

# CELEBRATIONS

## Cinco de Mayo (the fifth of May)

### 1. Warmer

**a. Write ten things that you associate with Mexico and Mexican culture.**

**b. Do an online image search with the words: Cinco de Mayo.**

**Do any of the images you see show the things that you connected with Mexico and its culture?**

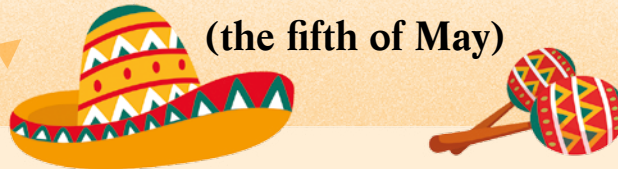
### 2. Key words and expressions

**Find the words and two-word phrases in the article that match the definitions below.**

1. the act of recreating a past or historical event (para 1) \_\_\_\_\_
2. the fact of winning a battle (para 2) \_\_\_\_\_
3. when you do not have enough of what you need or want (para 2) \_\_\_\_\_
4. when you have a lot of weapons – especially guns (para 2) \_\_\_\_\_
5. soldiers, especially in large numbers (para 2) \_\_\_\_\_
6. the art, buildings, traditions and beliefs that a group of people consider to be important to their history and culture (para 3) \_\_\_\_\_
7. companies that bring goods into a country in order to sell them and make money (para 3) \_\_\_\_\_
8. use a situation or opportunity to get what you want (para 3) \_\_\_\_\_
9. used for saying that you are not certain whether what you are saying is completely true (para 3) \_\_\_\_\_
10. large companies that pay money to support an event as a way to advertise their products (para 3) \_\_\_\_\_
11. relating to selling goods and making a lot of money (para 3) \_\_\_\_\_
12. comes from (para 4) \_\_\_\_\_

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(the fifth of May)



- 1** Cinco de Mayo festivities mostly take place in the US, in particular in cities in south-western states that have large Mexican-American populations such as Los Angeles, San Antonio, Phoenix, Albuquerque, Denver and El Paso. The fifth of May is not, as many people mistakenly believe, Independence Day in Mexico. That is on 16<sup>th</sup> September and is a national holiday in Mexico. Cinco de Mayo is not a national holiday in Mexico, nor in the US. In fact, apart from in the city of Puebla which stages a re-enactment of the battle, it's hardly celebrated in Mexico at all. It is primarily a celebration of Mexican culture and heritage and a time for music, dancing, partying and fiestas in the United States which has no other major celebrations in the month of May.
- 2** Despite this, the origins of Cinco de Mayo go back to the unlikely victory over France in the Battle of Puebla on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 1862 when a group of 2000 loyal, poorly-supplied Mexicans, gathered from all over the country, defeated 6000 heavily-armed French troops during the second Franco-Mexican War (1861–1867). This became a symbolic victory for the Mexican government and greatly strengthened the resistance movement within Mexico.
- 3** In the 1960s, at the time of the Civil Rights Movement in the US, Mexican-American activists started to use the fifth of May as a day to demonstrate pride in their Mexican heritage. In the late 1980s, importers of Mexican beers such as Modelo and Corona took advantage of this and introduced marketing campaigns that have been so successful that Americans now reportedly buy as much beer for Cinco de Mayo celebrations as they do to watch the Super Bowl or to celebrate St. Patrick's day. Many large Cinco de Mayo festivities have corporate sponsors and the celebration has become increasingly commercial. So much so, that it is sometimes criticised as being a 'fake holiday' created by drinks companies.
- 4** Whether it involves beer, margaritas and tequila or not, most people in the US see Cinco de Mayo as a day to celebrate all things Mexican: the culture, the traditions and the achievements of people with a Mexican background who live in the US and have achieved fame, fortune and success. Schools, especially in the southern US states, use it as a fun opportunity to teach their pupils about their immediate neighbours from the south. There are parades, street parties, festive dress, mariachi music and folk dancing, and, of course, Mexican food such as tacos, tortillas, guacamole and mole poblano – a thick sauce made from green chili peppers and chocolate and usually served over chicken – a dish that originates in Puebla in Mexico.

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### 3. Find the information

Are the sentences true or false according to the information in the text?

Correct any that are false providing as much information as you can.

1. Cinco de Mayo celebrates Mexican independence from the French in 1862.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The festival is celebrated more widely in the United States than in Mexico.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. It is a day to celebrate the culture, people and food that are connected to Mexico.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The first regular Cinco de Mayo celebrations in the US started to take place in the 1980s.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. In the past 30 years, it has become more and more commercialised due to Mexican fast food companies like Taco Bell sponsoring parades and fiestas. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Schools in the southern US states refuse to include Cinco de Mayo into their lessons as it's not an American festival. \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Using the key words and phrases

a. Use some of the key words and phrases to complete these sentences.

1. The bank robber was \_\_\_\_\_ so the cashier gave him everything he wanted.
2. Despite not winning any awards, the film was a huge \_\_\_\_\_ success and made lots of money.
3. The team trained hard for many months to achieve that \_\_\_\_\_ over their biggest rivals.
4. They are the main \_\_\_\_\_ of bananas into the country.
5. A huge 4-day \_\_\_\_\_ of the American Civil War takes place most years in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.
6. If the situation gets any worse, the president has promised to send in \_\_\_\_\_ to take control.

b. Use any of the key words and phrases - the ones that you think will be most useful for you - in a further 6 sentences of your own.

\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

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Worksheet

### 5. Quiz

**In pairs or small groups, create a multiple-choice quiz about Mexico for the other students to do.**

**Write 8–10 questions like the example below about the country, the people, its history, its sights, landscape and wildlife, the food, the culture, etc.**

*E.g.*

*What are the main colours on the Mexican flag?*

- a. Red, white and blue.*
- b. Green, white and red.*
- c. Orange, black and green.*