

CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday

Teacher's notes

Age: Teenagers/Adults
Level: Intermediate (B1)
Time: 30 minutes



Activity: In this lesson, students will:

1. learn the lyrics to Happy Birthday
2. research their birthday year
3. do a birthday quiz
4. practise speaking about birthdays

Language focus: vocabulary related to birthdays; spoken fluency

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student

Procedure

1. Ask students what songs they sing to celebrate someone's birthday in their country. If they are feeling brave they can sing the song and teach the other students. Next, draw students' attention to the lyrics in Exercise 1 and ask them if they can know the tune. Teach the lyrics to the song if students don't already know and sing it if any of your students have a birthday that day.
2. Ask students if they can remember the top songs of a year ago, the films that were showing and what was happening in the news. Ask the same about two years ago, three years ago and so on. Find out if students know anything about the year in which they were born. If the school has internet access, ask students to research the year in which they were born and write a summary.



FLIPPED TIP: The day before you teach this class, set your students homework to research events that happened in the year they were born. They can then present this in class rather than researching it during class.

3. When they have completed their summary, ask students to tell each other about their birth years in small groups, or display the information on the classroom walls so they can read each other's work.

4. Draw students' attention to the photos on the worksheet. Discuss how people usually celebrate birthdays in their country and other countries, e.g. in English-speaking countries it's the custom to have the same number of candles on the cake as the person's age. The person whose birthday it is tries to blow out the candles in one breath, while making a wish.
5. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Ask students to do Exercise 2 in their groups. While they are doing this, draw the same number of cakes on the board as there are groups in the class, each with 12 candles.
6. Check the answers to the quiz. For each correct answer, the group blows out a candle on their cake. The group that blows out all their candles first is the winner.

Key:

1. a; 2. c; 3. a; 4. a; 5. c; 6. b; 7. a; 8. a; 9. a; 10. c (six presidents were born in October); 11. c (in 1989 he flew 800 guests to Morocco for a non-stop three-day party); 12. b
7. Draw students' attention to the list of questions in Exercise 3. Tell them that they don't have to ask and answer all of the questions but that they should choose a few and discuss them with a partner. When they have finished, conduct a whole class feedback session and address any new questions that your students have.



FLIPPED TIP: Ask your students if they know any words that collocate (go together) with the word birthday. Some examples of this are birthday cake, birthday present, birthday party, birthday boy and birthday girl. Tell students it is good to get into the habit of recording high frequency collocations as this will help to improve their vocabulary.

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Exercise 1: Birthday song

What song do you sing to celebrate birthdays in your country? Look at the lyrics below. Can you complete them? Do you know the tune?

Lyrics

H_____ birthday to you,
Happy b_____ to you,
Happy birthday d____ (name),
Happy birthday to y___ !

When were you born? Do you know of any famous events that took place the year you were born? If not, look up some facts on the internet and discuss them with your partner.



Exercise 2: Birthday Quiz

You only have one birthday a year, so celebrate it in style with our Happy Birthday quiz. All you have to do is choose the correct answer for each question.



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1. People usually give birthday presents on birthdays. In which book do people give un-birthday presents on all the other days of the year?
 - a. *Alice Through the Looking Glass*
 - b. *Harry Potter*
 - c. *The Lord of the Rings*
2. What's a birthday suit?
 - a. *A suit that is worn only once a year on special occasions.*
 - b. *Two people who were born on the same day.*
 - c. *Nothing (i.e. naked!). It's what you were born with!*
3. Who was offered as a birthday present after dancing at the birthday banquet of her stepfather, Herod Antipas?
 - a. *Salome*
 - b. *Britney Spears*
 - c. *Lara Croft*
4. Complete the following quote by the American poet Robert Frost: A diplomat is a man who always remembers a woman's birthday but never remembers her _____.
 - a. *age*
 - b. *name*
 - c. *phone number*
5. Who famously sang 'Happy Birthday to You' to US President John F. Kennedy?
 - a. *U2*
 - b. *Frank Sinatra*
 - c. *Marilyn Monroe*
6. What did Joe Smart say on his 100th birthday when he was asked how he had managed to live so long?
 - a. *I eat a balanced diet and drink one glass of wine each day. On special occasions I have a glass of whisky.*
 - b. *I smoke almost constantly, sometimes in the middle of the night. I drink anything I can get my hands on.*
 - c. *I don't worry. It's stress that kills you. I don't care about anything or anyone.*
7. Who got married on his 80th birthday?
 - a. *Nelson Mandela*
 - b. *Frank Sinatra*
 - c. *Woody Allen*
8. Who was given a concert at Wembley Stadium as a present for their 70th birthday?
 - a. *Nelson Mandela*
 - b. *Frank Sinatra*
 - c. *Margaret Thatcher*
9. Where was Nancy Astor when she said, 'Is it my birthday or am I dying?'
 - a. *on her deathbed*
 - b. *on the moon*
 - c. *in the Houses of Parliament in London*
10. If you want to be president of the United States, in which month is it best to be born?
 - a. *March*
 - b. *June*
 - c. *October*
11. Who gave the most expensive birthday party ever?
 - a. *pop star Elton John*
 - b. *movie star and politician Arnold Schwarzenegger*
 - c. *publisher Malcolm Forbes*
12. Which of the following should you not write on a birthday card?
 - a. *Many Happy Returns*
 - b. *Merry Christmas*
 - c. *Happy Birthday*

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Exercise 3: Birthday discussion

Look at the twenty questions below. Choose some to ask and answer with your partner. When you have finished, discuss your answers with the rest of the class.

1. How are birthdays celebrated in your country?
2. What are some birthday traditions you know of from other countries?
3. How do you like to celebrate your birthday?
4. What is your best birthday memory?
5. What is your worst birthday memory?
6. Have you ever had a surprise birthday party for yourself or someone else?
7. What is the best birthday gift you have ever received?
8. What is the worst birthday gift you have ever received?
9. What are some things you like to do for your birthday?
10. When is your birthday?
11. Did your parents give you birthday parties when you were a child?
12. In your opinion, what is the best time of year to have a birthday?
13. What do you think is the best age?
14. Do you like going to work on your birthday?
15. Did you like going to school on your birthday when you were a child?
16. Whose birthday do you always remember?
17. What is the best birthday gift you have ever received?
18. What is the best birthday gift you have ever given?
19. What is the worst birthday gift you have ever received?
20. What is the worst birthday gift you have ever given?

