

Holidays and traditions



Ideas for classroom activities (Level: B1)

The photos on the calendar can be used for a variety of activities: warmers, fillers or longer speaking activities. Here are some ideas:

- Choose one of the holidays and brainstorm vocabulary. This can be done in plenary or in small groups. For ideas, you can look at the texts on the next page: Next to each text is a list of key words associated with the holiday. Encourage students to tell the class what they know about the holiday in question and/or how they celebrate it.
- Ask students to write an acrostic of the holiday with words that they associate with it (e.g. for **HALLOWEEN**: gHost, vAmpires, Lantern, chiLdren, OctOber, sWEets, witchES, costumEs, pumpkiN).
- Around a specific holiday, take the opportunity to pick up on some of its traditions: Have your students write Valentine's or Christmas cards to each other. Find a recipe for brownies (for the Fourth of July) or pumpkin pie (for Thanksgiving) on the Internet and/or bring some to class. Create rituals for students' birthdays. Have a small Christmas party: Sing carols and read Christmas stories.
- Have a different student research information about a holiday online and give a short talk about it at the beginning of each lesson.
- As a lead-in to any of the activities, you might bring an object that is associated with a holiday (a stocking, a piece of Halloween candy, a green hat) and ask students what they think this is for.

You can also work with the copymaster on the following pages. When a specific holiday is coming up, cut out the corresponding text and the key words and let students complete it. They can refer to the glossary at the bottom of the text if they don't know a word. Then ask them to decide which photo on the calendar goes with this holiday.

You can also use several texts (or all of them) to have a longer session on holidays:

- PRE-READING:** Choose some of the holidays and ask your students what they know about them, e.g. *Where do people celebrate Waitangi Day / Holi / Thanksgiving / ...? How do they celebrate? When is it?* This is a good opportunity to revise months, ordinal numbers, dates and country names.
- READING:** Have your students work in pairs or small groups. Make one copy of the copymaster for each group. Cut out the texts on the left and the key words on the right and let the students match them. Then ask the students to complete the texts with the words. They can refer to the glossary at the bottom of each text if they don't know a word. If you think this is too difficult, you can leave the texts and the key words together and ask your

students to simply fill in the gaps. Then ask students to match the texts to the photos on the calendar (to make this easier, you can write numbers next to the photos on the poster or stick Post-its with numbers next to the photos).

□ **POST-READING:** Have the students ask each other questions in pairs or small groups, for example:

- ◆ *Have you ever been to a parade on St Patrick's Day? Did you like it?*
- *Yes, I went to a parade once when I was in London on holiday. It was crazy, everyone was wearing green – and even the fountains had green water! How about you?*

Alternatively, have students choose a holiday and write a short text to explain how it is celebrated in their country (this could also be done as homework). Refer them to the texts on the copymaster as a model.



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New Year's Eve

is celebrated in many countries all over the world on _____.
Many people go out on _____: they go to _____, or they go _____ or have a nice dinner. At _____, there are many public or private _____. _____, on 1st January, is a public holiday in most countries.

Did you know?

“Auld Lang Syne”, an old _____ song about friendship, is traditionally sung at midnight on New Year's Eve in the UK and other countries. The first line of the song means “For old times”. The song is used to say goodbye to the old year.

Glossary: Eve Vorabend • fireworks Feuerwerk • line Zeile

31st December
dancing
fireworks
midnight
New Year's Day
New Year's Eve
parties
Scottish

_____ is celebrated in _____ on 6th February.
Waitangi Day is the national holiday of New Zealand. On this day in 1840, the _____ of Waitangi was signed. It is considered the _____ document of New Zealand as a nation. The official celebrations are at Waitangi, but there are also _____ events that feature _____ art and _____ in many other places.

Did you know?

These days, Waitangi Day is often an occasion for public discussion and controversy. In addition to the celebrations, there are also _____ on this day against the treaty and what it meant for the indigenous Maori.

Glossary: national holiday Nationalfeiertag • treaty Vertrag • sign unterschreiben • (to) be considered betrachtet werden als • founding document Gründungsdokument • nation Staat, Nation • feature ausstellen, zeigen • in addition to zusätzlich, neben • Maori Ureinwohner Neuseelands • occasion Gelegenheit • indigenous einheimisch

cultural
founding
Maori
New Zealand
protests
traditions
Treaty
Waitangi Day



Valentine's Day

is celebrated in _____ on _____.

It is a day for lovers: they give each other small _____ or _____ and send greeting cards. The cards have _____ and flowers on them and often include the line "_____".

Did you know?

Valentine's Day is possibly named after the Roman _____ Valentine. According to one story, he allowed Roman soldiers to get married, although this was against the official rules at the time. This is one of the reasons why he was considered a patron of _____.

Glossary: (to) include enthalten • possibly möglicherweise • according to nach, laut • (to) allow erlauben • (to) be considered betrachtet werden als

14th February

bishop

chocolates

hearts

love

many countries

presents

Be my Valentine

is celebrated in _____ and Nepal in the spring season.

It is an important _____ that lasts _____ in most places. It is the festival of _____: people throw coloured _____ or pour coloured water on each other to welcome _____, the _____ of colours.

Did you know?

The celebration of Holi has recently spread to many countries. There is a popular musical event called the "Holi Festival of Colours" at which people throw coloured powder, although the religious meaning has been lost.

Glossary: (to) last dauern • spread sich verbreiten • powder Pulver • meaning Bedeutung

colours

Hindu festival

Holi

India

powder

season

one night and

one day

spring



is celebrated in _____ and many other countries all over the world on 17th March. 17th March is thought to be the _____ of Saint Patrick, who brought the Christian faith to Ireland. The Irish _____ is also very popular in many other countries: it is celebrated with _____, festivals, dancing and – often – lots of alcohol.

Did you know?

People like to _____ for the St Patrick’s Day festivities: they wear _____ clothes and shamrocks. Some dress up as leprechauns. A lot of these symbols are associated with _____. And the phrase “Kiss me, I’m Irish”, which you might also see on this day, refers to the belief that kissing an Irish person is lucky.

Glossary: **faith** Glaube • **national holiday** Nationalfeiertag • **festivities** Feierlichkeiten • **shamrock** Kleeblatt • **leprechaun** (irischer) Kobold • **(to) be associated with** verbunden werden mit

death date
dress up
green
Ireland
national holiday
parades
Saint Patrick’s Day
luck

Easter Sunday

is celebrated in many countries on the Sunday after the first _____ in spring.

Christians all over the world go to _____ to celebrate the _____ of Jesus Christ. There are also many popular traditions that have no connections with the biblical stories: people _____ eggs as a symbol of life. Children in many countries go on _____ – they look for chocolate eggs that the _____ – also a symbol of fertility and new life – has hidden. Easter _____, like the one in New York City, are another popular tradition.

Did you know?

Rolling decorated, _____ eggs down a hill is an Easter tradition that started out in the UK. There has been an event called the “Easter Egg Roll” every year in the US since 1817. Children and their parents can come to the White House and push eggs over the lawn of the White House with a spoon.

Glossary: **resurrection** Auferstehung • **connection** Verbindung • **hunt** Jagd • **fertility** Fruchtbarkeit • **(to) hide** verstecken • **hard-boiled** hartgekocht • **hill** Hügel • **lawn** Rasen

church
decorate
Easter bunny
egg hunts
full moon
hard-boiled
parades
resurrection



_____ ,
 or **the Fourth of July**, is celebrated in the USA on 4th July.

It is the day of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, when _____
 declared their independence from Great Britain. It is a national holiday with many
 _____, such as _____ and parades. For many people it is also
 an opportunity to get together: they visit friends or relatives or have picnics or
 _____ with friends and neighbours. Everything is decorated in
 _____ – the colours of the American _____.

Did you know?

Hot dogs are very popular at Fourth of July picnics and barbecues. An estimated
 150 million hot dogs are eaten on this day every year. There has even been a
 hot dog eating _____ in New York every year since 1916. In 2017,
 the winner ate 72 hot dogs!

Glossary: **Declaration of Independence** Unabhängigkeitserklärung • **national holiday**
 Nationalfeiertag • **fireworks** Feuerwerk • **opportunity** Gelegenheit • **flag** Flagge •
estimated geschätzt

barbecues
 contest
 fireworks
 flag
 Independence Day
 red, white and blue
 official events
 the United States

Halloween

is celebrated in many countries all over the world on _____.

Halloween is the evening before _____. It is popular with children –
 and adults! – in many countries. Children wear scary _____, dressing up
 as _____, vampires or witches, and walk to people’s homes asking for
 _____. People sometimes put lanterns made from _____ in
 front of their houses. It is all supposed to be very _____!

Did you know?

When children walk to peoples’ homes in their Halloween costumes, they often
 shout “Trick or treat!” It means that if you don’t give them a _____
 (something sweet), they will play a trick on you!

Glossary: **All Hallows’ Day** Allerheiligen • **scary** gruselig • **witch** Hexe • **pumpkin** Kürbis •
treat Süßigkeit • **(to) play a trick on s.o.** jemandem einen Streich spielen

31st October
 All Hallows’ Day
 costumes
 ghosts
 pumpkins
 scary
 sweets
 treat



is celebrated in _____ on the fourth Thursday in November.

The first Thanksgiving was probably a _____ festival celebrated in 1621 by the Pilgrims (early European settlers in America) together with Native Americans. Today, it is a day for family get-togethers and, particularly, big Thanksgiving _____. Traditional foods are roasted and stuffed _____, _____ sauce, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, sweetcorn and pumpkin _____.

Did you know?

Another important Thanksgiving tradition is American _____. There are always big matches on this date. After dinner, families often watch the sport together on TV. Two big clubs, the Dallas Cowboys and the Detroit Lions, always play.

Glossary: **harvest** Ernte • **Pilgrims** Pilgerväter • **settler** Siedler • **Native Americans** Indianer / Ureinwohner Amerikas • **get-together** Zusammenkunft • **roasted** gebraten • **stuffed** gefüllt • **turkey** Truthahn • **mashed potatoes** Kartoffelbrei • **sweetcorn** Mais • **pumpkin pie** Kürbiskuchen • **match** Spiel, Wettkampf

cranberry
dinner
football
harvest
pie
Thanksgiving
the USA
turkey

Christmas Eve

is celebrated in many countries all over the world on 24th December.

In many English-speaking countries, this day is not the most important part of the Christmas celebrations. It is spent decorating the _____, singing _____, going to midnight church services, or just going out to a pub. Children hang up _____ and go to sleep. They believe that, in the night, _____ (or Santa Claus in the USA) comes and fills their stockings with presents.

In England, **Christmas Day** (on _____) is a day for opening _____, going to church, watching the Queen's Christmas Message and eating and drinking: Christmas dinner, Christmas _____, a Christmas cake or mince pie.

Did you know?

A mince pie is a typical British Christmas treat that has been around since the 13th century. It is filled with a mixture of dried fruits and _____ which is called "mincemeat". Although there's no meat in mincemeat today, the mixture was originally made with minced meat.

Glossary: **Eve** Vorabend • **carols** Weihnachtslieder • **stockings** Strümpfe • **Christmas pudding** gekochter Pudding mit Rosinen, Nüssen und Brandy • **mince pie** mit Früchten und Gewürzen gefülltes süßes Törtchen • **treat** Süßigkeit • **spices** Gewürze • **minced meat** Hackfleisch

25th December
carols
Christmas tree
Father Christmas
presents
pudding
spices
stockings



My birthday

is on _____.

Of course, birthdays are very individual matters: some people like to have big parties with friends or relatives, others don't celebrate them at all. There is one big difference between _____ in Germany and, for example, the USA: in Germany, the _____ or girl plans and prepares for the party – but in the USA, your friends do it for you. Sometimes, they even plan a _____ party.

And here are the _____ for a successful party: a birthday cake with _____ on it, music, _____, and, of course, lots of presents. Before you _____ the candles on your birthday cake, you can make a wish, and if you manage to blow out all the candles at once, your wish will _____!

Did you know?

Why do we blow out the candles on our birthday cakes?

One explanation is that people in former times believed that the smoke from the candles carried their wishes directly to the gods in the skies.

Glossary: **matter** Angelegenheit • **birthday boy/girl** Geburtstagskind • **ingredients** Zutaten • **candle** Kerze • **(to) manage** es schaffen • **sky** Himmel

birthday boy
birthday parties
blow out
candles
come true
decorations
ingredients
surprise

Key (Level: B1)

New Year's Eve: 31st December, New Year's Eve, parties, dancing, midnight, fireworks, New Year's Day, Scottish

Waitangi Day: Waitangi Day, New Zealand, Treaty, founding, cultural, Maori, traditions, protests

Valentine's Day: many countries, 14th February, presents, chocolates, hearts, Be my Valentine, bishop, love

Holi: Holi, India, Hindu festival, one night and one day, colours, powder, spring, season

Saint Patrick's Day: Saint Patrick's Day, Ireland, death date, national holiday, parades, dress up, green, luck

Easter Sunday: full moon, church, resurrection, decorate, egg hunts, Easter bunny, parades, hard-boiled

Independence Day: Independence Day, the United States, official events, fireworks, barbecues, red, white and blue, flag, contest

Halloween: 31st October, All Hallows' Day, costumes, ghosts, sweets, pumpkins, scary, treat

Thanksgiving: Thanksgiving, the USA, harvest, dinners, turkey, cranberry, pie, football

Christmas Eve: Christmas tree, carols, stockings, Father Christmas, 25th December, presents, pudding, spices

My birthday: birthday parties, birthday boy, surprise, ingredients, candles, decorations, blow out, come true