Santas or Father Christmases. Icelandic children put a shoe in their bedroom window each evening for 13 days before Christmas. Every night, one Yuletide Lad visits, leaving sweets and small presents—or rotting potatoes—in their shoe, depending on if they have been naughty or nice.

Although these tales are only stories, Gryla, her sons and the Christmas Cat ensure that Icelandic children everywhere are as good as gold at Christmas.

