

Special days in Britain and America



READING

14 **K** Read the text. Are the sentences True (T) or False (F)?



HALLOWEEN

People in Britain and America celebrate Halloween on 31st October. They organise parties and children dress up as witches and ghosts. Then they go out into the streets with lanterns made of pumpkins, knock on people's doors and ask for money or sweets. 31st October is the day before the Christian feast of All Saints. Halloween means "All Hallows' Eve" in old English (the day before All Saints). It probably originated in Britain with the ancient Celtic tribes to celebrate the passing from one season to another.

These people believed that the spirits of the dead wanted to return to the world of the living between the months of October and November.

They dressed up as ghosts to discourage these spirits from returning to the world of the living. When the Romans came to Britain, they decided to keep Halloween. Irish immigrants brought Halloween to America, where it is very popular.

dress up = travestirsi
ghosts = fantasmi
pumpkins = zucche
knock = bussare
the dead = i morti
the living = i viventi

APRIL FOOL'S DAY

Every year on 1st April people play jokes on each other.

When the "victim" discovers the joke, the other person shouts "April Fool!".

One of the funniest April Fool jokes happened on British television in the 1950s. On 1st April a very serious programme called "Panorama" showed a documentary on the Italian spaghetti harvest. It showed people picking the spaghetti from spaghetti trees!

play jokes = fare scherzi
shouts = grida
funniest = il più divertente
pick = raccogliere
harvest = raccolto



GUY FAWKES DAY

Guy Fawkes Day is on 5th November. On that day people in Britain remember the capture and death of Guy Fawkes. Guy Fawkes was a Catholic who tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament in London in 1605. At that time England was a Protestant country and religious conflict was a serious problem in Britain and in Europe. The plan failed and the king's men captured and executed Guy Fawkes. Children make a "Guy" from old clothes and build a bonfire. They ask people for money for the "Guy" and they use this money to buy fireworks. In the evening they light the bonfire with the Guy on the top and they have fireworks.

blow up = far saltare in aria
execute = giustiziare
bonfire = falò
fireworks = fuochi d'artificio



THANKSGIVING DAY

Another national holiday for Americans is Thanksgiving Day, which takes place on the fourth Thursday of November.

On this day Americans have a big meal of roast turkey and vegetables with the whole family. The first Thanksgiving was in 1621 when the Pilgrim Fathers, who emigrated from England, gave thanks to God for the good harvest of that year. They also invited their Indian neighbours to have dinner with them.



1. Halloween means "the day before All Saints' Day".
2. With the Romans' arrival in Britain, British people abandoned the Halloween tradition.
3. Guy Fawkes was a conspirator who planned to destroy the Houses of Parliament.
4. On 1st April, British people eat Italian spaghetti.
5. The Pilgrim Fathers had their first thanksgiving feast to thank the Indians who helped them.

T	F
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READING AND WRITING



15 K You receive this letter from your English friend, Gena. Read it and use it as a model to write her a letter about your Italian Christmas.

holly = agrifoglio
mistletoe = vischio
tinsel = fili dorati
cracker = cilindro di cartone che esplode tirando un cordoncino, liberando un piccolo regalo
dried fruit = frutta secca
board games = giochi di società



Dear...,
 Christmas is my favourite time of year. We start our "Christmas activities" by sending Christmas cards to relatives and friends (I love receiving Christmas e-cards from my friends) and by decorating our house with holly and mistletoe.
 A week before I go with my dad to buy a real tree and we decorate it with lights and tinsel.
 On Christmas Eve we put our stockings at the foot of our beds.
 On Christmas morning we find them filled with small presents.
 The big presents are under the tree.
 Then we go to church to celebrate the birth of Christ. On our way home we usually stop to listen to the traditional carols which groups of children or adults sing in the streets.
 At 1 o'clock we sit down to Christmas lunch. First we pull crackers and then we start to eat roast turkey with vegetables.
 For dessert we have Christmas pudding made with dried fruit.
 In the afternoon we always watch the Queen's speech on TV and we play board games.
 In England we also celebrate Boxing Day on 26th December.
 Do you know why we call it Boxing Day? The name originates from the time when rich people put presents in boxes and gave them to the poor.
 How do you celebrate your Christmas?
 Love,
 Gena



LISTENING

16 (2.07) Thanksgiving Day is coming. Preparations can take a long time and people, especially women, are starting to worry about the dinner menu. Listen to a chef's suggestions on a radio programme and complete the three Thanksgiving menus.

	STARTER	MAIN COURSE	DESSERT
Menu 1			
Menu 2			
Menu 3			

SPOKEN INTERACTION

17 K Work with a classmate. Ask and answer questions about your Christmas. Use the prompts below.

- Send Christmas cards?
- Get a Christmas tree?
- Have special decorations?
- Give and get presents?
- Go to church?
- Spend time with relatives or friends?
- Spend Christmas away from home?
- Have a big lunch?
- Play board games?
- Sing Christmas carols?

