

Spring Festivals Around the World

GENRE Informational Text

WHY THIS TEXT?

This informational text presents celebrations of spring around the world. Each chapter focuses on a spring festival in a different country, highlighting origins, symbols, costumes, foods, and unique traditions. Maps show each country and the location of its capital city. Colorful, engaging photographs and captions show people around the world celebrating the renewal of spring.



VOCABULARY NETWORK

Words About Festivals culture (n.), festive (adj.), symbolize (v.)

TEXT COMPLEXITY

READING LEVEL P **OVERALL RATING** Slightly Complex

TEXT X-RAY														
KEY IDEAS	LANGUAGE	BACKGROUND & CULTURE												
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spring is the season when the days become longer and warmer.• Since ancient times, people have celebrated the arrival of spring.• During spring festivals around the world, families and friends gather to celebrate and to participate in special traditions.• In some countries, such as China and Iran, spring is the beginning of the new year.	<p>Key Vocabulary</p> <table><tr><td>equator (p. 4)</td><td>population (p. 10)</td></tr><tr><td>ancient (p. 4)</td><td>resources (p. 15)</td></tr><tr><td>symbolize (p. 8)</td><td>standards (p. 16)</td></tr><tr><td>culture (p. 9)</td><td>valued (p. 19)</td></tr><tr><td>represent (p. 9)</td><td>national (p. 22)</td></tr><tr><td>festive (p. 9)</td><td>fair (p. 22)</td></tr></table> <p>Idiomatic Expressions</p> <p>cleaning up (p. 17)</p> <p>spend months (p. 26)</p>	equator (p. 4)	population (p. 10)	ancient (p. 4)	resources (p. 15)	symbolize (p. 8)	standards (p. 16)	culture (p. 9)	valued (p. 19)	represent (p. 9)	national (p. 22)	festive (p. 9)	fair (p. 22)	<p>In the Northern Hemisphere, the vernal equinox takes place at the end of March. The word <i>vernal</i> comes from the Latin word <i>ver</i>, meaning “spring.” The word <i>equinox</i> comes from two Latin words that mean “equal night” and describes the time of the year when day and night are the same length. The vernal equinox signals the first day of spring.</p>
equator (p. 4)	population (p. 10)													
ancient (p. 4)	resources (p. 15)													
symbolize (p. 8)	standards (p. 16)													
culture (p. 9)	valued (p. 19)													
represent (p. 9)	national (p. 22)													
festive (p. 9)	fair (p. 22)													

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

Options for Teacher-Led Sessions	Online Printables	Tabletop Minilessons: Reading
<input type="radio"/> Key Ideas & Details 2	Vocabulary Network	Central Idea
<input type="radio"/> Central Idea 4	Organizer	Text Structure
<input type="radio"/> Compare & Contrast..... 6	Comprehension Quiz	Genre: Informational Text
<input type="radio"/> Respond & Extend..... 8		

Key Ideas & Details

GENERATE INTEREST

- How do different people celebrate special events?
- How do people celebrate spring where you live?

BUILD VOCABULARY

Use the Vocabulary Network Organizer to develop vocabulary and explore language connections.

- culture (n.), festive (adj.), symbolize (v.)

GUIDE INSTRUCTION

Build comprehension of the text, using the prompts below as needed.

2–5

What is the vernal equinox? (*the point between winter and spring when day and night are equal in length; it is the first day of spring north of the equator.*)

Discuss Talk with students about why spring is important to people and why people want to celebrate when it arrives.

TEXT EVIDENCE

- *In between winter and summer is the vernal equinox, when day and night are each twelve hours long.*
- *first day of spring . . . north of the equator*

English Learner Support

Explain that the ending -er means “more.” Support the meanings of *warmer*, *longer*, *colder*, and *shorter*.

6–7

Why was spring important to the Chinese? (*Most people were farmers; spring was the time to plant for a successful harvest.*) **What did they do to show the importance of spring?** (*made the start of spring the beginning of their new year; had a festival*)

Reread Ask volunteers to read aloud details that show the importance of spring in Chinese culture. *Why was a good harvest important to farmers?*

TEXT EVIDENCE

- *most people were farmers . . . calendar that showed people when to plant crops*
- *so important . . . year of the Chinese calendar would begin when spring came*
- *The Spring Festival . . . still the most important celebration . . . a new beginning for a new year is a large part of the celebration.*

English Learner Support

Spanish cognate: *importante* (important)

10–12

What ancient tradition do people practice during the Festival of Colors? (*They spray each other with gual, a colored powder made from dried plants and flowers.*)

Guide Help students understand the relationship between spraying each other with multi-colored *gual* and celebrating the many colors of spring. *What makes all the different colors in spring? Why would this make people want to celebrate?*

TEXT EVIDENCE

- *They continue the ancient tradition of spraying each other with gual . . . from flowers and plants . . . ground into powders*

English Learner Support

Multiple-meaning word: *ground*

14–17

Why did people begin to celebrate Earth Day? *(They were concerned that Earth's air and water were being destroyed, and they wanted to change that.)*

Discuss Talk about some of the effects Earth Day has had in the United States. *Has Earth Day achieved its goals? How do you know?*

TEXT EVIDENCE

- *afraid that the planet's air and water supply was being destroyed . . . wanted to . . . change it*
- *They encouraged people to take action to help Earth.*

English Learner Support

Spanish cognate: *destruir* (destroy)

18–19

Why does the Cherry Blossom Festival last for a month? *(Trees in different areas of the country bloom at different times.)* **Why are cherry blossoms important to the Japanese?** *(They show that spring has arrived. They are pretty and serve as symbols of hope and life.)*

Reread Ask students to read aloud details that tell readers which events determine when the festival will take place. *Why doesn't the Cherry Blossom Festival happen on the same day every year?*

TEXT EVIDENCE

- *spring . . . when light pink cherry blossoms appear*
- *different climates . . . trees bloom at different times*
- *cherry blossoms represent hope and life*

English Language Support

- Do the cherry trees bloom at the same time?
- The cherry trees bloom from _____ to _____.
- When do cherry trees bloom in different parts of Japan?

24–26

Why do Swedes burn large bonfires during Valborg? *(Long ago, people built bonfires to keep away bad luck. The tradition continues today.)*

Discuss Talk about why people might have thought that bonfires kept away bad luck. *What are some good things fire can do? Bad?*

TEXT EVIDENCE

- *The bonfires began long ago when people believed that the fires kept away bad luck.*

English Language Support

Use the photos to define *bonfire*.

28–30

What does the throwing of lentils represent during Norouz? *(throwing away bad luck)* **Why would people want to throw away bad luck on the first day of a new year?** *(They want to have good luck in the new year.)*

Create a Visual Create a T-chart with the headings *Festival* and *Symbols*. Have a volunteer explain why people throw lentils during Norouz. Record the information on the chart. Discuss other symbolic actions people take during spring festivals to keep away bad luck or wish for good luck. Add the festivals and symbols to the chart.

TEXT EVIDENCE

- *Its new year, Norouz, falls on the first day of spring.*
- *They also throw lentils . . . into streams or brooks to symbolize the throwing away of bad luck.*

English Learner Support

- Do the people want good luck or bad luck?
- People pretend lentil seeds are _____. They _____ the seeds.
- What are people pretending to do when they throw lentils in the water?

Central Idea

INTRODUCE THE DRIVING QUESTIONS

- What is the central idea, or what the text is mostly about?
- What details tell more about the central idea?

GUIDE INSTRUCTION

Use the prompts below to guide students through the text. For additional support, refer to the relevant Tabletop Minilesson.

Table of Contents

Based on the title and table of contents, what is the topic of the book? (*spring festivals in different countries*)

Which spring festivals will the author describe?

(*festivals in China, India, the United States, Japan, Sweden, Finland, and Iran*)

Guide Tell students that the book title and chapter titles provide clues about a text's topic. They can also suggest its central idea, or what it is mostly about. Ask students what they think each chapter will tell them about the topic.

TEXT EVIDENCE

- *Spring Festivals Around the World*
- CHAPTER TITLE CLUES

English Learner Support

Spanish cognate: *festival* (festival)

4–5

Which details support the key idea that spring is so important that it has been celebrated since ancient times? (*Spring marks the end of winter and the beginning of warmer weather. People celebrated spring together in ancient times, and still do today.*)

Reread Point out that supporting details give facts and examples that tell readers more about a key idea. Have students read aloud details that tell them about celebrations in the past and today.

TEXT EVIDENCE

- *Spring's warmer temperatures . . . help flowers and crops grow.*
- *In ancient times family and friends came together . . . to share large meals on the first day of spring.*
- *Spring festivals are still celebrated*

English Learner Support

Explain that a yearly event happens once each year, usually at about the same time.

8

What is the author's key idea about the foods people eat during the Spring Festival? (*The foods people eat represent wishes for a happy new year and future.*)

Guide Explain that authors sometimes include a sentence that tells the key idea. Point out that in this case, the caption tells the key idea. Help students identify details that support it. *How do the foods represent people's wishes for the future?*

TEXT EVIDENCE

- *symbolize wishes for a happy future*
- *Round dumplings . . . symbolize coins and the hope that money will come*
- *Long noodles . . . symbolize a long life.*

English Learner Support

Point out that the words *symbolize* and *represent* are synonyms that both mean "stand for."

14–17

What is the key idea of this chapter? (*Earth Day was created to encourage people to take better care of Earth.*)

Which details show Earth Day’s successes? (*The EPA made rules about pollution and landfills. People now clean up and recycle. Earth Day spread to other countries.*)

Guide Help students synthesize the key idea. What was the purpose of the first Earth Day? Have students find details on pages 16–17 that describe the effects Earth Day has had. What happened as a result of Earth Day?

TEXT EVIDENCE

- They encouraged people to take action to help Earth.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) . . . pollution standards . . . set strict rules for landfills
- included the idea of . . . picking up litter . . . cut down on garbage by recycling
- Many countries . . . also take part

English Learner Support

Use the base words *environment*, *protect*, and *pollute* to help students understand *environmental*, *protection*, and *pollution*.

24–27

What is this chapter about? (*the Walpurgis Night festival in Sweden and Finland*) **What is the author’s key idea in this chapter?** (*Both countries celebrate Walpurgis Night, but they do it in different ways.*)

Create a Visual Have partners reread each paragraph on pages 24–25 and look for the most important ideas. Together, decide which parts state the chapter’s key idea. Draw a Venn diagram to compare the two festivals.

TEXT EVIDENCE

- In Sweden and Finland . . . people celebrate Walpurgis Night
- While the purpose of Walpurgis Night is the same in both countries, there are some differences in how Sweden and Finland celebrate it.

English Learner Support

- Do Sweden and Finland celebrate Walpurgis Night in the same way or in different ways?
- In Sweden, they celebrate Walpurgis Night by _____. In Finland, they _____.
- How are Sweden and Finland’s celebrations alike? Different?

2–31

What is the central idea of this book? (*People around the world celebrate the arrival of spring in a variety of ways.*)

Create a Visual Work with students to complete a web with *Spring Festivals* in the center circle. Review the chapter titles and key ideas. Then have students complete the web with key ideas about each festival. *How do the chapter titles help you figure out the central idea?*

TEXT EVIDENCE

- China: Spring Festival
- India: Festival of Colors
- United States: Earth Day
- Japan: Cherry Blossom Festival
- Sweden and Finland: Walpurgis Night
- Iran: Nouroz

English Learner Support

Multiple-meaning word: *spring*

Compare & Contrast

INTRODUCE THE DRIVING QUESTION

- How does the author organize information to help readers understand how spring festivals are alike and different?

GUIDE INSTRUCTION

Use the prompts below to guide students through the text. For additional support, refer to the relevant Tabletop Minilesson.

2–4

How do places north of the equator experience the vernal equinox? (*first day of spring, warmer weather, longer days*) **How is the vernal equinox different in places south of the equator?** (*first day of autumn, colder weather, shorter days*)

Discuss Tell students that authors organize information in a text to help readers understand their main points. When authors compare and contrast, they point out how things are alike and different. *What is the same about places north and south of the equator during the vernal equinox? (Day and night are both 12 hours long.)*

TEXT EVIDENCE

- first day of spring in places north of the equator . . . warmer weather and longer days
- South of the equator . . . first day of autumn . . . weather turns colder . . . days get shorter

English Learner Support

Antonyms: *spring/autumn, north/south, warmer/colder, longer/shorter*

8–11

How are the foods that people eat during China's Spring Festival different from the foods people eat at India's Festival of Colors? (*In China, they eat dumplings and long noodles. In India, they eat laddu and mathri.*)

Guide Help students identify details that explain how the foods are the same or different. *What shape are the foods? What do the foods taste like? What do the foods symbolize?*

TEXT EVIDENCE

- Round dumplings . . . Long noodles
- Holiday treats include laddu, a fried and sweetened ball of dough, and mathri, a salty, fried snack usually eaten along with a pickle.

English Learner Support

Use the base word *sweet* to help students develop meaning for *sweetened*.

14–17

How is Earth Day different from other spring festivals? (*Earth Day is about cleaning and saving the planet. Other festivals celebrate the beginning of the spring season.*)

Reread Have volunteers look back at pages 6 and 10 and read aloud details that explain why people celebrate the Spring Festival and the Festival of Colors. *Why do you think people decided to celebrate Earth Day in the spring?*

TEXT EVIDENCE

- air and water supply was being destroyed
- dangers of pollution and wasting . . . resources . . . take action to help Earth

English Language Support

Compound word: *landfill*

Idiom: *cut down*

18–23

How are the Cherry Blossom Festivals in Japan and Washington, D.C., the same? (*cherry trees and blossoms, happen in spring, kimonos*) **How are they different?** (*Japan: one month long, picnics, singing, dancing, lanterns; Washington, D.C.: two weeks long, art, classes, parade, street fair*)

Create a Visual Make a Venn diagram. Have students use details in the text to identify ways the two festivals are the same or different. Point out that the author doesn't state this information directly; students have to review the details to figure it out.

TEXT EVIDENCE

- *a month of celebrations*
- *sing, dance, and have picnics*
- *hang paper lanterns . . . wear . . . kimonos*
- *Cherry Blossom Festival was made two weeks long . . . art displays, classes . . . kimono fashion shows*
- *Parade is held, followed by a street fair*

English Learner Support

Multiple-meaning word: *last*

24–27

How is Walpurgis Night different in Sweden and Finland? (*In Sweden, it is called Valborg and people build bonfires to keep away bad luck. In Finland, it is called Vappu and people celebrate by wearing masks and shouting happily on the street.*)

Reread Explain that the words *both* and *differences* on page 25 are clues that the author will compare and contrast. *What does the author say is the same about both festivals?* Have students reread pages 26–27 to find differences.

TEXT EVIDENCE

- *is called Valborg . . . the celebration includes lighting large bonfires at night . . . kept away bad luck*
- *is called Vappu . . . celebrate by wearing masks on their faces and shouting happily in the streets*

English Learner Support

Point out words that are in italic print. Explain that these words have special type because they are words in Swedish or Finnish.

5–30

What do all the festivals have in common? (*Every festival happens in spring and has its own traditions.*)

Which traditions are alike in different festivals? (*special food, new clothes, flowers, parades, symbols of hope or good luck*)

Guide Have students look back at the photos to remind them of each festival's traditions. Have them identify similarities among festival traditions. *Why do you think so many festivals have special food? Why do you think so many festivals have outdoor activities?*

TEXT EVIDENCE

- PHOTO AND TEXT CLUES

English Language Support

- Point to different pictures of food. Of flowers. Of special clothes.
- People at different festivals eat _____. They wear _____.
- What do people do in more than one festival?

Respond & Extend

GENERATE INTEREST

- What surprised you about spring festivals?
- Which spring festival would you like to participate in? Why?

GUIDE INSTRUCTION

Explain that students will be using what they have read and their own opinions to respond to the text. Then assign and support one or more of the activities below.

Project

Draw Earth's Orbit

- Go online to research Earth's orbit and the seasons.
- Make a drawing to show Earth's orbit around the sun. Show Earth's position for all the seasons in the Northern Hemisphere.
- Add labels to your drawing.
- Display your drawing in the classroom.

Vocabulary & Language

Get into Action!

- Find these phrases: *come along* (p. 5), *stay up* (p. 8), *passing by* (p. 13), *clear away* (p. 14), *took place* (p. 15), *took part* (p. 15), *cut down on* (p. 17), *kept away* (p. 26), and *throwing away* (p. 30).
- Write a sentence using each phrase. Share your sentences with a partner.

Hands-On Activity

Graph Daylight

- Use the Internet to find the hours of daylight in your area for the last week. You may have to calculate the hours using the sunset and sunrise times.
- Are the lengths of the days changing? Are they getting longer or shorter? What does that tell you about the seasons?
- Make a graph to show the information. Present your graph and explain what you think it means.

Research Connection

Research a Fall Festival

- Go online or use other resource materials to learn about a festival that takes place in the fall. Learn when, where, and why the festival happens. What do people do to celebrate?
- Create a visual presentation to share the information you learned.

Response Writing

1. **Write a journal entry** about one of the spring festivals you read about. Include details that describe what you see, hear, smell, taste, and feel during the festival.
2. **Write an opinion paragraph** about whether Earth Day should be a national holiday like Independence Day or Memorial Day. Give reasons for your opinion.

