

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 1st 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 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?

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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 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.

*May Day Traditions
Past, present and future?*

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 1st 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 1st (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

GAP FILL: LISTENING

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 1st 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/SPELLING

WRITING / SPEAKING

1) On the board - *In pairs, as a class* - write down 20 different things 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) Homework - Write and send a 200 word email to your teacher about: **May Day** Your email can be read out in class.

GAP FILL READING

- 1) traditions
- 2) maypole
- 3) swords
- 4) parade
- 5) symbolise
- 6) purity
- 7) normally
- 8) ribbons

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

ANSWERS

- 1) fertility
- 2) livestock
- 3) revelry
- 4) fetes
- 5) dew
- 6) lifelong
- 7) trade union
- 8) various

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 – *15th April 2014*