

CELEBRATIONS

Special occasions

Teacher's notes

Age: Teenagers/Adults

Level: Intermediate (B1)

Time: 45 minutes +



Activity: In this lesson, students will:

1. read about special days and holidays;
2. practise writing and saying dates;
3. discuss celebrations around the world;
4. write about a special day.

Language focus: ways of saying dates; words associated with special days

Preparation: look up the dates of the variable special days (Ramadan, Chinese New Year, etc.) in advance of the lesson, if necessary

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student

Procedure

1. Ask students what the date is and write it on the board. Write further dates on the board as numbers and practise saying them in full. End with 25/12 – the twenty-fifth of December. Ask students, *What's special about this day?* (It's Christmas Day.)
2. If your students are confident about the names of dates and holidays, hand out the worksheet. Students read the texts about important dates in the year and write the name and date of the holiday below each one. If they need help, they can find the names at the bottom of the page.



TEACHING TIP 1: If your students are less confident, or if you want to revise vocabulary, write the names of the days and holidays on the board. Check students understand the vocabulary and drill pronunciation. Test their knowledge by eliciting words associated with each holiday and write them on the board. Then, hand out the worksheet.

When they have finished, students check their answers with a partner.

Key:

1. New Year's Eve; 2. Halloween; 3. St Patrick's Day;
4. US Independence Day; 5. Ramadan; 6. Earth Day;
7. Remembrance Day; 8. Chinese New Year; 9. Martin Luther King, Jr Day; 10. Thanksgiving; 11. Valentine's Day; 12. Rosh Hashanah

3. Students continue to work in pairs and use their general knowledge or clues in the texts to write the dates of each holiday on the worksheet. Explain that in some cases the date is variable. If students find this difficult, write the dates on the board to help them. When they are finished, check answers as a class.

Key:

1. December 31; 2. October 31; 3. March 17; 4. July 4;
5. variable; 6. April 22; 7. November 11; 8. variable;
9. variable; 10. variable; 11. February 14; 12. variable

4. Students work in groups of three. They find out the birthdays of the classmates in their group and then ask them further questions to find out three birthday facts. You could write some example questions on the board, if students get stuck, like, *How did you celebrate your last birthday? Do you know anyone else with the same birthday as you?*
5. Ask students if they celebrate any of the special days and holidays they've read about so far where they live. Find out from students if they celebrate other special days and holidays, or if they know of other days celebrated across the world.
6. Ask students to research a special day or holiday online and write a short description. Tell them they can find out more about one of the days already discussed, but they must find out new facts. When they are finished, ask each student to read their description to the class, and ask the others to identify which day it is.



TECH TIP 1: If you don't have access to a computer lab or laptops in the classroom, ask your students to work on their smartphones or tablets. Students that don't have a smartphone can work in pairs with someone who does. You could alternatively set this task as homework – students can find out information from the internet or they could ask friends or family. Then they could either send you the written report to check, or you could use the student presentations to help revise/recap vocabulary in your next lesson.

CELEBRATIONS

Special occasions

What day is it?

Every year has its special occasions. Read the texts below and try to identify the special occasions. If you need help, there is a list of days at the bottom of the page. When you have finished, check your answers with a partner. Then, with your partner, match as many of the days as you can with dates in the calendar.

1. This is the night when people meet in places like London's Trafalgar Square and New York's Times Square to welcome the New Year. It is called Hogmanay in Scotland.

Day: New Year's Eve
Date: January 31st

2. This is one of the scariest nights of the year. Children in the United States go trick-or-treating, collecting sweets.

Day: _____
Date: _____

3. The national day of Ireland is celebrated in many countries. In Ireland there are religious services, parades and lots of parties.

Day: _____
Date: _____

4. This is the anniversary of the day when the American colonies signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Day: _____
Date: _____

5. This is the start of the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. During the one-month period, Muslims do not eat, drink or smoke from dawn until sunset.

Day: _____
Date: _____

6. This day started in the US, but is now celebrated in countries across the world. It is a day when people think about the environment.

Day: _____
Date: _____

7. This is the day to remember the people who lost their lives in wars. The First World War officially ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

Day: _____
Date: _____

8. It's China's most important holiday. Each year is dedicated to one of 12 animals.

Day: _____
Date: _____

9. This US holiday is on the third Monday in January. It marks the birth on January 15, 1929, of a famous African-American civil rights leader.

Day: _____
Date: _____

10. Celebrated on the last Thursday in November in the United States and the second Monday in October in Canada, it is associated with family reunions and family traditions.

Day: _____
Date: _____

11. It is the custom in many countries for people to send anonymous cards or gifts to the people they love on this day.

Day: _____
Date: _____

12. Commonly known as the Jewish New Year, this is one of the holiest days of the year for the Jewish people.

Day: _____
Date: _____

St Patrick's Day
Rosh Hashanah
Halloween

Earth Day
Ramadan
Veteran's Day

Independence Day
New Year's Eve
Thanksgiving

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Chinese New Year
Valentine's Day

