

Cultural Festivals Around the World

COMPREHENSION • VOCABULARY • DISCUSSION

INTERACTIVE ONLINE TEST

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Reading Passage

Read the passage carefully. Each paragraph is labelled with a letter for easy reference.

- A** Cultural festivals are vibrant celebrations that showcase the traditions and heritage of different communities. One of the most famous festivals is Diwali, celebrated in India. This festival of lights occurs in October or November and lasts five days. People decorate their homes with colorful lights, exchange gifts, and enjoy delicious sweets. Fireworks light up the sky as families come together to celebrate victory over darkness. Another significant festival is Carnival, held in Brazil. This festival takes place in February or March and is known for its lively parades and samba music. Thousands of people dress in colorful costumes and dance through the streets, creating an atmosphere of joy and excitement.
- B** In Japan, the cherry blossom festival, or Hanami, welcomes spring. This celebration usually occurs in late March or early April when the cherry trees bloom. Families gather in parks to enjoy picnics under the blooming trees, appreciating the beauty of nature. In Spain, La Tomatina is a unique festival where participants throw tomatoes at each other. Held on the last Wednesday of August, this event attracts thousands of visitors who come to join in the fun. Each of these festivals highlights the unique culture and traditions of its country, inviting everyone to join in the celebration.

Vocabulary Glossary

Key words and phrases from the passage. Study them before attempting the exercise below.

WORD / PHRASE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
vibrant	full of energy and life	<i>The city was vibrant with music and dancing during the festival.</i>
heritage	the customs and traditions from past generations	<i>She learned about her family heritage from her grandparents.</i>
decorate	to make something look nice by adding things to it	<i>They decorate the house with lights for the holiday.</i>
delicious	tasting very good	<i>The cake was delicious, and everyone wanted more.</i>
atmosphere	the feeling or mood in a place	<i>The concert had a lively atmosphere with everyone singing along.</i>
bloom	when a flower opens up	<i>The flowers bloom in the spring, covering the fields with color.</i>
parades	events where people walk or march in a line to celebrate	<i>There were many parades during the national holiday.</i>
participants	people who take part in something	<i>The race had over 200 participants this year.</i>

Vocabulary Exercise — Fill in the Blank

Use one word or phrase from the glossary above to complete each sentence. Each item is used only once. Answers are on the final page.

1. The town center was _____ with music and laughter during the festival.
2. Every year, they learn about their cultural _____ through family stories.
3. Children love to _____ the Christmas tree with ornaments.
4. The bakery sells the most _____ pastries in town.
5. The music created a joyful _____ at the party.
6. In the garden, the roses _____ beautifully each year.

Comprehension Questions

These questions are different from the online practice test. Choose the best answer (A, B, C, or D). Answers and explanations are on the final page.

Question 1

What is a common feature of the festivals mentioned in the passage?

- A. They all involve dancing.
- B. They all take place in spring.
- C. They all include colorful lights.
- D. They all attract large numbers of people.

Question 2

Why do people celebrate Diwali according to the passage?

- A. To welcome spring.
- B. To enjoy music and dance.
- C. To celebrate victory over darkness.
- D. To throw tomatoes at each other.

Question 3

Which festival is associated with the blooming of cherry trees?

- A. Diwali
- B. Carnival
- C. Hanami
- D. La Tomatina

Question 4

What kind of music is associated with Carnival in Brazil?

- A. Classical
- B. Jazz
- C. Samba
- D. Rock

Question 5

What is unique about La Tomatina according to the passage?

- A. It involves lighting fireworks.
- B. It features tomato throwing.
- C. It celebrates the blooming of flowers.
- D. It takes place over five days.

Discussion & Writing Prompts

Each prompt references a specific detail from the passage above. Use for classroom discussion or a short written response (150–200 words).

1. The passage describes Diwali as a 'festival of lights' that includes fireworks and colorful decorations. How do these elements contribute to the celebration, and are there similar festivals in your country that use lights in a symbolic way?

2. According to the passage, Carnival in Brazil is known for its lively parades and samba music. What impact do you think such events have on the local economy and tourism in Brazil?

3. La Tomatina in Spain involves throwing tomatoes at each other, as described in the passage. What do you think are the cultural or social reasons behind such unique and playful festivals?

Answer Key

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Q1 D

Q2 C

Q3 C

Q4 C

Q5 B

VOCABULARY EXERCISE

FIB1 vibrant

FIB2 heritage

FIB3 decorate

FIB4 delicious

FIB5 atmosphere

FIB6 bloom

Comprehension Question Explanations

Why the correct answer is right — and why each wrong option is incorrect.

1. What is a common feature of the festivals mentioned in the passage?

✓ D — They all attract large numbers of people. The passage mentions that each festival attracts thousands of visitors.

✗ A — They all involve dancing. Only some of the festivals involve dancing, like Carnival.

✗ B — They all take place in spring. The festivals occur in different seasons, not just spring.

✗ C — They all include colorful lights. Only Diwali specifically mentions colorful lights.

2. Why do people celebrate Diwali according to the passage?

✓ C — To celebrate victory over darkness. The passage states that Diwali celebrates victory over darkness.

✗ A — To welcome spring. Diwali is not associated with spring; that's Hanami.

✗ B — To enjoy music and dance. Dance is more associated with Carnival in the passage.

✗ D — To throw tomatoes at each other. Throwing tomatoes is part of La Tomatina, not Diwali.

3. Which festival is associated with the blooming of cherry trees?

✓ C — Hanami Hanami is the festival mentioned with cherry trees blooming.

✗ A — Diwali Diwali is the festival of lights, not related to cherry trees.

✗ B — Carnival Carnival is known for samba music and parades, not cherry trees.

✗ D — La Tomatina La Tomatina is about throwing tomatoes, not cherry trees.

4. What kind of music is associated with Carnival in Brazil?

✓ C — Samba The passage states that samba music is known at Carnival.

✗ A — Classical Classical music is not mentioned in the context of Carnival.

✗ B — Jazz Jazz is not mentioned in the passage for Carnival.

✗ D — Rock Rock music is not mentioned in the passage for Carnival.

5. What is unique about La Tomatina according to the passage?

✓ **B — It features tomato throwing.**

The passage describes La Tomatina as a festival where people throw tomatoes.

✗ **A — It involves lighting fireworks.**

Fireworks are associated with Diwali, not La Tomatina.

✗ **C — It celebrates the blooming of flowers.**

Blooming flowers are part of Hanami, not La Tomatina.

✗ **D — It takes place over five days.**

La Tomatina is a one-day event, not five days.

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