

Let's Go For a Sleigh Ride!

New
Building
Bridges **7-8**



READING

A Read a story about the famous Christmas song **Jingle Bells** and answer the questions. Before reading the text, try to predict the correct answers.

- 1 The author of the song was from
 - a) Canada.
 - b) the UK.
 - c) the USA.
- 2 The song was written in the
 - a) 18th century.
 - b) 19th century.
 - c) 20th century.
- 3 The song was probably written in
 - a) Medford, Massachusetts.
 - b) Savannah, Georgia.
 - c) we don't know.
- 4 The song was originally written for
 - a) Thanksgiving.
 - b) Christmas.
 - c) Easter.
- 5 It was inspired by
 - a) a sight of children playing in the snow.
 - b) open-sleigh horse races.
 - c) bells on a Christmas tree.
- 6 It was originally called
 - a) "One Horse Open Sleigh".
 - b) "Merry Little Jingle Bells".
 - c) "Jingle Bells".
- 7 The original song has
 - a) two verses.
 - b) four verses.
 - c) six verses.
- 8 It became popular world-wide with the spread of
 - a) radio.
 - b) TV.
 - c) the Internet.



A Sleighing Song

One of the best-known songs we can hear during the Christmas season is "Jingle Bells". The author is James Lord Pierpont, an American composer, musician, photographer and adventurer. He was born in 1822 in Massachusetts, in the north of the USA, but later he lived in the South, in Georgia and Florida.

There are several theories about when and where this song was born. Did Pierpont write "Jingle Bells" in Medford, Massachusetts or in Savannah, Georgia? Both places claim it was there where the song was written. However, it seems more likely that he wrote the song in Medford, where snow was more common than in the warmer southern climate of Savannah. Another theory says that this famous American song was written not for Christmas but for Thanksgiving, which falls on the fourth Thursday in November. It is also believed that it was written on a winter day and inspired by sleigh races which were held once a year in Medford, where he lived at the time. It is very cold there in winter, so it's no wonder the song has a winter atmosphere.

The song became so popular that it was sung again at Christmas time. It was called "One Horse Open Sleigh". One of Pierpont's friends described the song as a "merry little jingle", and that is how the song got its second name – "Jingle Bells". Its real 'boom' came with the invention of radio, which helped the song to be heard all around the world.

The song is about how nice it is to ride in a sleigh during the winter. It originally had four verses, but only the first two are sung today. But, honestly, imagine riding in an open sleigh in a cold Massachusetts winter! Fun or not, what do you think?

- B** Read the first verse of the song and complete it with the missing words. There are two extra words. Then find a version of the song that you like on the Internet, listen and check. Sing along!

ring ride snow sing fun fields drive

Dashing through the _____,
In a one-horse open sleigh,
Over the _____ we go,
Laughing all the way.
Bells on bob tail _____,
Making spirits bright,
What _____ it is to ride and sing
A sleighing song tonight!

Chorus
Jingle bells, jingle bells,
Jingle all the way.
Oh! What fun it is to _____
In a one-horse open sleigh!
(repeat twice)

Glossary

to dash – to go fast

sleigh – a sledge drawn by horses, for use on snow

field – a piece of open land in the country

bobtail – the tail of a horse where the hair has been cut short in order to keep it from getting caught in the reins, common in sleigh races

to make spirits bright – to make people feel good



ANSWER KEY

Task A

1 c; 2 b; 3 a; 4 a; 5 b; 6 a; 7 b; 8 a

Task B

snow; fields; ring; fun; ride

USEFUL LINKS

- Classic Frank Sinatra's cover of the song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuAGMTAgnYw>

- Michaela Bublé and the Puppini Sisters (with lyrics):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLiRxOpKWcg>

- Glee cast (with lyrics):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0n3m34Hvq4>