



THE WEEK AHEAD

HAVE AN EGG-CELLENT EASTER!

IT'S Easter! Which means it's time for chocolate, bunny rabbits, hot cross buns and egg-painting – hooray! But just why do we associate all those things with Easter?



Well, it's pretty much all because of Christianity. Easter is one of the most important festivals on the Christian calendar, and a time when Christians look back to when they believe Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross, known as Good Friday, and then came back to life on Easter Sunday.

Unlike Christmas, Easter falls on a different day each year. In fact, it can fall on any day between 22 March and 25 April. This is because it follows the lunar calendar. Easter will always fall on the Sunday after the first full moon following 21 March – so it's up to the moon, basically!

Lots of non-Christians celebrate Easter, too, but many of the ways they celebrate stem from the original Christian beliefs.

It's no secret that when many of us think about Easter we specifically think about eggs: chocolate eggs, Easter egg hunts, decorating an egg... just lots of eggs! This is because early Christians in Mesopotamia (the region which would one day

become Syria and Iraq) would exchange chicken eggs with one another as a symbol of the day that Jesus was reborn. Since eggs are what some baby animals hatch from, they're a fitting image for new life.

These days, the tradition has grown into something that both Christians and non-Christians celebrate. Thanks to a little inspiration from France and Germany in the 19th century, chocolate eggs have become the most common type of egg exchanged at Easter. Thank goodness for France and Germany!

The Easter Bunny is another huge part of the annual Easter excitement, but there are arguments about the origins of the legend. Most people think that the story began in Germany, where there's a tradition of putting coloured eggs in a nest for the 'Osterhase' or 'Oschter Haws', which is an egg-laying hare. It's thought that the tradition spread through Europe, before eventually being taken to places like America by immigrants.

EASTER AROUND THE WORLD

AUSTRALIA



Down under, they don't appreciate bunnies like we do over here. Australians get upset at the little fellows for ruining their crops and land. So rather than an Easter Bunny, many Australians have an Easter Bilby, which is a rabbit-eared bandicoot. Which do you think are cuter: bunnies or bilbies?



HAUX, FRANCE



Omelette, anyone? In this town, found in southern France, a giant omelette made with a whopping 4,500 eggs is served on Easter Monday, making for a tasty Easter lunch for 1,000 people! Apparently, when Napoleon and his army were travelling through France, they stopped in a small town and ate omelettes. Napoleon liked his so much that he ordered the townspeople to gather their eggs and make a giant omelette for his army the next day.



FLORENCE, ITALY



In Florence, locals celebrate a 350-year-old Easter tradition known as Scoppio del Carro, or 'explosion of the cart'. A well-decorated cart, packed with fireworks, is led through the streets of Florence by people in colourful 15th-century costumes, before it's detonated by an archbishop. Pretty!



HUNGARY



In Hungary, they take part in the Easter tradition of 'sprinkling'! While the idea of sprinkling someone sounds a bit gross, it's actually an Easter Monday tradition where boys playfully 'sprinkle' perfume, cologne or just plain water on girls, in exchange for painted eggs.





LOOK AT THE ARTICLE ‘HAVE AN EGG-CELLENT EASTER’

1) What **four objects** does the writer mention in the first paragraph of the article to create an image of Easter in the reader’s mind?

1.
2.
3.
4.

2) What do Christians believe happened to Jesus Christ at Easter time?

3) How does the moon influence the date Easter falls on each year?

4) Explain what the writer means when he talks about non-Christians and says:

“...many of the ways they celebrate stem from the original Christian beliefs.”

5) What did early Christians in Mesopotamia exchange with each other and what did this exchange symbolise?

6) Why does the author thank France and Germany?

7) Which sentence in the article suggests that there isn’t one clear answer to explain the origin of the Easter Bunny?

8) Explain how the German “Osterhase” or “Oschter Haws” possibly led to the creation of the Easter Bunny.

9) Think of a heading for each paragraph of the article to summarise what that section is about.

LOOK AT THE ARTICLE ‘EASTER AROUND THE WORLD’

10) Read about the traditions in the four places around the world. Think about how you will be spending Easter. Do you celebrate it in any way, even if it’s just eating chocolate eggs, or do you have any unique Easter traditions at your home?

Write a paragraph to explain your own Easter traditions.



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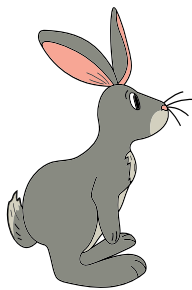


EXTENSION ACTIVITY

NAME AND EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENT EASTER SYMBOLS

Use the internet or the books in your school library to find out more information about the Easter symbols. Once you have completed your research, write your findings on the Easter Reference Sheet.

My Easter Reference Sheet



WHAT IS THIS EASTER SYMBOL?

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WHAT DOES IT REPRESENT?

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WHAT IS THIS EASTER SYMBOL?

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WHAT DOES IT REPRESENT?

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WHAT IS THIS EASTER SYMBOL?

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TEACHER ANSWERS

AIM OF THE NEWS COMPREHENSIONS

News reports are unique non-fiction texts. Being real, they naturally engage children, and with the range of topics that are covered, help to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world outside the classroom. The reports are ideal for short, focused comprehension or discussion activities. Along with the opportunity to find fascinating facts and appreciate the opinions of those involved, there is plenty to be inferred and deduced to understand in more depth what is being reported. Like authors, journalists play with language, so news 'stories' are rich nuggets of text to investigate and provide the opportunity for a wide range of reading skills to be practised each week. These skills should fit within most schools' reading and literacy programmes.

TEACHER ANSWER GUIDE

The teacher answers are intended to provide a guide to the reading skill each question is practising. Suggestions are given for a STARTING POINT response that pupils could give. Further suggestions then give a fuller, more DEVELOPED RESPONSE that students will work towards to reach and exceed the floor standards required at the end of primary school. For a list of these reading skills used to reference questions, please email schools@firstnews.co.uk.

LOOK AT THE ARTICLE 'HAVE AN EGG-CELLENT EASTER'

1. What four objects does the writer mention in the first paragraph of the article to create an image of Easter in the reader's mind?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information.

(NC 2a)

Expected Response

- Chocolate, bunny rabbits, hot cross buns and eggs

2. What do Christians believe happened to Jesus Christ at Easter time?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information.

(NC 2a)

Expected Response

- Christians believe Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross on Good Friday and then came back to life on Easter Sunday.

3. How does the moon influence the date Easter falls on each year?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information.

(NC 2a)

Expected Response

- Easter is on a different day each year because it always falls on the Sunday after the first full moon following 21 March.

Development

- Easter follows the lunar calendar, not the normal calendar. As a result, Easter will always fall on the Sunday after the first full moon following 21 March.

4. Explain what the writer means when he talks about non-Christians and says: "...many of the ways they celebrate stem from the original Christian beliefs."

READING SKILL – Infer information and justify with evidence from the text.

(NC 2C & 8)

Expected Response

- He means that the different ways people all celebrate Easter usually come from Christian traditions.

Developed Response

- By using the word 'stem', the journalist suggests that although many activities that non-Christians perform around Easter have their origin in Christian belief and tradition, they have now taken on a secular significance as they are undertaken more widely by different people and groups.



5. What did early Christians in Mesopotamia exchange with each other and what did this exchange symbolise?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information
(NC2a)

Expected Response

- Early Christians would exchange chicken eggs with one another as a symbol of the day that Jesus was reborn.

6. Why does the author thank France and Germany?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information
(NC2a)

Expected Response

- Because chocolate Easter eggs come from 19th century France and Germany. The writer clearly likes Easter eggs, so he is thankful to the French and Germans for inventing the treat.

7. Which sentence in the article suggests that there isn't one clear answer to explain the origin of the Easter Bunny?

READING SKILL – Infer information and justify with evidence from the text.
(NC 2C & 8)

Expected Response

- “The Easter Bunny is another huge part of the annual Easter excitement, but the origins behind the legend are argued about.”

8. Explain how the German “Osterhase” or “Oschter Haws” possibly led to the creation of the Easter Bunny.

READING SKILL – Infer information and justify with evidence from the text. (NC 2C & 8)

Expected response

- There is a tradition of putting coloured eggs in a nest for the “Osterhase” or “Oschter Haws” in Germany.

Developed Response

- In Germany, the “Osterhase” or “Oschter Haws”, is a mythical egg-laying hare associated with spring. The myth may have been spread by immigrants through Europe and America. As hares are very similar to bunnies and it is a German tradition to put coloured eggs in a nest for the “Osterhase”, it may have been this myth that developed into the contemporary Easter Bunny.

9. Think of a heading for each paragraph of the article to summarise what that section is about.

READING SKILL – Develop personal ideas from reading news stories
(NC 6,7,8) Recognise effects of language choices (NC 2f & 3)

Expected Response

- Easter associations, Christian calendar, Easter calendar, Eggs of all kinds, Chocolate egg origins

LOOK AT THE ARTICLE ‘EASTER AROUND THE WORLD’

10. Read about the traditions in the four places around the world. Think about how you will be spending Easter. Do you celebrate it in any way, even if it's just eating chocolate eggs, or do you have any unique Easter traditions at your home?

Write a paragraph to explain your own Easter traditions.

READING SKILL – Develop personal ideas from reading news stories
(NC 6,7,8)

Example Response

- In my family around Easter we have a big Easter egg hunt in the park. This is a fun activity for me and my brother – and my parents really enjoy hiding the eggs too! Our annual Easter egg hunt reminds me how important it is to spend time all together as a family so, to me, it is a symbol of family and fun.