



Teacher Key

What's the deal with mistletoe and Christmas?

After reading the article, answer the following questions. Use complete sentences when appropriate.

1. List four interesting facts about mistletoe.

- a. *It is a plant.*
- b. *It is a parasite.*
- c. *It lives high up in oak trees.*
- d. *It sinks its roots into the branches to get its nutrients.*

2. How did the custom of hanging mistletoe at Christmas probably begin?

The Druids, who lived in Britain around 400 A.D., hung mistletoe in late December or early January to ward off evil spirits. Christmas is celebrated at the same time of the year and the two became connected.

3. Explain how kissing under mistletoe may have originated.

According to Viking legend, the god Baider was killed with a poison made from mistletoe. His mother, Frigga, brought him back to life. She was so happy to have her son back that she kissed everyone who walked under the mistletoe.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

In the space below, write an original legend about mistletoe. You can explain how it got its name, why it can ward off evil spirits or why it is a parasite. Your purpose for the legend is to educate or warn the reader. Include a specific place and time in your story.

Answers will vary.