

Easter

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What does Easter celebrate?
2. When does Easter take place?
3. What is Good Friday?
4. What symbols are associated with Easter?
5. What might you see at an Easter parade?



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. commemorate | a) a theme-based celebration or special event |
| ___ 2. holy | b) a baby rabbit |
| ___ 3. crucify | c) to speak to God |
| ___ 4. symbol | d) a baby sheep |
| ___ 5. miracle | e) early morning, sunrise, daybreak |
| ___ 6. resurrection | f) religious, spiritual, connected to God |
| ___ 7. pray | g) without hurrying |
| ___ 8. festival | h) a type of hat that ties under the chin, worn by women or children |
| ___ 9. pagan | i) coming to life after being dead |
| ___ 10. dawn | j) to honour the memory of someone or something |
| ___ 11. fertility | k) a festive march with music and colourful costumes |
| ___ 12. lamb | l) well liked |
| ___ 13. bonnet | m) to put to death by nailing to a cross |
| ___ 14. popular | n) the ability to produce babies |
| ___ 15. leisurely | o) a low, flat, decorated car used in parades |
| ___ 16. parade | p) a sign or object used to represent something else |
| ___ 17. float | q) a person from ancient times who did not believe in one God |
| ___ 18. bunny | r) an unbelievable event, an act of God |

Reading

1. Easter is the greatest **festival** of the Christian church. According to Christian beliefs, this religious holiday **commemorates** the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ, the son of God. It is celebrated on the first weekend after the first full moon that follows March 21. It can occur as early as March 22 or as late as April 25.
2. Although Easter Sunday is the most important celebration of the Christian church, Good Friday is also a very important day in the **holy** week of Easter. Good Friday marks the day that Christ was **crucified**, or nailed on a cross, until he died. Because Christ was killed on a cross, the cross has become the **symbol** of Christianity. Easter Sunday commemorates the **miracle** of Christ's resurrection three days after his death. Christians all over the world celebrate Easter by attending church services, **praying**, and spending time with family and close friends.
3. Although Easter is celebrated as a religious holiday, it also has a non-religious side. The arrival of spring had been celebrated all over the world long before Easter became a Christian holiday. In fact, Easter was originally a **pagan** festival. The word Easter comes from the name Eostre, the ancient Anglo-Saxon goddess of **dawn** and **fertility**. In ancient times, spring festivals were held each year to honour Eostre and to celebrate new life and the rebirth of nature. In many parts of the world, flowers and plants begin to reappear after the long winter and birds return to build their nests. Because the resurrection of Christ occurred in the early spring, the two celebrations have become closely tied together.
4. There are many symbols associated with the Easter season. **Lambs**, chicks, bunnies, and other baby animals symbolize the birth of new life. One of the most well-known symbols of Easter and springtime is the egg, which also represents new life. In modern times, chocolate Easter eggs and bunnies have become very **popular**. Another common symbol has been the Easter **bonnet**, which is a kind of hat. In past times, the Easter bonnet and other new clothes were worn to mark the end of the long, cold winter and the beginning of the fresh, new spring. A number of years ago, it was common to see families walking **leisurely** to and from church to show off their new clothes. The white lily, also a symbol of rebirth, is the traditional Easter flower. In many cultures, pastries such as hot cross buns are also an important part of Easter.
5. In many countries, Easter **parades** are common. Some parades are religious, with people carrying heavy crosses over long distances. Other Easter parades are just for fun. They celebrate the coming of spring with colourful **floats**, costumes, Easter bonnets, and of course, the Easter **bunny**.

Comprehension

Practise asking and answering the following questions with your partner.
Then write the answers below. Use your notebook if you need more room.

1. Is Easter a fixed date every year?

2. What does Easter commemorate in the Christian religion?

3. What do Christians do to celebrate Easter?

4. Who was Eostre?

5. Why are baby animals traditional symbols of Easter?

6. What did pagan festivals celebrate in ancient times?

7. What did many women wear in earlier times to mark the beginning of spring?

8. What is the traditional Easter flower?

9. What is one of the most well-known symbols of Easter?

10. What kind of eggs have become popular in modern times?

Vocabulary Review

Choose the correct words from the vocabulary on page 1 to complete the following sentences. You may have to change the form of the noun or verb.

1. It is very windy today. The baby needs to wear a _____ to protect her ears.
2. Easter Sunday commemorates the _____ of Jesus Christ.
3. A cross is the _____ of the Christian church.
4. There were many marching bands and beautiful _____ in the Easter parade.
5. Her son really wants a _____ as a pet. He promised to feed it carrots every day.
6. Coke is a very _____ drink all over the world.
7. He always goes to bed very early because he likes to get up at _____.
8. Every spring, we attend our city's tulip _____ and end up buying some bulbs for our garden.
9. It's a beautiful day today. Let's take a _____ walk through the park and look at all the beautiful spring flowers.
10. The rabbit is a sign of _____ because it produces a large number of babies.
11. When her cancer disappeared, everyone thought it was a _____.
12. Children usually like to watch a _____ if there are a lot of marching bands, music, and clowns.
13. When Robert's child got very sick, he went to church and _____ to God.
14. Good Friday _____ the day Jesus Christ was _____.
15. A church is a _____ place.

Group Work (Student A)

EASTER TRADITIONS

A. Sharing Information

Each person in your group has some information about a tradition or symbol of Easter. Share the information with the others in your group.

The Easter Bunny

1. The Easter bunny is not actually a modern invention. It had its origins in pre-Christian days.
2. Since pagan times, the rabbit has been a symbol of fertility because rabbits are one of the most fertile animals. They produce large litters of babies and have several litters in a season. The ancient goddess Eostre chose the rabbit as her sacred animal, so it became an important symbol in spring festivals.
3. Nowadays, in many Western countries, the Easter bunny has become a cute little rabbit that hides chocolate eggs for children on Easter. The origin of this tradition is not known, but some people say that it came from an old German book that was written in the 1600s. The book is a story of a little bunny that laid eggs and hid them in a garden.
4. The first edible bunnies were made in Germany in the 1800s. This custom was later brought to North America.

Group Work (Student B)

EASTER TRADITIONS

A. Sharing Information

Each person in your group has some information about a tradition or symbol of Easter. Share the information with the others in your group.

The Easter Egg

1. The most well-known symbol of Easter is the Easter egg. Throughout history, the egg has been a symbol of new life.
2. From ancient times through to the present, eggs have been painted, dyed, and decorated in bright colours to represent the sunlight and brightness of spring.
3. The old custom of exchanging eggs as gifts had been going on throughout the centuries long before Easter became a Christian holiday. In early times, eggs were often wrapped in gold leaf if you were wealthy. If you were poor, eggs could still be made beautiful and bright by boiling them with the leaves and petals of certain plants and flowers.
4. In addition to being exchanged as gifts, eggs have also been used in different games and contests in spring festivals down through the years. Egg tossing and egg rolling contests are popular in many countries.
5. Nowadays, an Easter egg hunt is a common activity associated with Easter. Children in many Western countries believe that the Easter bunny delivers chocolate and candy Easter eggs to their homes on Easter Sunday.

Group Work (Student C)

EASTER TRADITIONS

A. Sharing Information

Each person in your group has some information about a tradition or symbol of Easter. Share the information with the others in your group.

The Easter Basket

1. The Easter basket is a traditional symbol of the season. It originated from an old Christian custom that began many years ago. During the Easter season, people would fill baskets with bread, cheese, ham, and other food for their Easter dinner. They would take the baskets to church on Easter Sunday to be blessed by the priest.
2. This custom has changed over the years. Nowadays, Easter baskets are filled with chocolate eggs, candies, and little stuffed toys such as lambs and baby chicks. During the traditional Easter egg hunt, which takes place in many homes on Easter Sunday, children are given colourful Easter baskets to fill as they go around their houses searching for the eggs that the Easter bunny has hidden.
3. Easter baskets are usually decorated in the soft colours of spring such as pink, yellow, purple, and light blue.

Group Work cont.

B. Favourite Holidays

Complete the chart below by asking the members of your group questions about their favourite holidays.

Group Members			
favourite holiday			
time of year			
religious or secular			
symbols			
special customs			
traditional food			

Idioms & Expressions

A. Easter Vocabulary

Read over these idioms involving Easter vocabulary with a partner.

IDIOM OR EXPRESSION	DEFINITION
cross my heart and hope to die	to make a very strong promise to do something; this expression is often used by children
cross paths	to meet someone
cross that bridge when you come to it	to make a decision when it is necessary, but not before
egg someone on	to push someone to do something
have egg on your face	to look foolish, to be embarrassed
not put all your eggs in one basket	to not invest all your money in one company or all your energy or work in one thing
a nest egg	money that a person saves for retirement or for the future
walk on eggshells	to be in an uncomfortable situation where you feel that you have to be very careful, especially about what you say
have a bee in your bonnet	to be preoccupied or obsessed with something
wear or have on your Sunday best	to dress up in your nicest clothes

Idioms & Expressions cont.

B. "Eggspressions"

How do you like your eggs?

This list describes some popular ways to prepare them.

TYPE OF EGGS	PREPARATION
boiled eggs	the eggs are cooked in their shells in boiling water
fried eggs	the eggs are cooked without the shell, fried in a pan with a little oil or butter
sunny-side up	an egg that is fried in a pan on one side only, not turned; the yolk is very soft
once over lightly or easy-over	a fried egg that is cooked first on one side and then turned over in the pan and cooked very quickly on the other side.
poached eggs	the eggs are cooked without the shell in a little bit of boiling water
scrambled eggs	the eggs are beaten in a bowl with a little milk and seasonings, then poured into a frying pan and mixed while cooking
omelet	the eggs are beaten in a bowl with milk and seasonings, poured into a frying pan, and cooked on one side; then the other ingredients such as cheese, onions, mushrooms, etc. are added. The eggs cook until they puff up a little and then are folded in half.
deviled eggs	the eggs are first hard-boiled in their shells, then peeled and cut in half; the yolks are then mixed with mayonnaise and seasonings and put back into the whites

Idioms & Expressions cont.

C. Practice

Choose the correct idiom or expression from Parts A and B to complete the following sentences. You may have to change the form of the verb or pronoun.

1. He is moving to another city, but I'm sure we will _____ again someday.
2. Why are you _____? Are you going someplace special?
3. Ben has been saving money every month ever since he started working twenty years ago. He is going to have a big _____ when he retires.
4. Maria is very uncomfortable whenever she visits her mother-in-law. She is always afraid she may say something wrong. She feels like she is _____.
5. At first, Johnny didn't want to fight, but all the other boys in the school yard were _____.
6. If they offer him a promotion, he may have to move to another city. He is not sure if he wants to do that, but he will _____.
7. Suzie said to her friend, "Please tell me your secret. I promise I won't tell anyone. _____!"
8. Robert had promised to finish the work before last weekend. Now it is Monday and the work still isn't finished. He is really going to have _____ when he has to tell his boss.
9. Anna has a _____. She has decided to redecorate her house and she can't think about anything else. That's all she talks and thinks about all the time.
10. My financial advisor gave me some advice. He said, "_____". It is better to invest in different companies, not all in one."

Survey

Walk around the classroom and ask your classmates questions. Write the questions in the spaces provided below, and write your classmate's name on the right if he/she answers "yes."

#	Find someone...	Question	Classmate
1	whose birthday is in April.		
2	whose favourite holiday is Easter.		
3	who prefers scrambled eggs to poached eggs.		
4	who has bought some chocolate Easter eggs recently.		
5	who has never eaten an omelet.		
6	who has celebrated a spring festival in his/her country.		
7	who has eaten a chocolate Easter bunny.		
8	who can tell you where the name Easter originated.		
9	who is trying to save a nest egg.		
10	who thinks that Easter and Christmas have become too commercialized.		
11	who has been on an Easter egg hunt.		
12	whose favourite season is spring.		

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

1. Easter is the greatest _____ of the Christian church. According to Christian beliefs, this religious holiday _____ the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the son of God. It is celebrated on the first weekend after the first full moon that follows March 21. It can occur as early as March 22 or as late as April 25.
2. Although Easter Sunday is the most important celebration of the Christian church, Good Friday is also a very important day in the _____ week of Easter. Good Friday marks the day that Christ was _____, or nailed on a cross, until he died. Because Christ was killed on a cross, the cross has become the _____ of Christianity. Easter Sunday commemorates the miracle of Christ's _____, three days after his death. Christians all over the world celebrate Easter by attending church services, _____, and spending time with family and close friends.
3. Although Easter is celebrated as a religious holiday, it also has a non-religious side. The arrival of spring had been celebrated all over the world long before Easter became a Christian holiday. In fact, Easter was originally a _____ festival. The word Easter comes from the name Eostre, the ancient Anglo-Saxon goddess of _____ and fertility. In ancient times, spring festivals were held each year to honour Eostre and to celebrate new life and the rebirth of nature. In many parts of the world, flowers and plants begin to reappear after the long winter and birds return to build their nests. Because the resurrection of _____ occurred in the early spring, the two celebrations have become closely tied together.
4. There are many symbols associated with the Easter season. _____, chicks, bunnies, and other baby animals symbolize the birth of new life. One of the most well-known symbols of Easter and springtime is the egg, which also represents new life. In modern times, chocolate Easter eggs and bunnies have become very popular. Another common symbol has been the Easter _____, which is a kind of hat. In past times, the Easter bonnet and other new clothes were worn to mark the end of the long, cold winter and the beginning of the fresh, new spring. A number of years ago, it was common to see families walking _____ to and from church to show off their new clothes. The white lily, also a symbol of rebirth, is the traditional Easter flower. In many cultures, pastries such as hot cross buns are also an important part of Easter.
5. In many countries, Easter _____ are common. Some parades are religious, with people carrying heavy crosses over long distances. Other Easter parades are just for fun. They celebrate the coming of spring with colourful _____, costumes, Easter bonnets, and of course, the Easter _____.

Answer Key

NOTE:

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

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students read about the history and traditions associated with Easter. Includes a comprehension check, a vocabulary review, and an information gap activity to do in group. Fun idioms are introduced.

LEVEL: High Int

TIME: 2–3 hours

TAGS: holidays, Easter, Easter bunny, Easter basket, Easter eggs, spring, Christianity, Eostre

Warm-Up and Introduction to Easter

You can begin by bringing coloured or chocolate Easter eggs, Easter bunnies, Easter baskets, hot cross buns, pictures associated with Easter, etc. to class. Ask the students to share any information they may already have about Easter or spring festivals in their countries.

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Answers will vary.

1. In the Christian religion, Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. To non-religious people, it is a celebration of spring and rebirth.
2. Easter takes place in late March or April at the beginning of spring (after the first full moon following March 21).
3. Good Friday is the day that Jesus Christ was crucified (nailed to a cross).
4. Symbols associated with Easter include crosses, eggs, flowers, chicks, bunnies, and other baby animals.
5. At an Easter parade, you might see decorated floats, Easter bonnets and dresses, baskets, the Easter bunny, and Easter eggs.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | |
|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. j | 5. r | 9. q | 13. h | 17. o |
| 2. f | 6. i | 10. e | 14. l | 18. b |
| 3. m | 7. c | 11. n | 15. g | |
| 4. p | 8. a | 12. d | 16. k | |

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 13. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

After reading the passage, break the students into pairs and have them practise asking and answering the comprehension questions. At the end of the oral practice, have the students write the answers. Review again orally with the whole class.

1. No, it is not.
2. Easter commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the son of God.
3. Christians celebrate Easter by attending church services, praying, and spending time with family and close friends.
4. Eostre was the ancient Anglo-Saxon goddess of dawn and fertility.
5. They are traditional symbols of Easter because they symbolize the birth of new life.
6. These festivals were held each year to honour Eostre and to celebrate new life and the rebirth of nature.
7. Many women wore Easter bonnets.
8. The white lily is the traditional Easter flower.
9. One of the most well-known symbols of Easter is the egg.
10. In modern times, chocolate Easter eggs have become very popular.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Vocabulary Review

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. bonnet | 9. leisurely |
| 2. resurrection | 10. fertility |
| 3. symbol | 11. miracle |
| 4. floats | 12. parade |
| 5. bunny | 13. prayed |
| 6. popular | 14. commemorates, crucified |
| 7. dawn | 15. holy |
| 8. festival | |

Group Work

Break the class into groups of three. Each student in the group is given a short reading about one of the traditions of Easter. Have the students read their own paper silently and then share the information orally with their partners. You may then have a few students summarize the information to the whole class. At this time, you can also review relevant new vocabulary from the different readings. The students also have a chart about favourite holidays. Have them share the information in their groups. You can also follow up this small group activity with the survey activity on page 12 involving all the students in the class.

Idioms & Expressions

C. PRACTICE

1. cross paths
2. Sunday best
3. nest egg
4. walking on eggshells
5. egging him on
6. cross that bridge when he comes to it
7. Cross my heart and hope to die
8. egg on his face
9. bee in her bonnet
10. Don't put all your eggs in one basket

Survey

Answers will vary. Help your students with question formation.

Listening

Play the recording and have students fill in the blanks.

1. festival, commemorates
2. holy, crucified, symbol, resurrection, praying
3. pagan, dawn, Christ
4. Lambs, bonnet, leisurely
5. parades, floats, bunny