

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Comparing December Celebrations

*DIRECTIONS: Use library or Internet sources to learn about the holiday celebrations on the chart below. As you find information about any of the headings, write a note in the correct box on the chart.*

|             | Date | Countries | Foods | Symbols | Key Words |
|-------------|------|-----------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Christmas   |      |           |       |         |           |
| Hanukkah    |      |           |       |         |           |
| Kwanzaa     |      |           |       |         |           |
| Las Posadas |      |           |       |         |           |
| Ramadan     |      |           |       |         |           |

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*DIRECTIONS: Use library or Internet sources to learn about the holiday celebrations on the chart below. As you find information about any of the headings, write a note in the correct box on the chart.*

|             | Decorations | Songs | Gifts | Stories | Light/Candles |
|-------------|-------------|-------|-------|---------|---------------|
| Christmas   |             |       |       |         |               |
| Hanukkah    |             |       |       |         |               |
| Kwanzaa     |             |       |       |         |               |
| Las Posadas |             |       |       |         |               |
| Ramadan     |             |       |       |         |               |

## **Moore vs. Livingston: Who really wrote "The Night Before Christmas?"**

### **Subjects:**

Arts & Humanities:  
    Language Arts  
    Literature  
Educational Technology  
Social Studies

**Grades:** 6-12

### **Description:**

Who was the real author of "The Night Before Christmas?" Students take a look at the facts and then decide.

### **Objectives:**

- Students will research an author and gather information that seems to support that person as author of "The Night Before Christmas."
- Work in groups to gather the most solid evidence to support that author as the creator of the poem.
- Decide which author has the strongest case.
- Write a persuasive essay presenting strong evidence in support of Moore or Livingston as the author of the classic poem.

### **Materials Needed:**

Internet access for research (or printed information from the Web).

### **Lesson Plan:**

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house... History has it that Clement Clark Moore penned the words of that classic rhyme for his own children. But in 2000, Don Foster, a professor of English at Vassar College, presented what he felt was airtight proof that the famous words were instead written by Major Henry Livingston, Jr. A detailed review of previous works of playful rhyme by Livingston helped Foster make his case.

In this lesson, students take a look at the evidence and decide for themselves who wrote the poem they all know so well.

Start the lesson by arranging students into groups of four. Within the groups, pair students so that two of them research the facts surrounding Moore and the other two focus their research on Livingston. (Idea for creating student pairs: Place in a hat or bowl two index cards labeled Moore and two index cards labeled Livingston. Have students in each group draw a card to determine which author they will research.) Give students a class period or two to gather information and make notes that prove their assigned author was the actual creator of "The Night Before Christmas."

The next time students meet, gather them in their original groups of four and ask them to share the results of their research. Have each group create two columns on a

piece of paper; in one column have them list the best evidence that Moore is the author and, in the other column, list the points that support Livingston's authorship of the poem. During the next session, the groups share their findings and the entire class creates a record of the strongest arguments for each man's authorship.

By this time, students should have an idea of which man they think was the author of the classic poem. Provide one more day in the library or computer lab for detailed research to gather last-minute support for the man they believe is the true author.

Finally, each student uses his or her notes to write an essay in support of one of the two men as author of "The Night Before Christmas."

**Assessment:**

Did students' essays provide a strong point of view backed by solid facts? Were they clearly written? Was grammar and punctuation carefully edited? Those are some of the elements that might go into assessing students' efforts on this assignment.

Lesson Plan Source: [www.educationworld.com](http://www.educationworld.com)