

Christmas Song Titles in Gobbledygook*

by Margaret Whisnant



All together now. . .



***A Set of Two Or More Hollow, Metal
Instruments, Typically Cup-shaped or
Spherical, with Internal Clappers,
Pellets, etc, That When Suspended from
Their Vertex and Shaken Will Render a
Clinking or Tinkling Sound.***



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Introduction. . .

What if your teacher handed back an assignment and said, “I have affixed the most highly desired alphabet character to your scholarly endeavor as an expression of its meritorious attributes”?

Well, for one thing, your teacher would be speaking **gobbledygook**!

Yes, it’s a real word with real definitions. Here’s one version:

gobbledygook *gă-bəl-dē-guk* -noun Language characterized by high-sounding, pretentious wording that is hard to understand; double talk; double speak; balderdash; gibberish; mumbo jumbo; baloney.

The term was coined in 1944 during World War II by Texas lawyer Maury Maverick while he was working for the Smaller War Plants Corporation. Fed up with bureaucratic double talk such as *combat emplacement excavator* instead of *shovel*, Mr. Maverick dashed off a memo banning “gobbledygook language.” His made-up word purposely imitated the sound of a turkey call.

Rather than disappearing as Mr. Maverick commanded, gobbledygook has become quite commonplace. Bureaucrats still love it. Consider, for example, a hospital bill that lists *disposable mucus recovery system* as a chargeable item, or this announcement—*Refuse and rubbish shall not be collected from the site or receptacles thereon before the hour of 8:00 A.M. or after the hour of 6:00 P.M. any day*—issued by a town in Australia. Translation? Patients must pay for a box of tissue and the town will pick up garbage between 8:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M.

It’s enough to *drive your mental activity beyond the margins of reason* as you leave home wearing *gently-used attire* and ride in your parents’ *preowned vehicle* to your *assigned institution of instruction* where you will *inhabit the student station designated specifically for your occupancy*!

Or, you can have bunches of fun with the whole idea! Let’s start with the gobbledygook Christmas song title printed in the upper right-hand corner above the reindeer.

Aren’t you glad you get to sing the simple phrase **Jingle Bells** instead?

Here’s your chance to become proficient in spotting, investigating, and decoding this type of verbal pollution. Beginning on the next page, you will find titles of familiar Christmas songs written in gobbledygook. Study the convoluted verbiage and then write the actual title in the blank provided.

By the way, you made an A on the assignment. Your teacher said so!

Christmas Song Titles in Gobbledygook

Part One

Write the real titles in the blanks after each flood of balderdash!



1. An Anthropomorphic Representation of the Human Form Constructed of Two to Three Orbs of Compacted Frozen Precipitation, Hexagonal in Shape, Often with Facial Features of Mineral and/or Vegetable Matter with a Moniker Referring to Freezing or Very Cold Temperatures

2. That Most Famous of All North Pole Residents Is Approaching at This Very Moment

3. The Holiday Celebrated the Twenty-Fifth Day of the Month of December on the Georgian Calendar and Described in This Particular Musical Composition as Being the Color of Pure Snow or the Outer Margins of This Page.

4. A Member of a Group of Antlered Animals Inhabiting Northern and Arctic Regions of Europe, Asia and North America Made Famous by His Glowing, Scarlet Proboscis

Christmas Song Titles in Gobbledygook—Part One—*continued*

5. The Sum Total of My Desired Receipts for the Yuletide Season Consists of a Set of Central Incisors Within My Oral Cavity

6. This First Person Singular Personal Pronoun Observed Its Maternal Parent Pursing Her Lips and Lightly Pressing Them Against Those of the Male Person Identified by Several Aliases, Including Kris Kringle.

7. The Musical Composition Designed for Singing During the Annual Festival and Legal Holiday Celebrated on December 25, Often Misnamed by Its Opening Line “Chestnuts Roasting On an Open Fire.”

8. Do Take It upon Yourself to Enjoy a Jovially Pleasant, Though Diminutive, December Holiday

9. The Yuletide Season As Described by a Group of Trees or Shrubs Having Glossy, Spiny-tipped Leaves and Red Berries and a Cheerfully, Festive Disposition

10. To Be in One’s Own House, Apartment, or Other Shelter, Including the Residence of One’s Childhood During the Special Celebrations That Occur the Latter Part of December

11. Rudimentary Indications of the Arrival of the Annual Merriment and Celebration That Takes Place Shortly after the Winter Solstice Are Becoming Apparent.

12. A Hollow, Metal Instrument, Typically Cup-shaped or Spherical, with an Internal Clapper or Pellet That When Suspended from Its Vertex and Shaken Will Render a Clinking or Tinkling Sound That Is Marked by a Heavily Accented Beat Compelling One to Dance

Christmas Song Titles in Gobbledygook

Part Two

Write the real titles in the blanks after each pool of mumbo jumbo!



1. Surely 'tis the Jolly Old Elf Himself

2. The Greatest, Superlatively Fabulous Portion of All the Twelve Months Has Arrived

3. Exceedingly Joyful, Senior Citizen, Blessed Person Named Nicholas

4. Permit Precipitation in the Form of Hexagonal Ice Crystals to Fall from the Atmosphere to the Earth! Permit Precipitation in the Form of Hexagonal Ice Crystals to Fall from the Atmosphere to the Earth! Permit Precipitation in the Form of Hexagonal Ice Crystals to Fall from the Atmosphere to the Earth!

5. Dancing to Music with a Heavily Accented Beat while Circumnavigating an Evergreen Appropriately Decorated with Ornamentation Associated with the Yuletide Season.

Christmas Song Titles in Gobbledygook—Part Two--continued

6. The Mysterious Man Noted for Unique Red Ensemble, Manically Joyous Nature, and Unusual Means of Transportation Is Scheduled for a Visit to Our Local Municipality

7. A Set of Two Or More Hollow, Metal Instruments, Typically Cup-shaped or Spherical, with Internal Clappers, Pellets, etc, Cast from a White, Ductile Metallic Element: Symbol: AG; Atomic Weight: 107.870; Atomic Number: 47

8. The Short Metrical Composition Intended for Singing Created Specifically for the Small, Striped Terrestrial Rodent of the Genera *Tamias*'

9. One-dozen Complete Rotations of the Earth Connected to the Festive Celebration That Takes Place Each Year During the Month of December.

10. Elevated onto the External Upper Portion of the Building in Which Humans Live

11. A Marvelous Region of Beautiful Scenes That Exists During the Cold Season Between Autumn and the Vernal Equinox in the Northern Latitudes

12. Being Borne Along on or in a Light Vehicle on Runners, Usually Open and Generally Horse-Drawn, Especially over Snow or Ice

13. I Very Much Desire That a Large Herbivorous African Mammal Able to Remain Under Water for a Considerable Time Be Bestowed upon Me as a Holiday Gift

14. The Despicable, Yet Loveable, Green Furry Being Who Devised and Carried Out a Failed Plot to Steal Christmas from the Citizens of Whoville

Letter to Santa in Gobbledygook

Skip the boring letter to Santa. Write one in gobbledygook and become the topic of conversation in the elves' snack room. Organize your thoughts in the spaces below.

Dear Santa,

This year, I want. . .



I really deserve this (these things) because. . .



Directions to my house in case your GPS gets jammed. . .



Christmas Song Titles in Gobbledygook

Answer Keys

Set One

1. Frosty the Snowman
2. Here Comes Santa Claus
3. White Christmas
4. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
5. All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth
6. I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus
7. The Christmas Song
8. Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas
9. A Holly Jolly Christmas
10. Home for the Holidays
11. It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas
12. Jingle Bell Rock

Set Two

1. Must Be Santa
2. It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year
3. Jolly Old St. Nicholas
4. Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!
5. Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree
6. Santa Claus is Coming to Town
7. Silver Bells
8. The Chipmunk Song
9. The Twelve Days of Christmas
10. Up on the Housetop
11. Winter Wonderland
12. Sleigh Ride
13. I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas
14. Mr. Grinch

Possible Follow-up Activity:

Ask students to compose gobbledygook titles for two or three Christmas songs not used in the activity, and/or for several of their favorite pop tunes. Read the gobbledygook rewrites out loud or post on a bulletin board for translation.