

6

## Autumn festivals



Source: AdobeStock/Andrii

6 a

### Speaking

#### Warm-up: talking about celebrations and traditions

Get into small groups and talk about the following:

- » What do you celebrate?
- » Which autumn festivals do you know / have you heard of?
- » What do you think of Halloween?
- » Describe the picture above. What do you associate with the symbols displayed?
- » What is your favourite season and why?

The American English word for *autumn* is *fall*!

*Autumn* is derived from a Latin word meaning “the passing of the year.” *Fall* comes from an Old English word that means “fall from a height.” The name for the season was probably inspired by the falling of the leaves.

6 b

### Vocabulary

#### The autumn festival quiz

Find the answers to the questions. Write the letters highlighted in the boxes below to get a new word. If the word is new for you, check its meaning in a dictionary and find a picture.

Which ancient European people is often associated with *Halloween*?

1 \_\_\_\_\_

What is the signal colour of *Halloween*?

2 \_\_\_\_\_

What is the most important part of a *Thanksgiving* dinner?

3 \_\_\_\_\_

What day of the week do Canadians celebrate *Thanksgiving*?

4 \_\_\_\_\_

What day of the week do Americans celebrate *Thanksgiving*?

5 \_\_\_\_\_

What marks the *Indian summer*?

6 \_\_\_\_\_ LEAVES

What do people in Britain light in Guy Fawkes Night (November 5<sup>th</sup>)?

7 \_\_\_\_\_

What is the symbol of *Remembrance Day* (November 11<sup>th</sup>) in Great Britain?

8 \_\_\_\_\_

In which country do people celebrate *Diwali*?

9 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 \_\_\_\_\_

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

6 c

## Reading

### The origin of Halloween

Read the text about Halloween's history. Some parts are missing. Choose the correct part (A–J) for each gap (1–7). There are two extra parts that you should not use. Write your answers in the spaces provided. The first one (0) has been done for you.

BE

## Halloween

ancient: uralt,  
antik  
turnip: Rübe  
mangel-wurzel:  
Futtermübe

actually: eigen-  
tlich, tatsächlich  
harvest: Ernte

to mock:  
verhöhnern,  
lächerlich  
machen

Perhaps the most well-known of the autumn festivals is Halloween. But its traditional origins do not reflect the spooky costuming (0) \_\_\_. Essentially, Halloween – celebrated today on October 31<sup>st</sup> – is based on the ancient Celtic festival Samhain, which marked the opening of winter and the end of autumn. At the same time, communities traditionally prepare for the bleakness of winter, so the festivities tended (1) \_\_\_.

Typically, this is the time of year where people in an ancient medieval community who have been away for the summer herding, fighting or trading were returning (2) \_\_\_. The harvest was in, the beer brewed and the animals that couldn't be fed through the winter had been slaughtered, (3) \_\_\_. On the other hand, everyone was facing the most terrifying season of all: winter.

Unlike today, even the best winters meant dirt, isolation, cold, dark, and a lack of greenery. In a bad year, (4) \_\_\_.

Mocking the spirits of dark, cold and fear has always been a part of these earliest Halloween

festivities. One such tradition is the carving of 25 faces in vegetables and the creation of glowing lanterns to drive away Stingy Jack – a figure from an originally Irish myth. We see this continue today, but the widespread popularity of carving pumpkins is actually an American 30 practice. In England, people carved turnips or mangel-wurzels, (5) \_\_\_. However, this practice wasn't associated with Halloween until the 19th and 20th centuries.

Another aspect of Halloween (6) \_\_\_ is the concept of trick-or-treating. Again, attributed to American tradition, the origins are actually a lot closer to home. It comes from the practice of the poorer members of the community going around the richer members or providing entertainment (7) \_\_\_. This custom was taken from Ireland by mass Irish immigration to America in the 19th century and that's how the Americans turned it into trick-or-treat. 35

Overall, we can look to America for the commercialisation of Halloween, but essentially, it's applying a traditional festival to the needs of the modern market. 45

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| A            | to settle for the winter                             |
| B            | which are larger versions of turnips                 |
| <del>C</del> | or sweet exchanges we see today                      |
| D            | to scare away the spirits of the dead                |
| E            | winter could also bring famine, epidemic and disease |
| F            | to have a darker approach to celebrating             |
| G            | which means bad luck                                 |
| H            | that many know and love                              |
| I            | so fresh meat was readily available                  |
| J            | to collect food and drink for their own feasting     |

Test format  
Multiple matching

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C							



## 6 d Speaking

### Thanksgiving – a traditional harvest festival

Canada and the USA are neighbours and share many traditions as well as the English language. However, some of the customs and festivals are different, like Thanksgiving.



Source: AdobeStock/  
Selene Studio

In small groups, brainstorm

- » what you know or have heard about Thanksgiving
- » what you are thankful for in your life and why
- » why it is important to be thankful
- » why the cornucopia has become a Thanksgiving symbol

The cornucopia (horn of plenty) is a traditional symbol of Canadian Thanksgiving.

## 6 e Listening

### Watching a video about Thanksgiving

Go to a streaming platform and enter “7 Ways Canadian Thanksgiving is Different”.



- » Watch the video clip from the channel “Whoa Canada!” and note at least five differences between Canadian and US Thanksgiving.
- » Then fill in the table below:

	Canada	USA
Date		
Origin / history		
Celebrations / holiday		
Food		
Shopping		
Turkey		

## 6 f Speaking

### Beyond Halloween and Thanksgiving – autumn festivals around the world

Although the changing of the seasons is not the same in different parts of the world, many cultures celebrate festivals in the months of October and November. They are often associated with the harvest that people want to thank for. Light and remembering the dead also play an important role.



- » Go to internet. Enter “autumn festivals around the world”.
- » Research one or two festivals you do not know.
- » Present your findings in a small group.
- » Compare and contrast these festivals with the ones you know.
- » Then write down the name of the festival and the country or religion under each picture.



Source: AdobeStock/toa555, Calado, denisgo

## 6 g Speaking

### Day of the Dead – Día de los Muertos

The Day of the Dead is a holiday which is traditionally celebrated in Mexico on November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. As so many people from Mexico migrated to the US, it is also celebrated in some parts of the US now.



Source: AdobeStock/  
Наталья Осипова

Get into small groups.

- » Go to the internet and find pictures or a short video clip of Day of the Dead.
- » Then talk about how people in Austria or in your culture of origin remember their dead loved ones.

## 6 h Language in use

### Day of the Dead

Read the text about Day of the Dead. Some words are missing. Complete the text by writing one word for each gap (1–14) in the spaces provided. The first one (0) has been done for you.

AE

ancestors: Vorfahren

#### A day for remembering relatives

Day of the Dead combines the ancient Aztec custom of celebrating ancestors with All Souls' Day, a holiday that Spanish invaders brought to Mexico starting in the early 1500s.

The holiday, (0) \_\_\_ is celebrated mostly in Mexico on November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, is like a family reunion – except dead ancestors are the guests of honor. The Day of the Dead is a joyful time (1) \_\_\_ helps people remember the deceased and celebrate (2) \_\_\_ memory.

deceased:  
Verstorbene

#### Treats for the deceased

First, people set (3) \_\_\_ a candlelit altar in their homes, so spirits can find their way (4) \_\_\_ to their relatives. The altar also offers some of the favorite foods of the deceased – just in (5) \_\_\_ they get hungry. Items that were important to the ancestors (6) \_\_\_ they were alive, such as a favorite book or musical instrument, are placed on the altar as well.

Then it's off to the graveyard for a big party. Families bring a huge feast to eat (7) \_\_\_ they clean tombstones, sing songs, and talk to their ancestors. Parents (8) \_\_\_ even introduce a baby to a grandparent who died (9) \_\_\_ the baby was born.

#### Funny bones

And don't forget the skeletons. During the Day of the Dead, life-size papier-mâché skeletons and miniature plastic or clay skeletons are everywhere. Why? Mexicans honor their ancestors on the Day of the Dead, but they're (10) \_\_\_ reminding themselves that death is just a part of life. Hanging (11) \_\_\_ with skeletons reminds people that (12) \_\_\_ day they will be skeletons, too – but not for a very long time!

The skeletons are posed doing all sorts of wacky things, such as (13) \_\_\_ the guitar, taking a bath, or making tortillas. Apparently, people aren't the only (14) \_\_\_ who get to have fun on Day of the Dead!

posed: gestellt  
wacky: crazy  
apparently: offensichtlich

Write your answers here:

0	which	5		10
1		6		11
2		7		12
3		8		13
4		9		14



Source: AdobeStock/kANTASWAR

Test format  
Open gap-fill