

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*You have come across a web article about important holidays around the world. Read the article.*

**Text 1 Web article**



## Celebrations galore:

① What would you say is the festival of each year? Depending on where in the world you are, the answer can be very different. Take a look at these picks from different cultures around the year.

### Songkran, the Thai New Year

5 ② This joyous occasion lasts from 13 to 15 April every year. 'Songkran' means 'passing' in Thai. It used to mark the passing of a year.

③ These days, we know it as the Water Festival. People pour water over elders' hands to show  
10 respect and give good wishes. Meanwhile, locals and foreigners alike have a whale of a time throwing and spraying water at each other on the street. Thai people believe pouring water washes off the previous year's misfortune and promises a fresh start to the new year.



### 15 Midsummer, the Summer Solstice

④ The summer solstice is the day of the year with the most daylight. If you're very far north or south, that's almost 24 hours of sunlight!

⑤ For people in Scandinavia, these endless warm  
20 hours are a welcome break from the long dark winter. During Midsummer in late June, people in Sweden sing and dance around a maypole, a tall wooden pole decorated with greenery.



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## Festivals around the globe:

### Hanukkah, the 'Festival of Lights'

25 ⑥ People often call this eight-day holiday 'Jewish Christmas' as it falls between late November and late December.

⑦ Hanukkah celebrates Jewish people's recovery of a temple from Greek rulers in 165 BC. The Jews  
30 wanted to light candles in the temple, but only found one flask of pure olive oil for this customary act. It was supposed to burn out in one day, but managed to last for eight!

⑧ Nowadays, Jewish communities celebrate this  
35 'miracle of the oil' by lighting eight candles. Hanukkah foods also relate to oil, including deep-fried recipes like *latke*—potato pancakes—and *sufganiyah*—jelly-filled doughnuts.



### Eid al-Fitr, the 'Breaking of the Fast'

40 ⑨ This is one of two annual global Muslim festivals. It marks the end of Ramadan, a spiritual month when Muslims avoid eating in daytime. Eid al-Fitr is a three-day celebration of prayer, exchanging presents and huge delicious feasts.

45 ⑩ The main themes of Eid al-Fitr are giving thanks, showing happiness and forgiveness. It is also a time of thoughtfulness, as people give generously to charities and the poor.



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**Comprehension 1** *Your parents are asking you about festivals around the world. Answer their questions using information from the web article. For multiple-choice questions, choose the best answer and blacken ONE circle only.*

1 What does 'these picks' refer to in line 2?

\_\_\_\_\_

2 Why do Thai people pour water at Songkran? Give TWO reasons.

i) \_\_\_\_\_

ii) \_\_\_\_\_

3 Find words or phrases in paragraphs 2 and 3 which show that Songkran is a happy experience.

i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_

4 According to paragraphs 4 and 5, are the following statements **True (T)**, **False (F)** or **Not Given (NG)**?

Statements	T	F	NG
i) Midsummer happens on 5 June.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ii) In Scandinavia, night-time is very short in June.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
iii) People in Norway sing and dance around maypoles during Midsummer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5 What major festival is Hanukkah close to?

A Chinese New Year

B Christmas

C Easter

D Mid-Autumn Festival

A B C D

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

6 Why do you think Jewish people light eight candles for Hanukkah?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7 How do Hanukkah foods 'relate to oil' (line 36)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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8 Why is Eid al-Fitr called the 'Breaking of the Fast' (line 39)?

A It takes place in the morning.

B It is an occasion for exchanging presents.

C It is a three-day celebration.

D It marks the end of Ramadan.

A B C D

○ ○ ○ ○

9 Which of the following might people do during Eid al-Fitr? Tick (✓) all that apply.

☐ forgive someone else's mistakes

☐ give money to homeless people

☐ wish people a happy new year

☐ stop eating for a month

☐ eat a large meal

☐ stay awake from sunset to sunrise

10 Write the correct holiday or festival next to each speech bubble.

Here's to a good year ahead!

i) \_\_\_\_\_

It can be difficult, not eating for ten hours, but you get used to it over time.

iii) \_\_\_\_\_

There's nothing quite like singing and dancing in the sun!

ii) \_\_\_\_\_

We usually light an extra candle to 'watch over' the other ones.

iv) \_\_\_\_\_

11 Which of the following appear in the web article for all four festivals? Tick (✓) all that apply.

☐ a different name for the festival

☐ story behind the festival

☐ festival practices

☐ time of the festival

12 Complete the following passage using the correct form of words from Text 1. Use ONE word to complete each blank.

Some festivals happen for (i) \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 9) reasons, having to do with people's beliefs in things like avoiding disasters or washing away (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 3). However, many festivals mark real events. Everything usually starts with an event so difficult to understand that people see it as a (iii) \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 8). People repeat the same actions or celebrations until they become (iv) \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 7) behaviour—things that people do out of habit or tradition.