

次の英文は、1897年、8歳の女の子 Virginia が新聞社に投書した「サンタさんはいるの?」という質問に対する記者の答えです。「世界一有名な社説」と呼ばれる英文を読んでみましょう。

1 **1** Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be (a) which is not comprehensible by their little minds. (1) All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of  
5 ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

**2** Yes, Virginia, (b) there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life  
10 its highest beauty and joy. Alas! (c) how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. (2) The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

15 **3** Not believe in Santa Claus! (3) You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no  
20 Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you (d) ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

**4** You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the  
25 united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

**5** No Santa Claus? Thank God he (e) lives and lives forever. A thousand years  
30 from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.



## 英文法で迫る

(1) they be で be 動詞が原形になっているのはなぜでしょうか？

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(2) with which のはたらきに注意して日本語に直しましょう。

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(3) might as well の意味と役割に注意して日本語に直しましょう。

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### !!! ここに注意

(a) この which は疑問詞ですか、それとも関係代名詞ですか？

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(b) ここで there is ~が使われているのはなぜでしょうか？

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(c) この how はどのようなはたらきをしていますか？

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(d) この ever はどうして入っているのでしょうか？

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(e) lives が2回出てきますが、意味に違いはあるのでしょうか？

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