



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 date 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?



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.



HAUX, FRANCE

Omelette, anyone? In this town 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!





Part A: Find and explain the facts

A1. Which Christian belief does Easter celebrate?

A2. Complete the table by identifying the country that each of the following Easter traditions come from. Then describe each tradition.

Tradition	Country	Description
The cooking of a giant omelette on Easter Monday.		
“Sprinkling”		
Scoppio del Carro (explosion of the cart)		

A3. Where did the inspiration for chocolate eggs come from?

A4. What has the region of Mesopotamia become?

A5. What is the ‘Osterhase’ or ‘Oschter Haws’?

Part B: Deduce and infer information

B1. Easter falls on a different date each year. Why is it “up to the moon”?

B2. Why are eggs associated with Easter?

B3. In Australia, why do they have an Easter Bilby instead of an Easter Bunny?

B4. How did the tradition of the Easter Bunny spread?

B5. How do non-Christians celebrate Easter?

Part C: Analyse the writing and presentation

C1. Analyse the use of the word “EGG-CELLENT” in the headline.

C2. The writer describes bunnies as “little fellows.” How does this choice of words support the assertion that we appreciate bunnies more than they do in Australia?

C3. To what effect are questions used in this article?



Part A: Find and explain the facts

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TEACHER ANSWERS

AIM OF THE NEWS COMPREHENSIONS

News reports are unique non-fiction texts. Being real, they naturally engage students, 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 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 for responses that students would be expected to give at the start of KS3. Further suggestions then give fuller, more developed responses that students will work towards by the end of KS3, in preparation for the non-fiction elements of GCSE English language.

Part A: Find and explain the facts

A1. Which Christian belief does Easter celebrate?

READING SKILL-Find and explain information

Possible answer

Starting point

- Easter is a time when Christians look back to when they believe Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross.

Development

- The day when he died is known as Good Friday and then he came back to life on Easter Sunday.

A2. Complete the table by identifying the country that each of the following Easter traditions come from. Then describe each tradition.

READING SKILL-Find and explain information

Possible answer

Starting point-some relevant information identified

Developed response-all relevant information identified and clearly explained

Tradition	Country	Description
The cooking of a giant omelette on Easter Monday.	France	A giant omelette made with 4,500 eggs is served as 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. He liked his omelette so much that he ordered the townspeople to gather their eggs and make a giant omelette for his army the next day.
“Sprinkling”	Hungary	This is an Easter Monday tradition where boys playfully ‘sprinkle’ perfume, cologne or just plain water on girls, in exchange for a painted egg.
Scoppio del Carro (explosion of the cart)	Italy	This is a 350-year-old Easter tradition. A well-decorated cart, packed with fireworks, is led through the streets of Florence by people in colourful 15 th century costumes. The fireworks are then set off by an archbishop.

A3. Where did the inspiration for chocolate eggs come from?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

Possible answer

Expected response

- The inspiration for chocolate eggs came from France and Germany in the 19th century.



A4. What has the region of Mesopotamia become?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

Possible answer

Expected response

- The region of Mesopotamia is now Syria and Iraq.

A5. What is the ‘Osterhase’ or ‘Oschter Haws’?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

Possible answer

Starting point

- The ‘Osterhase’ or ‘Oschter Haws’ is an egg-laying hare.

Development

- In Germany, there is a tradition of putting coloured eggs in a nest for the ‘Osterhase’ or ‘Oschter Haws’. It is thought that this is the origin of the Easter bunny legend.

Part B: Deduce and infer information

B1. Easter falls on a different date each year. Why is it “up to the moon”?

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

Possible answer

Starting point

- The date of Easter is “up to the moon” because it follows the lunar calendar.

Development

- The lunar calendar is based upon the monthly cycles of the moon’s phases. Easter will always fall on the Sunday after the first full moon following 21 March. Therefore, it can fall on any date between 22 March and 25 April.

B2. Why are eggs associated with Easter?

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

Possible answer

Starting point

- Eggs are associated with Easter because early Christians in Mesopotamia would exchange chicken eggs with one another as a symbol of the day that Jesus was reborn.

Development

- Eggs symbolise new life because some baby animals hatch from them. Therefore, it is fitting that eggs are associated with Easter as the festival celebrates Jesus coming back to life.

B3. In Australia, why do they have an Easter Bilby instead of an Easter Bunny?

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

Possible answer

Starting point

- In Australia, they have an Easter Bilby instead of an Easter Bunny because they think of rabbits as being pests that ruin their crops and land.

Development

- As bunnies are not looked upon favourably it would be odd to have them associated with a festival that many people enjoy. Instead, they have an Easter Bilby which is a rabbit-eared bandicoot.

B4. How did the tradition of the Easter Bunny spread?

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

Possible answer

Starting point

- There is controversy over the origins of the legend of the Easter Bunny. However, most people think that it originated with the ‘Osterhas’ or ‘Oschter Haws’ in Germany.

Development

- It is believed that the tradition then spread through Europe, before eventually being taken to places like America by immigrants.



B5. How do non-Christians celebrate Easter?

READING SKILL- Infer information and justify with evidence from the text

Possible answer

Starting point

- Lots of non-Christians do celebrate Easter even though many of the ways they celebrate link back to Christian beliefs.

Development

- For example, many non-Christians exchange eggs on Easter day.

Part C: Analyse the writing and presentation

C1. Analyse the use of the word “EGG-CELLENT” in the headline.

READING SKILL – Recognise effect of language choices

Possible answer

Starting point

- The word “EGG-CELLENT” is used in the headline instead of “excellent” in order to bring humour to the headline.

Development

- The use of the pun is highlighted by the hyphen and it is appropriate because eggs are commonly exchanged to celebrate Easter.
- The focus on “EGG” also prepares the reader for the main body text in which there is an explanation of why the giving of eggs is an Easter tradition.
- The headline also reads like an Easter message to the reader. It is the sort of thing that someone might say to a friend. This helps the reader to relate to the writer and to want to read what has been written.

C2. The writer describes bunnies as “little fellows.” How does this choice of words support the assertion that we appreciate bunnies more than they do in Australia?

READING SKILL – Recognise effect of language choices

Possible answer

Starting point

- The phrase “little fellow” is an informal friendly form of address for something small. Therefore, by referring to bunnies as “little fellows” the writer shows that he views them favourably as cute, adorable creatures.

Development

- The reference is at odds with the information in the rest of the sentence in which the writer explains that Australians do not appreciate bunnies because they ruin their land. Pests would not usually be referred to as “little fellows”! Therefore, by using the phrase, the writer distances himself from the Australian lack of appreciation for bunnies.

C3. To what effect are questions used in this article?

READING SKILL – Explain methods used by the writer with appropriate use of terminology

Possible answer

Starting point – simple comment on the use of questions

Developed response – detailed explanation on the effect of the use of questions

- In the lead paragraph the question is answered in the main body text. Therefore, a question and answer format is being used to hook the reader.
- In the section about how Easter is celebrated in Australia, the rhetorical question: “Which do you think are cuter: bunnies or bilbies?” is used to encourage readers to develop their own views based on what they’ve read.
- In the section about Easter traditions in France, the rhetorical question “Omelette, anyone?” is used to create a friendly, light-hearted tone in order to engage the reader and maintain interest.