Introduction

Chapter summary

Chapter 1 (Festivals old and new) is about the time when Christianity arrived, and how some festivals that were important in the old religions became Christian festivals, like Easter and Christmas. People celebrate festivals in many different ways – sending cards, visiting their families, giving presents, and cooking special food.

Chapter 2 (The year begins) shows that the arrival of the New Year is an important event. People get together on New Year’s Eve and celebrate at midnight, drinking, dancing, singing and lighting fireworks. Later, in February, people secretly send Valentine’s cards to the people they love.

Chapter 3 (National days) looks at days that are special in different countries. The nations of Britain have special days for their patron saints, who died many centuries ago. Australia, New Zealand and Canada have national days that celebrate more recent historical events.

Chapter 4 (Lent and Easter) describes Easter as the time when Jesus came back to life. The period leading up to it is called Lent. Some Easter traditions started because Easter is in the spring, a time when there are a lot of young animals, birds and plants.

Chapter 5 (Families and fools) shows how Mothering Sunday used to be a religious festival, when everyone visited their ‘mother church’. It gradually changed to Mother’s Day, a special day for mothers. Soon afterwards comes April Fool’s Day, when people play jokes on each other.

Chapter 6 (Summer celebrations) shows how some people in Britain celebrate the summer solstice – the longest day of the year – by visiting Stonehenge. In the USA, on the Fourth of July, everyone celebrates the day in 1776 when America declared its independence from Britain.

Chapter 7 (Fires and fireworks) describes autumn as a time of fruit and vegetables – and also dark nights, fires and ghosts. Halloween, with its strange traditions, comes at the end of October, and in November the British remember the Gunpowder Plot by lighting fires and fireworks.

Chapter 8 (Remembering) is about Remembrance Day in late November (called Veterans Day in the USA), when people remember the soldiers who died in the First World War and other wars.

Chapter 9 (Thanksgiving) looks at celebrations after the harvest. Some go to church services to give thanks. In the USA, they remember the first harvest of the Pilgrim Fathers, a group of English people who sailed across the Atlantic. The local Wampanoag helped them to grow food.

Chapter 10 (In a new country) looks at when people move to a new country and how they take their language and festivals with them. Many cities all over the world have large groups of immigrants who celebrate festivals from their home countries.

Chapter 11 (Christmas) describes how in Britain, Christmas is not just a religious festival. There are many traditions, some old and some new – cards, presents, carols, the Christmas tree, stockings, the Queen’s speech and pantomimes.

Background

This book describes the festivals and celebrations that take place at different times of year in English-speaking countries. It tells us about the history behind them, too. Why do people eat pancakes just before Lent? How did April Fool’s Day begin? And who was Saint Valentine? It describes old traditions, how they started, and how they have changed: it also looks at newer festivals, like the Notting Hill Carnival and Multiculturalism Day.
Seasons and Celebrations

After reading activity 1

Word search

There are twenty words. Write them in this table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seasons</th>
<th>Festivals</th>
<th>Words about celebrations</th>
<th>Kinds of food and drink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
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To the teacher

Aim: To introduce key vocabulary

Time: 15–20 minutes

Organization: Give one copy of the word search to each student or put the word search on an overhead projector. Give the students ten minutes to find as many words as possible. Then ask them to decide which words belong in which categories. Go through the words and deal with any remaining difficulties over meanings. Then ask the students what connections they can find between the words.

Key: Seasons – winter, spring, summer, autumn
Festivals – Christmas, Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving
Words about celebrations – flowers, presents, cards, barbecues, parties, fireworks
Kinds of food and drink – wine, beer, champagne, turkey, pie, pudding
Seasons and Celebrations

After reading activity 2

Snap! or Pelmanism

SET ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old friends</th>
<th>Trafalgar square</th>
<th>In prison</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter Sunday</td>
<td>Hot cross buns</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 April</td>
<td>21 June</td>
<td>Wiltshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>1783</td>
<td>31 October</td>
<td>Pumpkins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guy Fawkes</td>
<td>Poppies</td>
<td>Gallipoli</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>1620</td>
<td>North America</td>
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<tr>
<td>the Caribbean</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Father Christmas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To the teacher

Aim: To revise key facts of the text

Time: 30–40 minutes

Organization: Make a pack of 52 cards by cutting out each of the phrases and sticking them on pieces of card. The pack consists of two sets of 26 cards. The first set has details from the book (dates, seasons, people, places and so on), and the second set has clues in the form of sentences. The aim is for the students to match up the two sets of cards. The games are best played in groups of three or four students; each group needs a complete pack of 52 cards.

For SNAP! give the players equal numbers of cards, face down. Each player in turn lays one of their cards, face up, on a pile in the centre of the table. If two corresponding cards are put down, one after the other, the player who realizes it first shouts ‘Snap!’ and can pick up the whole pile of cards in the centre. Play continues until one player holds all the cards and is therefore the winner.

For PELMANISM put all the cards face down on the table, either in parallel rows (this makes the game much easier!) or at different angles to each other. Each player turns over two cards at a time. If the cards are a matching pair, that player keeps both cards, and has another turn. If they do not match, they are turned face down again, and the next person has a turn. Players try to remember where cards are, and the winner is the one with the most pairs of cards at the end of the game.
Seasons and Celebrations

After reading activity 2

Snap! or Pelmanism

SET TWO

People play jokes on their friends and family on THIS day.

Many people eat THESE at Easter.

Thanksgiving is in THIS season.

Saint Valentine died HERE.

In Britain, THIS is usually the longest day of the year.

Auld Lang Syne is a song about THESE.

Children leave a stocking for HIM on 24 December.

People send THESE to their friends and family at Christmas.

The first Father's Day was in THIS year.

Halloween is on THIS day.

HE tried to kill the King of England.

In London, many people celebrate the new year HERE.

Easter is in THIS season.

THESE are big autumn vegetables.

The United States of America was born in THIS year.

Waitangi Day is the national day of THIS country.

11,000 soldiers from Australia and New Zealand died HERE.

Multiculturalism Day is celebrated HERE on 27 June.

There are circles of big heavy stones HERE.

People wear THESE to remember soldiers who died in wars.

The Pilgrim Fathers sailed to America in THIS year.

The Wampanoag people lived HERE.

People from HERE started the Notting Hill Carnival.

Good Friday is two days before THIS.

People go to pantomimes in THIS season.

Saint David is the patron saint of THIS country.

The Pilgrim Fathers sailed to America in THIS year.

The Wampanoag people lived HERE.

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