

Pearson ELT

Pancake Day Lesson with Teacher's notes

1.

a. Read the text below.

In Britain, we always eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday but do you know why? The Tuesday before Ash Wednesday is the start of the Christian period of Lent. It is a religious holiday. Christians believe Jesus spent forty days and forty nights in the desert before his crucifixion. He had no food and only a little water. This is why in the past, forty days before Easter, Christians ate everything they had in their pantries (store cupboards) like flour and eggs to make pancakes. Then, they didn't eat these luxury foods again until Easter Sunday. British people still follow this tradition of making pancakes on Shrove Tuesday but some other things have changed. Eggs and flour are seen as basic food ingredients nowadays so people don't stop eating them for forty days. Instead, some people choose their favourite food like chocolate or pizza and decide to stop eating it for forty days, the whole period of Lent. It can be really difficult sometimes to live without your favourite food for more than one month.

b. Work in groups. Discuss these questions.

- a) When does Lent start?
- b) Why do you think Christians give up their favourite food during Lent?
- c) What favourite food do you/ would you give up for Lent?
- d) Do you make pancakes during Lent in your family?
- e) Is there any traditional food that you eat at this time of year?

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2.

In lots of countries people celebrate the start of Lent with a carnival. Write about how you celebrate carnival weekend in your town or city. You can use these sentences to help you:

- a) We make a themed float. A float is a lorry or a tractor that is decorated to look like a boat or a jungle for example.
- b) People wear costumes. Sometimes they wear masks and feathers too.
- c) We play loud music from a stereo on the float.
- d) There is a parade. People walk down the street singing and dancing.
- e) People eat sweets and cakes like doughnuts and candyfloss.



(image from: www.whitehavenandwesternlakeland.co.uk)

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Teachers's notes

- 1. This is a reading comprehension task but the follow on discussion questions should be done orally. Sample answers:**
 - a) On Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday.
 - b) It's a small sacrifice to thank Jesus for his suffering in the desert and then his ultimate sacrifice of dying on the cross.
 - c) Chocolate and cake.
 - d) Yes, we do/ No, we don't.
 - e) Fritelle, which are similar to sugared doughnuts.

- 2. Class discussion before starting activity: ask students what they know about Mardi Gras and how it is celebrated. In Italy, Venice is the Carnival city and in America it is New Orleans. In the UK carnival festivities are not common, we celebrate the event only on Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day) by making pancakes. This year Mardi Gras/ Shrove Tuesday is on February 17th.**

Before writing, put students into groups and ask them to share their Carnival experiences. The starting question could be : What do you do for Carnival?

Once the students have shared their ideas and you have done some subsequent class discussion, the students then have to complete the individual writing activity. You may wish to focus on a particular grammar point depending on the level of your students.

Present simple- Every year, I go to carnival.

Past simple- Last year, I went to Carnival in Venice.

Present perfect- I have been to Carnival in lots of different towns.