

Festivals quiz

Language focus

Wh- questions; dates

Key vocabulary

festivals and celebrations; countries and nationalities

Skills focus

reading and speaking; discussing and answering quiz questions

Level

intermediate

Time

30 minutes

Preparation

one photocopy for each group of 3 or 4 students

Extra notes

To change the focus from reading to listening, you can read out the quiz questions instead of handing out the worksheet. Groups write their answers on a sheet of paper.

Warm-up

- 1 Get students thinking about the topic by asking them to name some of the most important festivals in their own country.
- 2 Then brainstorm names of festivals and special days in other parts of the world. Don't go into details here, as this could take away some of the challenge of the quiz.

Main activity

- 1 Organise the class in groups of three or four. Ask them to choose a group leader who will record their answers and make a decision if there is any disagreement.
- 2 Hand out a quiz worksheet to each group. Set a time limit of 15 minutes for groups to discuss and answer the questions. If they don't know some of the answers, encourage them to guess. You may want to explain that *blossom* means the flowers that appear on trees in the spring.
- 3 When they are ready, they exchange worksheets with another group to mark the answers. Go through the answers with the class and follow up with further questions and/or brief discussion. Groups score one point for each correct answer.
- 4 You could give out small prizes to the group that scores the most points.

Answers

- 1 24th December (or 5th/6th January for Orthodox Christians) 2 February
3 autumn/fall 4 1st January 5 one month 6 31st October
7 USA 8 France 9 Japan (other Asian cherry blossom festivals exist, e.g. in South Korea and parts of China) 10 the Chinese 11 the Irish
12 Germany 13 Venice 14 Rio de Janeiro 15 Mexico
16 Spain (Pamplona)
17 New Year / New Year's Eve 18 Halloween 19 Ramadan 20 Carnival, Halloween (other answers are also possible) 21 Easter
22 roses 23 (chocolate) eggs 24 turkey 25 thirteen 26 the day after Christmas / 26th December 27 red 28 Because it is a festival of light.
29 women (it is International Women's Day) 30 Because on this day people remember the soldiers who died in wars.

Follow-up

- 1 Ask groups to write four or five new quiz questions for the rest of the class on festivals in their own country or elsewhere in the world. They could do some research on the Internet to obtain or check information.
- 2 Invite groups to invent a special day to be celebrated at their school. They should think about what the celebration is about, when the event takes place and what happens on that day. Groups then share their ideas with the class. Examples of celebrations might include *a school carnival, a football or music festival, a celebration for the beginning of summer* or for *someone's birthday*.

Name the time



- 1 What date is Christmas Eve? _____
- 2 In which month is Valentine's Day? _____
- 3 In which season do Americans celebrate Thanksgiving? _____
- 4 What date is officially New Year's Day in Europe? _____
- 5 How long does Ramadan last? _____
- 6 What date is Halloween? _____

Name the place or people



- 7 Which country has Independence Day on 4th July? _____
- 8 Which country has its national day on 14th July? _____
- 9 Which Asian country has a famous festival of cherry blossom? _____
- 10 Who has a 15-day celebration for New Year in January or February? _____
- 11 Who celebrates St Patrick's Day? _____
- 12 Which country started the tradition of Christmas trees? _____
- 13 Which Italian city is famous for its carnival masks and costumes? _____
- 14 Which city in South America has the biggest carnival in the world? _____
- 15 Which Latin American country has a very famous Day of the Dead in November? _____
- 16 Where do people run through the streets with bulls in July? _____

Name the festival



- 17 Which celebration is associated with fireworks at midnight? _____
- 18 Which festival is associated with witches, ghosts and pumpkins? _____
- 19 Name a festival when people don't eat during the day. _____
- 20 Name two festivals when people dress in costumes. _____
- 21 Which festival does Good Friday belong to? _____

Extra questions



- 22 What flowers are associated with Valentine's Day? _____
- 23 What do children usually get at Easter? _____
- 24 What bird is traditionally cooked at Thanksgiving? _____
- 25 How old are most Jewish boys when they have their Bar Mitzvah? _____
- 26 What is Boxing Day? _____
- 27 What is the luckiest colour for Chinese celebrations? _____
- 28 Why are there so many lamps, candles and fireworks at the Hindu festival of Diwali? _____
- 29 Who has a special day on 8th March? _____
- 30 Why is there a day in November called Remembrance Day in some countries? _____

A new festival

Language focus

past, present and future tenses

Key vocabulary

festivals and celebrations

Skills focus

writing and speaking:
organising information;
note taking; giving a presentation

Level

upper-intermediate

Time

50–60 minutes

Preparation

one photocopy for each group of 3 or 4 students, cut into separate cards and mixed in a random order

Extra notes

The activity cards can be used to present a real festival rather than an invented one. The activity may also be spread over two lessons, depending on the size of the class and the amount of preparation time you want to give to it (see main activity 4).

Warm-up

- 1 Ask students to give examples of traditional celebrations and festivals in their country. Make sure they include local events as well as big national ones. Focus on one of the festivals and invite students to say what they know about its origins and traditions.
- 2 Then ask students to say which festival might seem most unusual to a foreign visitor to the country. If possible, briefly describe one or two particularly unusual festivals in other parts of the world, e.g. the Cooper's Hill Cheese Rolling races in Gloucestershire, England; La Tomatina (tomato fight) in Buñol, Spain; the Todd River boat races on a dry river bed in Alice Springs, Australia.

Main activity

- 1 Organise the class in groups of three or four students. Explain that they are going to invent a new and unusual festival in their country and present it to the class. Set a time limit of five minutes to come up with some general ideas.
- 2 Hand out a set of cards to each group. Ask them to choose at least 15 of the cards and use them to fill out the details of their festival. They can write notes on the cards. Encourage them to be inventive and to have fun with their ideas.
- 3 Ask groups to put the cards in a logical sequence to organise their presentation and to decide who will say what.
- 4 Groups practise their presentation. You may want to give them extra time to collect pictures, costumes, masks, posters, etc. to make the presentation more entertaining. Alternatively, they could prepare a computer presentation.
- 5 In turn, groups present their festival to the class. Encourage the others to ask questions after each presentation.
- 6 At the end, take a class vote on the best festival.

Follow-up

- Ask students to imagine that their festival has just taken place. Ask them to write an internet blog describing their experience of the day.
- Ask students to write a paragraph on their festival (or on a real festival in their country) for a tourist brochure or website.

name of festival

place(s)

date and duration

season and weather

number of people who
take part

visitors and tourists

origins – when? why?

how it used to be

changes since it first began

preparations

what happens first

what happens later

highlight(s) of the event

costumes

decorations

music

special food

how and when the event ends

problems in the past

success or failure last year

plans for the future