

Traditional Holidays in Transition

Name:

Date:



Different traditions

LU Luca

Hey Luca! How do you celebrate New Year's Eve in Italy?

Hi Emily! We have a big dinner with family and friends. We eat lentils for good luck and set off fireworks. How about you in Canada?

That sounds fun! We usually have a party and watch the countdown on TV. Some people go to big events in the city. My parents said they used to go ice skating before the countdown when they were kids.

Wow, ice skating sounds cool! My grandparents told me that in their time, they used to wear red underwear for good luck on New Year's Eve. It's a pretty funny tradition!

Haha, that's interesting! My grandmother told me they used to write down their resolutions on paper and then burn them in the fireplace to make them come true.

That's a nice tradition. We also have a custom where we throw old things out of the window to start fresh. It can be dangerous though, so not many people do it anymore.

Oh wow, that does sound a bit dangerous! We also have fireworks, but they are usually organized by the city. It's safer that way.

Yeah, safety first! Do you have any special foods you eat?

We usually have a big dinner with turkey and lots of desserts. My favorite is the maple syrup pie.

Yum, that sounds delicious! We have a dessert called panettone, which is a sweet bread with raisins and candied fruit. It's really tasty.

I've heard of panettone! I'd love to try it someday. Do you stay up until midnight?

Yes, we stay up and make a toast with sparkling wine. Do you?

Yes, we do! We also make noise with party poppers and blow horns when it's midnight.

Sounds like fun! Can't wait for New Year's Eve now.

Me too! Have a great New Year, Luca!

You too, Emily! Happy New Year!

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How do you celebrate?

Read the chat conversation and talk about it in class: Do you celebrate this traditional holiday, and if so, how? Do you know of any other customs associated with this day?

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Traditional holidays in different countries

The traditional holiday is celebrated differently in various countries. Can you correctly match the traditions?

Match the country with the tradition.

Spain

● Ringing temple bells 108 times to cleanse sins.

Japan

● Using round fruits to symbolize prosperity.

Brazil

● Smashing plates against friends' doors for good fortune.

Denmark

● Breaking a pomegranate on the doorstep for good luck.

Scotland

● Jumping over seven waves in the ocean for wishes.

Philippines

● Eating twelve grapes at midnight for good luck.

Russia

● Writing wishes on paper, burning them, and drinking the ashes.

Greece

● First-footing, where the first guest brings gifts like coal.

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Have a look at how traditions associated with the traditional holiday have changed over the course of several centuries.

Anna, 1750



My name is Anna, and the year is 1750. Here in Germany, we celebrate New Year's Eve with a family gathering around the fireplace. We light candles to symbolize the hope and light for the coming year. My father reads from an almanac, and we drink spiced wine while sharing stories and singing songs. At midnight, we ring bells to ward off evil spirits and welcome a prosperous new year.

Anna describes an 18th-century New Year's Eve in Germany, focusing on family gatherings, candle lighting, and traditional songs and stories.

Johann, 1900



My name is Johann, and it is now the year 1900. In Germany, our New Year's Eve has evolved quite a bit. We now celebrate with grand fireworks displays in the town square. Families and friends gather to enjoy the spectacle, and we hold sparklers while singing and dancing. The night is filled with laughter, and we toast with champagne to welcome the new century.

Johann describes how New Year's Eve celebrations in Germany have changed by 1900, with fireworks and public gatherings becoming a central part of the festivities.

Sophie, 2023



My name is Sophie, and the year is 2023. In Germany, New Year's Eve is now a time of grand celebrations and modern traditions. We gather with friends at parties or public events, watching impressive fireworks displays in the city. We also make New Year's resolutions and share them with our loved ones. At midnight, we toast with sparkling wine and wish each other 'Frohes Neues Jahr' as we look forward to the new beginnings ahead.

Sophie explains the modern-day New Year's Eve celebrations in Germany, highlighting large public events, fireworks, and the custom of making New Year's resolutions.

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What important differences can you identify in the way the traditional holiday was celebrated in the past compared to today? Note them down.

