



CHILD: Mommy, is there a Santa Claus?

MOMMY: Well, honey, here is the Christmas math. There are **2 billion children** (that is, people under 18) worldwide, but since Santa doesn't (appear to) handle Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and Buddhist children, that reduces the workload to **15% of the total** – which means **378 million**, according to the Population Reference Bureau. At an average census rate of 3.5 children per household, that totals **91.8 million homes**. Presuming that there's at least one good child in each, Santa has **31 hours** of Christmas to work with – this thanks to the different time zones and the rotation of the earth, assuming he travels east to west (which seems logical). This works out to **822.6 visits per second**. Assuming that each of these 91.8 million stops are evenly distributed around the earth, it would mean that Santa's sleigh has to move at **650 miles per second** – that is, 3,000 times the speed of sound. Assuming that each child gets nothing more than a medium-sized Lego set (2 pounds), **the sleigh is carrying 321,300 tons**, requiring at least **214,200 reindeer** to pull this load. This increases the payload – not even counting the weight of the sleigh – to 353,430 tons. 353,000 tons traveling at 650 miles per second creates enormous air resistance – this will heat the reindeer up in the same fashion as spacecrafts re-entering the earth's atmosphere. The lead pair of reindeer will absorb **14.3 QUINTILLION joules of energy per second** – each. In short, they will burst into flame almost instantaneously, exposing the reindeer behind them, and creating deafening sonic booms in their wake. The entire reindeer team will be vaporized within **4.26 thousandths of a second**. Santa, meanwhile, will be subjected to **centrifugal forces 17,500.06 times greater than gravity**; accordingly, a 250-pound Santa would be pinned to the back of his sleigh by **4,315,015 pounds of force**. In conclusion — If Santa ever did deliver presents on Christmas Eve, well, I am afraid he's dead by now.

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