

# Victoria Day



## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. When does the beginning of summer happen in your country?
2. What do you usually do on long weekends?
3. Are you interested in royal families?  
Does your country have a monarch?

### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.  
Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| ___ 1. annually       | a) a small layer of snow on a surface when the temperature is below freezing |
| ___ 2. reign          | b) in rapid numbers  |
| ___ 3. monarch        | c) to happen at the same time  |
| ___ 4. cottage        | d) a person who inherits a rank or property                                  |
| ___ 5. heir           | e) a summer vacation home  |
| ___ 6. exponentially  | f) with full strength  |
| ___ 7. snowbird       | g) every year  |
| ___ 8. frost          | h) something that is named after a person or place                           |
| ___ 9. namesake       | i) to be in power  |
| ___ 10. out of hand   | j) a person who goes south to escape winter weather                          |
| ___ 11. in full force | k) out of control  |
| ___ 12. coincide      | l) a royal head of state (not elected)                                       |



## Reading

1. Victoria Day is a Canadian public holiday that celebrates Queen Victoria. The holiday takes place **annually** on the last Monday before May 25. Queen Victoria's birthday was on May 24, 1819. Victoria Day has been celebrated in Canada since 1845.
2. Queen Victoria **reigned** in Britain from 1837 until 1901, during what is known as "the Victorian Era." This was the longest reign of a female **monarch** in history. Victoria was the daughter of Prince Edward, whose father was the reigning king, George III. She inherited the throne at age 18 when her uncle, William IV, died. King William, like her other uncles, had no living **heirs**. A few years later, Victoria married her first cousin, Albert. The couple had nine children together. When Prince Albert died in 1861, the Queen became very depressed. She wore mainly black for the rest of her life.
3. The Victoria Day long weekend unofficially marks the beginning of summer in Canada. Canada's population increases **exponentially** at this time of year because retired **snowbirds** return home. Many Canadians wait until this weekend to open their **cottages** and set up patio furniture and barbecues. This is the busiest time for garden shops and nurseries. While it may still be cool, the risk of **frost** is usually over. Regardless of the weather, campgrounds and other outdoor facilities often open this weekend. Victoria Day falls on the weekend before American Memorial Day.
4. Victoria Day celebrations take place across Canada, with fireworks, parades, concerts, and outdoor festivals. Firework displays typically take place on Monday night at the end of the long weekend. On the West Coast, many Canadians flock to the queen's **namesake** city: Victoria, British Columbia. In Ontario, the May long weekend is also known as "May Two-Four." A "two-four" is slang for a 24-pack of beer. To prevent parties from getting **out of hand**, many campsites do not allow alcohol on this long weekend. The police are typically out **in full force** on Canadian highways to reduce drinking and driving. In Ottawa, the May long weekend often **coincides** with the final weekend of the Canadian Tulip Festival. Each spring, the capital of Canada has over three million tulips in bloom. It is the largest tulip festival in the world, and it attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors.
5. Some Canadians feel that it is time to give up the British monarchy. Others are more interested in the monarchy than ever before, thanks to Prince William and Duchess Kate. Despite disagreements about the role of the monarchy, Canadians do not want to give up their May long weekend! After a long Canadian winter, the Victoria Day weekend is often the most memorable weekend of the year.



# Comprehension

Practise asking and answering the following questions with your partner.  
Then write the answers below. Use full sentences.

1. When is Victoria Day celebrated?

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2. When did Queen Victoria reign?

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3. How did Queen Victoria inherit the throne?

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4. What does Victoria Day  
“unofficially” mark in Canada?

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5. Why does Canada’s population increase in May?

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6. What important event ends in  
Ottawa after the May long weekend?

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7. What do Canadians often do on Victoria Day?

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8. What is a “two-four”?

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9. What do some campsites  
ban on Victoria Day weekend?

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10. Why are some Canadians more interested in  
the monarchy now than they were in the past?

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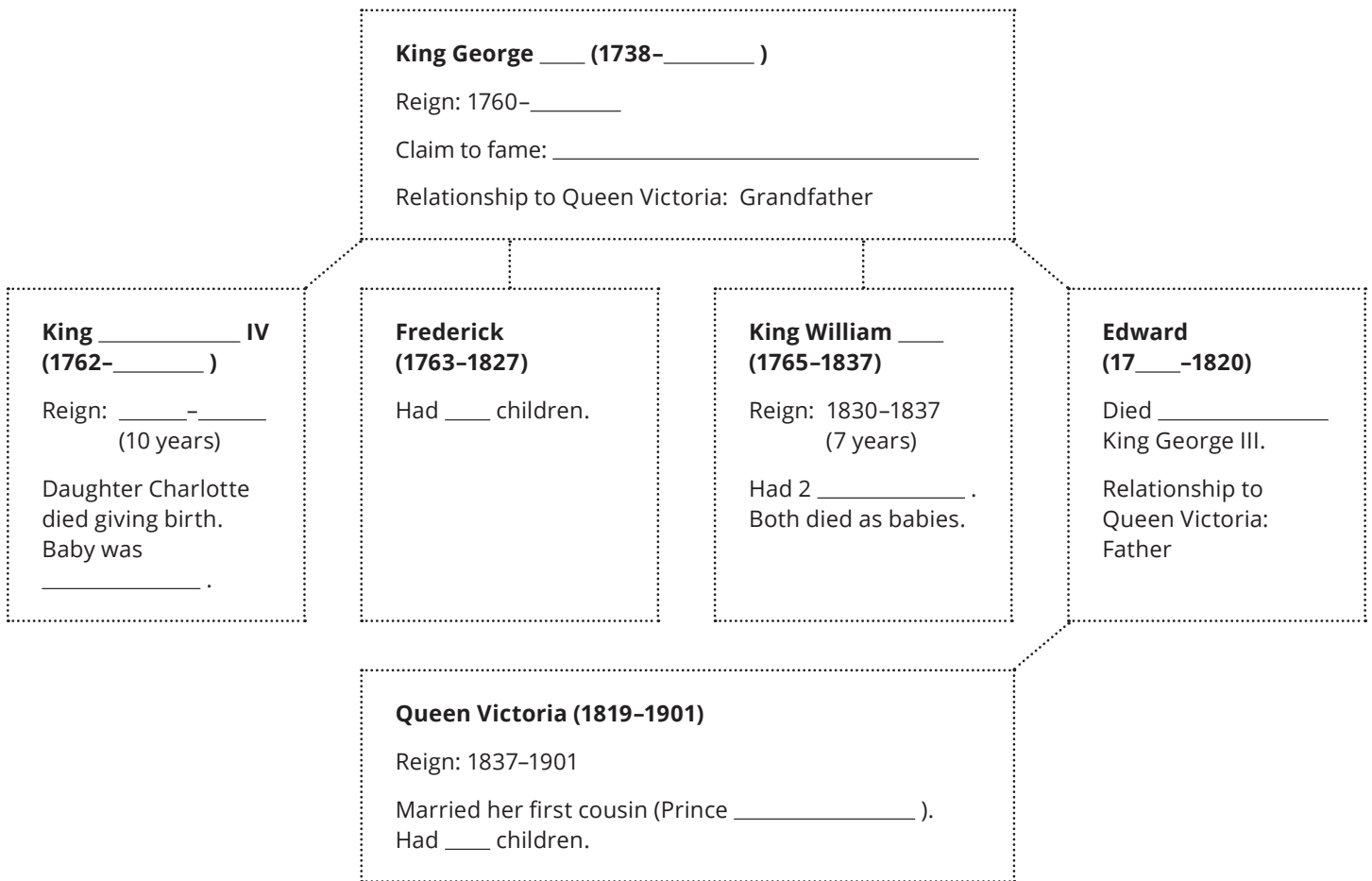


## Pair Work (Student A)

You and your partner each have part of a family tree showing how Victoria became a queen. You have *some* of the same information. Describe your family tree to your partner. Spell out names that your partner doesn't know how to write. Try to complete the family tree and answer the question at the bottom of the page. (Don't look at each other's paper.)

### Example Questions to Ask Your Partner

- How long did King George IV reign?
- How many children did King George's second son have?
- What was the name of Queen Victoria's husband?



Why did Edward's child become the queen instead of his older brothers' children?

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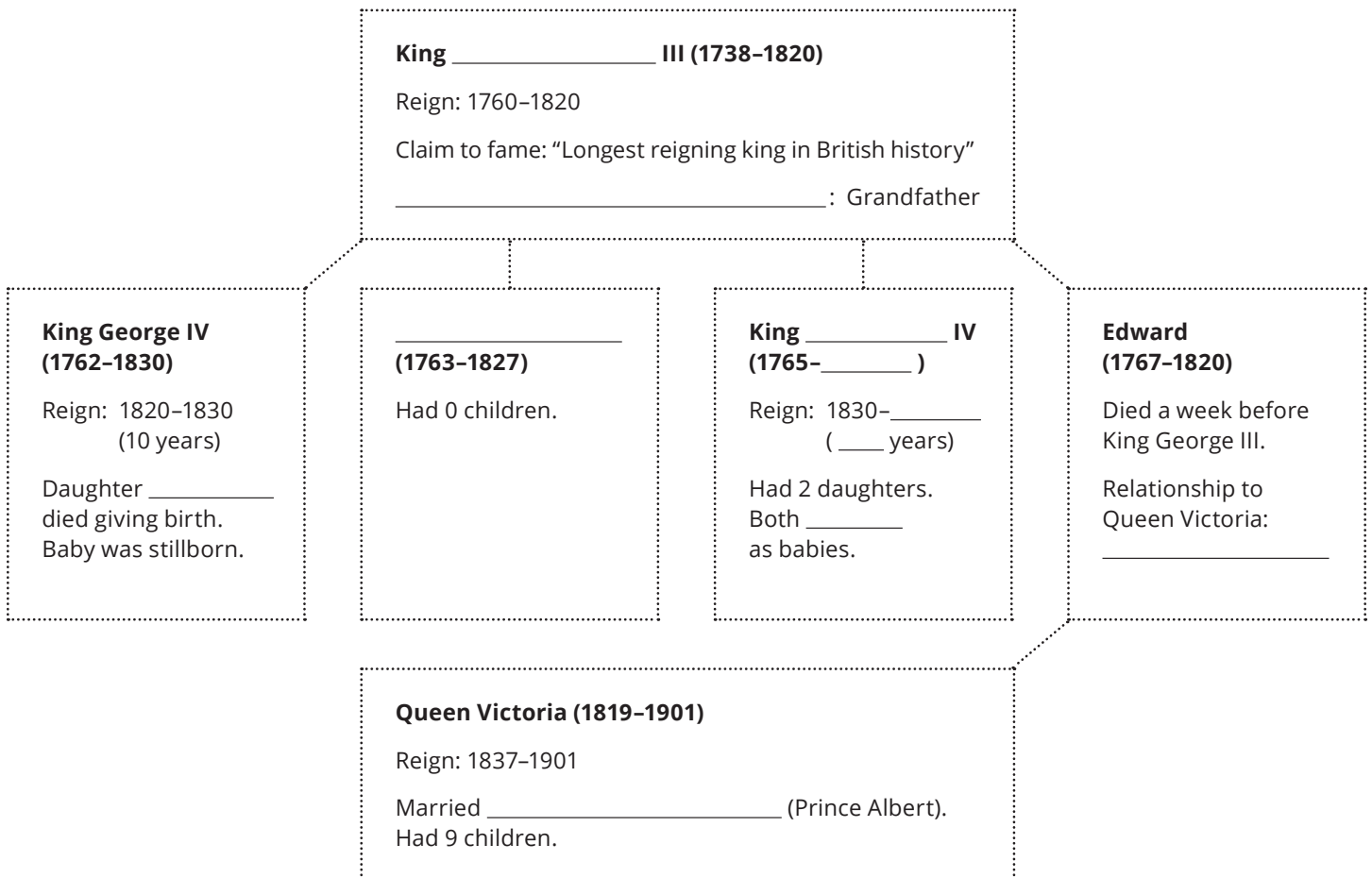


## Pair Work (Student B)

You and your partner each have part of a family tree showing how Victoria became a queen. You have *some* of the same information. Describe your family tree to your partner. Spell out names that your partner doesn't know how to write. Try to complete the family tree and answer the question at the bottom of the page. (Don't look at each other's paper.)

### Example Questions to Ask Your Partner

- How long did King George IV reign?
- How many children did King George's second son have?
- What was the name of Queen Victoria's husband?



Why did Edward's child become the queen instead of his older brothers' children?

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# Group Activity

## FAMOUS VICTORIAS

Work in a small group or as a class.

The name "Victoria" comes from the word "victor" or "conqueror." It was not a popular name when Queen Victoria was born, but has been on **Top 100 Baby Names** lists for many years. The short form of Victoria is "Vicky" or "Vicki." Some Victorias also *go by the name* "Tori." The male version of the name is "Victor." Work with a partner or small group. Try to place the correct words under each famous Victoria. Some words will appear under more than one Victoria.

Victoria Beckham	Victoria Spelling	Queen Victoria
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British</li> </ul>

- monarch
- singer-songwriter
- married her first cousin
- born in the 1800s
- born in the 1900s
- American
- actress

- married an athlete
- fashion designer
- nicknamed "Posh"
- goes by "Tori"
- member of the "Spice Girls"
- British
- starred in "Beverly Hills 90210"

- wealthy
- nicknamed "Grandmother of Europe"
- had nine children
- starred in a reality show



# Listening

 <http://blog.esllibrary.com/2012/05/16/podcast-victoria-day/>

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

1. Victoria Day is a Canadian public holiday that celebrates Queen Victoria. The holiday takes place \_\_\_\_\_ on the last Monday before May 25. Queen Victoria's birthday was on May 24, 1819. Victoria Day has been celebrated in Canada since \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. Queen Victoria \_\_\_\_\_ in Britain from 1837 until 1901, during what is known as "the Victorian Era." This was the longest reign of a female \_\_\_\_\_ in history. Victoria was the daughter of Prince Edward, whose father was the reigning king, George III. She inherited the throne at age 18 when her uncle, William IV, died. King William, like her other uncles, had no living \_\_\_\_\_. A few years later, Victoria married her first cousin, Albert. The couple had nine children together. When Prince Albert died in 1861, the Queen became very depressed. She wore mainly black for the rest of her life.
3. The Victoria Day long weekend unofficially marks the beginning of summer in Canada. Canada's population increases \_\_\_\_\_ at this time of year because retired \_\_\_\_\_ return home. Many Canadians wait until this weekend to open their \_\_\_\_\_ and set up patio furniture and barbecues. This is the busiest time for garden shops and nurseries. While it may still be cool, the risk of \_\_\_\_\_ is usually over. Regardless of the weather, campgrounds and other outdoor facilities often open this weekend. Victoria Day falls on the weekend before American Memorial Day.
4. Victoria Day celebrations take place across Canada, with fireworks, parades, concerts, and outdoor festivals. Firework displays typically take place on Monday night at the end of the long weekend. On the West Coast, many Canadians flock to the queen's \_\_\_\_\_ city: Victoria, British Columbia. In Ontario, the May long weekend is also known as "May Two-Four." A "two-four" is slang for a 24-pack of beer. To prevent parties from getting \_\_\_\_\_, many campsites do not allow alcohol on this long weekend. The police are typically out \_\_\_\_\_ on Canadian highways to reduce drinking and driving. In Ottawa, the May long weekend often \_\_\_\_\_ with the final weekend of the Canadian Tulip Festival. Each spring, the capital of Canada has over three million tulips in bloom. It is the largest tulip festival in the world, and it attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors.
5. Some Canadians feel that it is time to give up the British monarchy. Others are more interested in the monarchy than ever before, thanks to Prince William and Duchess Kate. Despite disagreements about the role of the \_\_\_\_\_, Canadians do not want to give up their May long weekend! After a long Canadian winter, the Victoria Day weekend is often the most \_\_\_\_\_ weekend of the year.





# Answer Key

**NOTE:**

These activities are designed for intermediate-level adult ESL learners, but they may also be suitable for junior and senior high school ESL students.

**LESSON DESCRIPTION:**

Students read about Victoria Day, a Canadian public holiday. Includes a comprehension check, a vocabulary review, a family tree information gap, and a comparison chart on three famous "Victorias."

**LEVEL:** Int

**TIME:** 2–3 hours

**TAGS:** holidays, Victoria Day, Canada, Canadian, British, names, family, family tree, monarchy, queen

## Pre-Reading

**A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS**

Discuss the questions as a class. Answers will vary.

**B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW**

- |      |      |      |      |       |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. g | 3. l | 5. d | 7. j | 9. h  | 11. f |
| 2. i | 4. e | 6. b | 8. a | 10. k | 12. c |

## Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 8. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

## Comprehension

- Victoria Day is celebrated on the last Monday in May before May 25.
- Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 to 1901.
- Queen Victoria inherited the throne because her father and his brothers were all dead. None of her uncles' children were living.
- Victoria Day "unofficially" marks the beginning of summer in Canada.
- Canada's population increases in May because the snowbirds return from their winter escapes.
- The tulip festival ends in Ottawa after the May long weekend.
- Canadians often go to parades, concerts, or outdoor festivals. They also often go camping this weekend.
- A "two-four" is a 24-pack of beer.
- Some campsites ban alcohol on Victoria Day weekend.
- Some Canadians are more interested in the monarchy now than they were in the past due to Prince William and Duchess Kate.

*(continued on the next page)*



# Answer Key cont.

## Vocabulary Review

### A. CHOOSE THE CLOSEST MEANING

1. a                    2. c                    3. a                    4. b                    5. c

### B. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

1. snowbirds                    3. annually                    5. in full force  
2. frost                    4. out of hand

## Pair Work

Divide students into pairs.

Give one student page 5 and the other page 6.

#### King George III (1738–1820)

Reign: 1760–1820

“Longest reigning

king in British history”

Grandfather of Queen Victoria

#### King George IV (1762–1830)

Reign: 1820–1830 (10 years)

Daughter Charlotte died giving birth. Baby was stillborn.

#### King William IV (1765–1837)

Reign: 1830–1837 (7 years)

Had 2 daughters.

Both died as babies.

#### Queen Victoria (1819–1901)

Reign: 1837–1901

Married her first

cousin (Prince Albert).

Had 9 children.

#### Frederick (1763–1827)

Had 0 children.

#### Edward (1767–1820)

Died a week before

King George III.

Father of Queen Victoria.

Edward’s child became the queen instead of his older brothers’ children because they all died as babies.

## Group Activity

Allow your students to do some research if they don’t know these Victorias. They can go online in a computer lab or use their mobile phones.

#### Victoria Beckham:

- born in the 1900s
- British
- singer-songwriter
- married an athlete
- member of the “Spice Girls”
- fashion designer
- wealthy
- starred in a reality show
- nicknamed “Posh”

#### Victoria Spelling:

- American
- born in the 1900s
- goes by “Tori”
- wealthy
- starred in “Beverly Hills 90210”
- actress
- starred in a reality show

#### Queen Victoria:

- monarch
- married her first cousin
- British
- wealthy
- nicknamed “Grandmother of Europe”
- had nine children
- born in the 1800s

## Listening

1. annually, 1845
2. reigned, monarch, heirs
3. exponentially, snowbirds, cottages, frost
4. namesake, out of hand, in full force, coincides
5. monarchy, memorable