

## 8.1

**TYPE OF ACTIVITY**

Reading and information exchange

**LEVEL**

Elementary to Pre-intermediate

**TIME**

40–50 minutes

**AIMS**

To explore a range of British celebrations

**VOCABULARY**

adult, bonfire, candle, card, celebrate, decorate, firework, fool, guy, joke, parade, pumpkin

**PREPARATION**

One copy of the questionnaire for each learner. One set of reading cards per group of six learners. One photocopy of the worksheet for each learner as a handout.

# British celebrations

**Warmer**

Ask learners if they know the names of any British celebrations. Prompt them with images of celebrations for learners to identify, e.g. Guy Fawkes' night, Valentine's Day, Christmas. Alternatively, play 'draw the man' or 'hangman' with words associated with celebration, e.g. *festival, holiday*. Learners guess the letters of the word. For each incorrect letter, draw a section of a stick man up to nine strokes.

Tell learners they're going to read about some famous British celebrations. Give out one copy of the questionnaire to each learner and focus on the headings. Ask learners what questions they need to ask to get the correct information. *What's the name of the celebration? What's the date? What do people do on this day?* Drill the pronunciation of questions. There are two ways to deliver the next stage.

**Option 1: small group information exchange (suitable for stronger learners)**

Give out one set of cards to groups of six learners. Each reads their own card and fills in the information about their own celebration on their questionnaire. Learners then ask each other questions to complete the rest of the chart. Go over the answers with the class and discuss any points of interest.

**Option 2: pair work information search (suitable for weaker learners)**

Put enlarged photocopies of each information card onto separate tables or pin them round the room. Tell learners they are going to read about some popular celebrations. Learners work in pairs and walk round the room to complete their questionnaires. Go over the answers with the class. With smaller groups, do this as a class, looking at each celebration card, checking answers and discussing any points of interest.

**Answers**

<b>1</b>	New Year's Day	1 January	People visit family and friends, have parties and relax.
<b>2</b>	May Day	1 May	Fairs to celebrate the beginning of summer. Maypole dance.
<b>3</b>	Mother's Day	March or April (fourth Sunday in Lent)	People give cards, presents or flowers to their mothers.
<b>4</b>	April Fool's Day	1 April	Children and adults play silly jokes on people and say <i>April fool!</i> to anyone who falls for the joke. Newspapers traditionally publish false stories and readers try to find them.
<b>5</b>	Hallowe'en	31 October	People dress in ghostly clothes and have parties.
<b>6</b>	Guy Fawkes' Night	5 November	People light bonfires, burn 'Guys' and watch fireworks.

Finally, if you have images of the celebrations, learners match them with the activity cards. Find out what learners think about these customs and if there are any surprises. Discuss and compare any similarities with the learners' own customs from their own countries, or religious or ethnic group.

**Extension**

The class make a timeline following the British festival year, adding further celebrations and significant days in the calendar, e.g. historic days (Armistice Day on 11th November; the Queen's official birthday; the Lord Mayor's show; The Edinburgh Military Tattoo); religious celebrations (see Unit 8.2); sports events (London Marathon, the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race) and about other popular celebrations, e.g. Burns Night; St Patrick's Day; Notting Hill Carnival; Chinese New Year). Learners can do more research into any of these and/or develop their wall chart/book/blog.

1

New Year's Day is on 1st January. It is a national holiday and people often visit their family or friends or just relax. Lots of people also go to parties on the evening of 31st December, known as Hogmanay, and sing a famous song about friendship called *Auld Lang Syne*. There are many street celebrations and house parties.



2

1st May is called May Day. It's a national holiday to celebrate the beginning of spring and summer. It was firstly a pagan festival – now there are fairs and people, usually children, dance round a flowery Maypole. People have celebrated May Day for over 2,000 years.



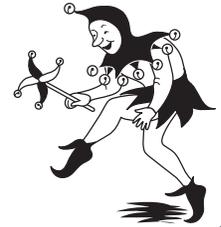
3

People celebrate Mother's Day in March or April. This falls on the 4th Sunday in Lent, a time just before Easter. On this day people give their mother a card and a present, or flowers. Sometimes they have Sunday lunch together.



4

In Britain there is a funny celebration called April Fool's Day. This is on 1st April and children and adults play silly jokes on each other. For example, the TV may broadcast a funny but untrue story. They can only play these tricks before twelve o'clock midday.



5

Hallowe'en is a ghostly night. People dress in strange clothes and go to Hallowe'en parties in the evening. People also decorate their houses with pumpkins, lit with candles and children go 'trick or treating'. This celebration is on 31st October.



6

On 5th November, people remember the night when a man put a bomb under Parliament in 1604. He was called Guido Fawkes. Bonfire night is also called Guy Fawkes' Night. In the evening people light big bonfires, burn 'Guys', have some food and watch the fireworks.



**British celebrations questionnaire**

Write the information about your celebration in the correct box below. Ask others questions about their celebration. Write their answers below.

Celebration	Date	What people do on this day
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		