

# 4. Family Events And Holidays, Public Holidays

*“Real happiness is public holidays  
that result in 3-day weekends.”*

### What Are Family Events And Public Holidays?

All around the world people of different cultures celebrate festivals and holidays to mark special days throughout the year. Most of the events we celebrate were milestones in a country's history, for example a revolution, the foundation of the state or a war of independence. There are also some religious holidays, like Easter or Christmas. These are generally bank holidays, which means that people don't have to go to work and there is no school either. On these days people usually go to commemoration ceremonies, lay wreaths on statues and listen to speeches or watch performances. At school, students usually have class performances or school commemoration ceremonies.

We also have family holidays when we celebrate special events in the family, for example birthdays, namedays, weddings, wedding anniversaries, engagements, graduations or christenings. The holiday season is a time when people gather to celebrate with the people they love. Many holidays include traditions like gift-giving, lighting candles, cooking special meals, and volunteering to help the needy.

## PRACTICE

### Task 1

Match the sentence halves in the story of Valentine's Day. Then speak about this holiday.

1. February 14th, or Valentine's Day,
2. People give handwritten cards or gifts, like chocolate or flowers,
3. The story of Valentine's Day began when a Roman emperor banned men from getting married
4. Despite the emperor's orders,
5. When he was caught,
6. On his last day in jail, he thanked his jailer's daughter for her friendship with a note which he signed,

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- A) so that they would join his army instead.
- B) a priest named St. Valentine carried out weddings in secret.
- C) to let others know that they love them.
- D) he was sentenced to death.
- E) is a special holiday.
- F) 'love from your Valentine'.

### Task 2

Match these holidays with the dates when we celebrate them. Then speak about what we celebrate, when and how.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. 1st November                              | A) The Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence in 1848-49 |
| 2. 20th August                               | B) The Foundation of the Hungarian State/Saint Stephen's Day   |
| 3. 1st May                                   | C) The Revolution of 1956/The Proclamation of the Republic     |
| 4. 15th March                                | D) Labour Day/May Day: working people and spring               |
| 5. the first Sunday after the Full Moon date | E) Mother's Day  |
| 6. the first Sunday in May                   | F) All Saints' Day: commemoration of our dead relatives        |
| 7. 23rd October                              | G) Easter Sunday: the resurrection of Jesus from the dead      |
| 8. 14th February                             | H) Christmas Day: the birth of Jesus Christ                    |
| 9. 25th December                             | I) Valentine's Day: thinking about/celebrating our loved ones  |

### Task 3

Read this dialogue between two friends about Linda's preparations for a family event. Fill in the gaps with Mary's questions (A-H). Then try to act out the dialogue.

- A) It's going to be a fun day for her, isn't it?
- B) Did you make a cake for her?
- C) Is it her birthday?
- D) Shall I help you decorate the house?
- E) What is it?
- F) What time are you going to the restaurant with your parents?
- G) Are you doing anything special?
- H) Who are these flowers for?

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**Mary:** Hi, Linda. (1) .....

**Linda:** Hi, Susan. My daughter, Natalie.

**Mary:** (2) .....

**Linda:** No, she graduated from high school last week and we are going to celebrate it today.

**Mary:** (3) .....

**Linda:** Yeah, we're meeting my parents for dinner. They want to take her out to a nice restaurant. Afterwards she is having a party with her friends.

**Mary:** (4) .....

**Linda:** I hope so. And I also hope she will like the present we bought her.

**Mary:** (5) .....

**Linda:** An intensive online Spanish language course because she is going to take the language exam soon.

**Mary:** Great idea. (6) .....

**Linda:** No, we have cakes only on birthdays. I wanted to decorate the house but, unfortunately, I didn't have enough time.

**Mary:** (7) .....

**Linda:** At 7.

**Mary:** Then we still have some time. (8) .....

**Linda:** That would be very nice of you. Thank you!

### Task 4

Put the sentences of speaker A and B in the correct order to make a dialogue about celebrating a family occasion. Then try to act out the dialogue.

| ADAM   | JULIE   |
|--|---|
| A) I'm sure Mom has a lot of pictures we can go through.                         | F) Perfect! That's going to be so beautiful.                            |
| B) Let's make a slideshow of their life together.                                | G) 50 years! That's a really long time.                                 |
| C) I know. They got married in their early twenties.                             | H) Sure. How long have they been married?                               |
| D) Why don't we throw them a surprise party? We can invite all of our relatives. | I) That's a great idea. Shall we buy them any presents?                 |
| E) 50 years.   | J) So young? That's amazing! We should definitely do something special. |

**Adam:** *Hey Julie, shall we do something special for Grandma and Grandpa's wedding anniversary?* .....

**Julie:** .....

Adam: .....

Julie: .....

Adam: .....

Julie: .....

Adam: .....

Julie: .....

Adam: .....

Julie: .....

Adam: .....

Julie: *Let's meet at Mom's tonight and plan the whole party.* .....

**Task 5**

Read this text about Christmas and fill in the gaps with the correct answer: A, B or C. Then based on this text, speak about Christmas on your own.

Christmas is probably the (1) ..... celebration of the year. It is celebrated by Christians (2) ..... December 25th. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the son of the Christian God. The period of four Sundays before Christmas (3) ..... Advent, which is a time for preparation (4) ..... Christmas. People usually (5) ..... Advent candles or have Advent calendars to count up to Christmas day. Most people (6) ..... their houses. They usually put up fir trees with lights and ornaments. It is also a special occasion for families, because they usually get (7) ..... and spend some meaningful time with their loved ones. People usually have a special meal (8) ..... Christmas day and attend the midnight mass in (9) ..... Christmas is also about (10) ..... cards and presents to each other.

- |  |                                    |  |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. A) more important<br>B) most important<br>C) very important | 2. A) on<br>B) in<br>C) at         | 3. A) are called<br>B) called<br>C) is called            |
| 4. A) for<br>B) to<br>C) by                                    | 5. A) lights<br>B) light<br>C) lit | 6. A) decorate<br>B) are decorating<br>C) have decorated |
| 7. A) up<br>B) together<br>C) across                           | 8. A) on<br>B) at<br>C) in         | 9. A) temple<br>B) prison<br>C) church                   |
| 10. A) giving<br>B) give<br>C) to give                         |                                    |  |

### Task 6

Fill in the gaps with the missing sentence halves (A–H) then describe the pictures with the help of the text and the following points:

- how New Year is usually celebrated
- how people usually get married
- how we celebrate Mother's Day
- your preferences



- A) celebrate the bride and the bridegroom
- B) thank her for bringing them up
- C) in the local registry office
- D) go on honeymoon right after the wedding reception
- E) when they clink glasses, hug and kiss each other and make a resolution
- F) drink champagne, listen to music and dance
- G) for example drawings
- H) I have never managed to keep any, unfortunately

People celebrate New Year's Eve either with their family or with friends. They usually throw a party, (1) ..... Many people start counting down to New Year's Day in the last minute before midnight (2) .....

Getting married is a complicated process which requires a lot of preparation. The couple can legally get married (3) ..... Church marriages are optional. After the wedding ceremony there is usually a wedding reception for family members and friends who (4) ..... The bride usually wears a beautiful long white wedding dress and the bridegroom wears a tuxedo. The newly-weds usually (5) .....

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On Mother's Day children usually give their mother some presents, for example flowers or chocolate and (6) ..... Mothers generally prefer self-made presents, (7) .....

I personally prefer New Year's Eve because I usually spend this occasion with my friends partying. I like listening to music and dancing very much. I always make a New Year's resolution but (8) .....

#### Task 7

Answer the following questions with the help of the given words or expressions.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1. What family occasions do you celebrate and why?</p>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Christmas</li> <li>● Easter</li> <li>● birthday/nameday</li> <li>● wedding anniversary</li> <li>● christening</li> <li>● graduation</li> <li>● spend meaningful time together</li> <li>● strengthen family ties</li> <li>● get to know relatives better</li> <li>● make relatives happy</li> </ul>  |
| <p>2. How do you celebrate these family occasions?</p>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● come together</li> <li>● go to a restaurant/prepare dinner/order food</li> <li>● decorate the house</li> <li>● have a barbecue</li> <li>● invite/visit relatives</li> <li>● make a cake/buy some biscuits</li> <li>● play cards/board games</li> <li>● give/get presents</li> <li>● send greeting cards</li> <li>● set up a Christmas tree</li> <li>● throw a surprise party</li> </ul> |
| <p>3. Do you know any national holidays of some other nations?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Guy Fawkes' Day (Great Britain, 5th November)</li> <li>● St. Patrick's Day (Ireland, 17th March)</li> <li>● Independence Day (the USA, 4th July)</li> <li>● Thanksgiving Day (the USA, last Thursday of November)</li> <li>● Halloween (the USA, 31st October)</li> </ul>   |

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|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>4. How do people usually celebrate national holidays?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● commemorate a historic event</li><li>● wear a rosette</li><li>● watch the fireworks display</li><li>● visit the cemetery</li><li>● light candles</li><li>● go to commemoration ceremonies</li><li>● listen to political speeches</li><li>● watch the events on TV</li></ul> |
| <p>5. How do schools celebrate national holidays?</p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● wear formal clothes</li><li>● have a school commemoration ceremony</li><li>● lay wreaths on statues</li><li>● sing in the school choir</li><li>● play a musical instrument in the school band</li><li>● listen to speeches</li></ul>  |



### EXAM TASK

#### Final exam – Conversation

Answer the following questions:

1. Is it important for families to celebrate special occasions together? Why or why not?
2. What family events do you usually celebrate with your family?
3. How do you usually celebrate them?
4. Which is your favourite celebration? Why?
5. Which one don't you like so much and why?

#### Final exam – Role-play

You are preparing to commemorate 15th March at school. Talk to an American exchange student about the following:

- what we celebrate on 15th March
- what other national holidays we celebrate
- how you usually commemorate these events at school
- your favourite commemoration

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### DExam – Role-play between two candidates

Imagine that you are siblings and you want to throw a surprise birthday party for your mother, who is 40 years old. Talk about the following.

#### CANDIDATE A

You want the party at home

You want to have traditional Hungarian food

#### THROWING A SURPRISE BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR YOUR MOTHER

Who to invite?

What present to buy?

#### CANDIDATE B

You want the party in a restaurant

You want to have fast food

#### THROWING A SURPRISE BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR YOUR MOTHER

Who to invite?

What present to buy?

### DExam – Picture description

Look at the picture and describe what you can see. For example, the people, the place and the occasion. You will have about 2-3 minutes for it.

Now answer the following question:

**Is Easter your favourite celebration?**

- (If yes) Why do you like it?
- (If not) What is your favourite celebration and why?



### LanguageCert – Monologue

Your task is to talk about a given topic for one and a half minutes. Before you start, you have thirty seconds to write some notes to help you.

Your topic is:

**My favourite family celebration**



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Follow-up questions:

1. Do you celebrate this event with your nuclear or extended family? Why?
2. Is giving presents an important part of this celebration? Why or why not?
3. Do you prefer celebrating it at home or somewhere else? Where and why?
4. Do you sometimes invite friends for this celebration? Why or why not?

### Final exam - Individual long turn

Compare and contrast these pictures of different celebrations based on the following points:

- our national holidays and what we commemorate
- how students celebrate them at school
- how families celebrate them
- your favourite national holiday



### WORD LIST

|                          |                          |                            |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| All Saints' Day          | /ɔ:l seɪnts deɪ/         | mindenszentek napja        |
| attend the midnight mass | /ə'tend ðə 'mɪdnɑ:t məs/ | részt vesz az éjféli misén |
| ban somebody from        | /bæn frɒm/               | megtilt valakinek valamit  |
| bank holiday             | /bæŋk 'hɒlɪdeɪ/          | munkaszüneti nap           |
| bride                    | /braɪd/                  | menyasszony                |