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The 4 page 60 minute ESL British English lesson – 20/04/15

## Celebrating May Day in Britain

May Day traditions in Britain include Morris dancing, the crowning of the May Queen and Maypole dancing.

Morris dancers normally perform on May Day. These are men wearing folk costumes and bell pads on their shins. They use sticks, swords and handkerchiefs that maybe wielded by the dancers during their dance.

The May Queen is a girl who must ride or walk at the front of a parade for May Day celebrations. She wears a white gown to symbolise purity and usually wears a tiara or crown. She is generally crowned by flowers and makes a speech ahead of any dancing taking place.

In England and Wales, Maypole dancing is normally performed by children. They dance around a Maypole holding ribbons. These are attached to the top of a wooden pole that is normally erected on a green. Many children learn the Maypole dance at school.

May Day in the UK is associated with towns and villages celebrating springtime fertility (of people, the livestock and the soil). There is revelry and village fetes, as well as community gatherings.

In Edinburgh, Scotland, tradition has it that young women who climb Arthur's Seat (a local mountain) and wash their faces in the morning dew at the top of it will have lifelong beauty.

International Workers' Day is celebrated in London on May 1<sup>st</sup> with trade union workers marching into Trafalgar Square to listen to various speeches.

In Europe, May Day or International Workers' Day is a public holiday. In England, the May Day public holiday waits until the first Monday of May.

### SPEAKING – WARM UP

Think of three things you know about May Day. Go round the room swapping details with others.

### LISTENING – WRITING - DICTATION

The teacher will read some lines of the article slowly to the class.

### READING

Students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

### SPEAKING - UNDERSTANDING

**1) The article** – Students check any unknown vocabulary or phrases with the teacher.

**2) The article** - Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- 1) What is the article about?
- 2) What do you think about the article?
- 3) Was this an easy or difficult article to understand?
- 4) Was this a boring or interesting article?
- 5) Discuss the article.

**3) Article quiz** - Students quiz each other in pairs. Score a point for each correct answer. Score half a point each time you have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

#### Student A questions

- 1) What day is 'May Day'?
- 2) What is celebrated in London?
- 3) What is a 'May Queen'?
- 4) What are 'Morris dancers'?
- 5) Many children learn what at school?

#### Student B questions

- 1) Explain what 'Maypole dancing' is.
- 2) What does 'revelry' mean?
- 3) What happens in Edinburgh?
- 4) What is 'dew'?
- 5) Where is Trafalgar Square?

**Category: May Day / Tradition / UK  
Intermediate / Upper Intermediate**

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### WRITING / SPEAKING

*In pairs.* On the board write as many words as you can to do with '**May Day**'. *One-two minutes.* Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

### WRITING / SPEAKING

*In pairs* – Using the article write down three things you know about May Day traditions in Britain. Discuss together.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

Add three things you know about May Day traditions *in your country*. Discuss together.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

*The teacher* will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

### WRITING / SPEAKING

*In pairs*, write down five things you know about **International Workers' Day**. Discuss together. *3 mins.*

*The teacher* will choose some students to read out their findings to the class.

### DISCUSSION

#### Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) How do you celebrate May Day?
- 3) Would you like to try Maypole dancing?
- 4) What do you think of Morris dancing?
- 5) Would you have a go at Morris dancing if offered the chance?
- 6) Have you ever been to Edinburgh?
- 7) What is Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh?
- 8) Would you like to visit Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh?
- 9) What May Day traditions did you do as a child?
- 10) Have you learnt anything in today's English lesson?

### SPEAKING – ROLEPLAY 1

*In groups.* One of you is the interviewer. There are up to four guests. You are in the Radio London studio. Today's interview is: *May Day traditions*. *10 mins.*

- 1) A tourist.
- 2) A May Queen.
- 3) A Morris dancer.
- 4) A Maypole dancer.

*The teacher* will choose some groups to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

### SPEAKING - ROLEPLAY 2

*In pairs.* Student A is in England. Student B is in another country (Imagine!). You are discussing May Day in both countries. *5 mins.*

### SPEAKING – DISCUSSION

*Allow 10 minutes* – As a class.

<p><i>May Day traditions</i> <i>Past, present and future?</i> <i>Google it!</i></p>
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*The teacher* can moderate the session.

### DISCUSSION

#### Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you've read?
- 2) Were you ever a May Queen?
- 3) Have you ever watched Workers' march through the streets on May Day?
- 4) Is there revelry and village fetes in your country on May Day?
- 5) Do you have a day off on May Day?
- 6) Have you ever visited Trafalgar Square in London?
- 7) What is the best thing about May Day?
- 8) What do you normally do on May Day?
- 9) Has this been a difficult lesson for you to understand?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

**GAP FILL: READING**

**Celebrating May Day in Britain**

May Day (1)\_\_\_ in Britain include Morris dancing, the crowning of the May Queen and (2)\_\_\_ dancing.

Morris dancers normally perform on May Day. These are men wearing folk costumes and bell pads on their shins. They use sticks, (3)\_\_\_ and handkerchiefs that maybe wielded by the dancers during their dance.

The May Queen is a girl who must ride or walk at the front of a (4)\_\_\_ for May Day celebrations. She wears a white gown to (5)\_\_\_ (6)\_\_\_ and usually wears a tiara or crown. She is generally crowned by flowers and makes a speech ahead of any dancing taking place.

In England and Wales, Maypole dancing is (7)\_\_\_ performed by children. They dance around a Maypole holding (8)\_\_\_.

**parade / traditions / maypole / purity / normally / swords / ribbons / symbolise /**

These are attached to the top of a wooden pole that is normally erected on a green. Many children learn the Maypole dance at school.

May Day in the UK is associated with towns and villages celebrating springtime (1)\_\_\_ (of people, the (2)\_\_\_ and the soil). There is (3)\_\_\_ and village (4)\_\_\_, as well as community gatherings.

In Edinburgh, Scotland, tradition has it that young women who climb Arthur's Seat (a local mountain) and wash their faces in the morning (5)\_\_\_ at the top of it will have (6)\_\_\_ beauty.

International Workers' Day is celebrated in London on May 1<sup>st</sup> with (7)\_\_\_ workers marching into Trafalgar Square to listen to (8)\_\_\_ speeches.

In Europe, May Day or International Workers' Day is a public holiday. In England, the May Day public holiday waits until the first Monday of May.

**dew / various / fertility / livestock / lifelong / revelry / trade union / fetes**

**GAP FILL: GRAMMAR**

**Celebrating May Day in Britain**

May Day traditions in Britain include Morris dancing, the crowning (1)\_\_\_ the May Queen and Maypole dancing.

Morris dancers normally perform on May Day. These are men wearing folk costumes and bell pads (2)\_\_\_ their shins. They use sticks, swords and handkerchiefs that maybe wielded (3)\_\_\_ the dancers during their dance.

The May Queen is a girl (4)\_\_\_ must ride (5)\_\_\_ walk (6)\_\_\_ the front of a parade for May Day celebrations. She wears a white gown to symbolise purity and usually wears a tiara or crown. (7)\_\_\_ is generally crowned by flowers and makes a speech ahead of any dancing taking place.

(8)\_\_\_ England and Wales, Maypole dancing is normally performed by children. They dance around a Maypole holding ribbons.

**in / at / by / on / of / or / she / who**

(1)\_\_\_ are attached to the top of a wooden pole that is normally erected on a green. (2)\_\_\_ children learn the Maypole dance at school.

May Day in the UK is associated with towns and villages celebrating springtime fertility (of people, the livestock and the soil). (3)\_\_\_ is revelry and village fetes, (4)\_\_\_ community gatherings.

In Edinburgh, Scotland, tradition has it (5)\_\_\_ young women who climb Arthur's Seat (a local mountain) and wash (6)\_\_\_ faces in the morning dew at the top of it will have lifelong beauty.

International Workers' Day is celebrated in London on May 1<sup>st</sup> (7)\_\_\_ trade union workers marching (8)\_\_\_ Trafalgar Square to listen to various speeches.

In Europe, May Day or International Workers' Day is a public holiday. In England, the May Day public holiday waits until the first Monday of May.

**with / their / many / there / into / as well as / that / these**

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### GAP FILL: LISTENING

### WRITING/SPELLING

#### Celebrating May Day in Britain

\_\_\_\_\_ in Britain include Morris dancing, the crowning of the May Queen \_\_\_\_\_.

Morris dancers normally perform on May Day. These are men wearing folk costumes and bell pads on their shins. They use sticks, \_\_\_\_\_ that maybe wielded by the dancers during their dance.

The May Queen is a girl who must ride or walk at the front of a parade for May Day celebrations. She wears a white gown \_\_\_\_\_ and usually wears a tiara or crown. She is generally crowned by flowers and makes a speech ahead of any dancing taking place.

In England and Wales, Maypole dancing is normally performed by children. \_\_\_\_\_ Maypole holding ribbons. These are attached to the \_\_\_\_\_ that is normally erected on a green. Many children learn the Maypole dance at school.

May Day in the UK is associated with towns and villages celebrating \_\_\_\_\_ (of people, the livestock and the soil). There is revelry and village fetes, as well as community gatherings. In Edinburgh, Scotland, tradition has it that young women who climb Arthur's Seat (a local mountain) and wash their faces \_\_\_\_\_ at the top of it will have lifelong beauty.

\_\_\_\_\_ is celebrated in London on May 1<sup>st</sup> with trade union workers marching into Trafalgar Square to listen to various speeches. In Europe, May Day or International Workers' Day is a public holiday. In England, the May Day public holiday waits until the \_\_\_\_\_.

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#### WRITING / SPEAKING

**1) On the board** - *In pairs, as a class* - write down 20 different things you know about May Day. Talk about them! *5 mins.*

**2) Sentence starters** - Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- 1) The May Queen \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) In my country \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) May Day \_\_\_\_\_

**3) In class** - Write down 50 words about: **May Day**. Your words can be read out to the class.

**4) Homework** - Write and send a 200 word email to your teacher about: **May Day**. Your email can be read out in class.

#### SPELLING

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards check your answers.

- 1) normally
- 2) traditions
- 3) maypole
- 4) shins
- 5) swords
- 6) handkerchiefs
- 7) during
- 8) parade
- 9) celebrations
- 10) symbolise

#### SPELLING

Use the following ratings:

**Pass = 12**  
**Good = 15**  
**Very good = 18**  
**Excellent = 20**

- 11) purity
- 12) usually
- 13) tiara
- 14) crown
- 15) generally
- 16) fertility
- 17) livestock
- 18) soil
- 19) revelry
- 20) dew

Celebrating May Day in Britain – *20<sup>th</sup> April 2015*