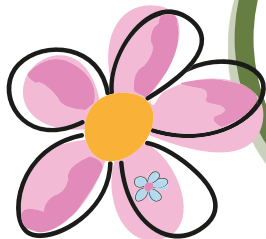


**1** How do we celebrate May Day? Read the May Day poem and complete the gaps with the words in the list and find out.

• everyone • head • door • near

# 1st May



It's the first of May, and May day is here.  
Today we can celebrate that summer is **1)** \_\_\_\_\_.

A **maypole** with ribbons; blue, yellow and red.  
A **May Queen** with flowers on top of her **2)** \_\_\_\_\_.

Make a **May basket** with flowers and more.  
Then leave it outside somebody's **3)** \_\_\_\_\_.

Let's celebrate today and have some fun.  
A happy May Day to **4)** \_\_\_\_\_!



**2** Label the pictures with words in bold from the poem.



**1** \_\_\_\_\_

**2** \_\_\_\_\_

**3** \_\_\_\_\_

**3** Find the words in the list in the word grid below. Use the leftover letters from the grid to complete the banner.

• MAY DAY • SUMMER • MAYPOLE • QUEEN • BASKET • FLOWERS

M	B	A	S	K	E	T
A	H	Q	U	E	E	N
Y	A	P	M	P	Y	M
D	A	Y	M	D	A	Y
A	T	O	E	E	V	E
Y	R	Y	R	O	N	E
F	L	O	W	E	R	S
M	A	Y	P	O	L	E

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



1 Match the texts (1-4) to the pictures (A-D).



# May

## DAY

in the UK

### Customs and Symbols

In the UK, May Day is a celebration of spring and the coming of summer. It takes place on the first Monday in May each year. All over the country, different towns and villages hold May Day celebrations.

#### 1 THE MAYPOLE

The Maypole is an important part of a May Day celebration. It is a tall pole with colourful ribbons on it. On May Day, people dance around the maypole each holding a ribbon in their hand.

#### 2 THE MAY QUEEN

Every year, each area chooses a young girl to be the May Queen and lead the parade. On May Day, the May Queen usually wears a white dress and a crown of flowers on her head.

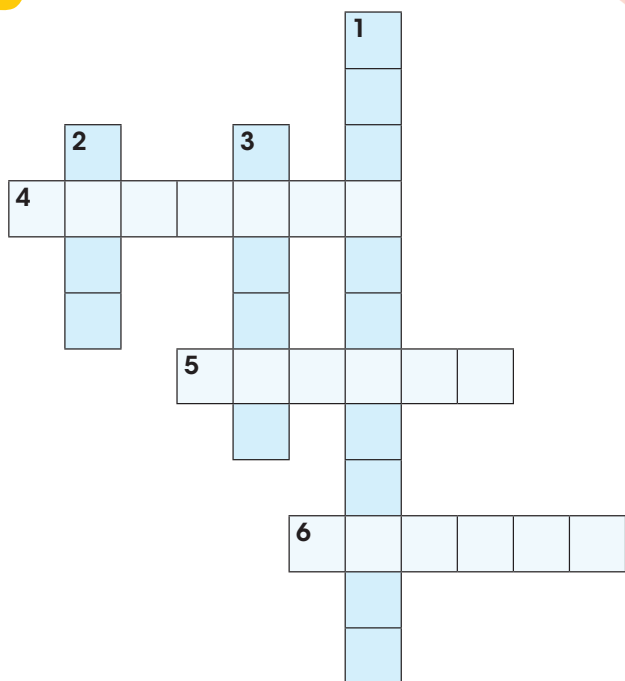
#### 3 JACK-IN-THE-GREEN

Jack-in-the-Green is another May Day symbol in parts of the UK. Jack-in-the-Green is usually a man who wears green. The costume has got leaves and decorations on it that make it look like a plant.

#### 4 MORRIS DANCERS

At May Day celebrations, you can often see Morris dancers. They usually wear white shirts and trousers with colourful ribbons on them and bells on their legs. Morris dancing is a type of British folk dancing and is a lot of fun!

2 Do the crossword.



#### Down

- 1 There are May Day \_\_\_\_\_ all over the UK.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_-in-the-Green wears a green costume.
- 3 In the UK, May Day is on the first \_\_\_\_\_ in May.

#### Across

- 4 People dance around the \_\_\_\_\_ with ribbons.
- 5 The May Queen leads the May Day \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ dancers wear bells on their legs.

3 **ICT** In groups, find May Day customs or symbols from other countries. Present them to the class.

**1** Read the texts and complete the gaps with words from the box.

- villagers • parade • May Queen • rings • bushes • luck • balloons  
• picnic • funnel cakes • village • tradition • ribbons

# May DAY traditions around the world

## The UK



In the UK, the most common types of May Day celebration include dancing around a maypole with long, colourful **1)** \_\_\_\_\_ and watching a May

Day **2)** \_\_\_\_\_ with musicians, dancers and the **3)** \_\_\_\_\_ who wears a white dress and a crown of flowers on her head.

## Finland



In Finland, people celebrate May Day by spending time outdoors with their friends and family. A lot of people buy colourful **7)** \_\_\_\_\_

with pictures on them. Then, for lunch, they have a **8)** \_\_\_\_\_ outside. They eat special fried cakes with sugar called **9)** \_\_\_\_\_.

One May Day

**4)** \_\_\_\_\_ in Ireland is the May Bush. People go out and decorate hawthorn **5)** \_\_\_\_\_ and trees with ribbons, strings and eggshells. Some people tie their clothes or personal items to the May Bush to bring them good **6)** \_\_\_\_\_.

## Ireland



In Germany people raise the maypole on May Day. It is usually tall with green **10)** \_\_\_\_\_ around it. On the night before May Day, some **11)** \_\_\_\_\_ stay awake to guard the maypole because it is common for others to try to take it away and raise it in their own **12)** \_\_\_\_\_.

## Germany



**2** Use information from the text to find the answer to the clues.

A girl who wears a white dress and flowers: **1**

\_\_\_\_\_

A place where people decorate plants: **4**

\_\_\_\_\_

Something colourful people dance with in Britain: **2**

\_\_\_\_\_

An item that lots of Finnish people buy: **5**

\_\_\_\_\_

A sweet cake people in Finland eat: **3**

\_\_\_\_\_

Something German people guard on 30th April: **6**

\_\_\_\_\_

**3** Use the highlighted letters from Ex. 2 to complete the sentence below!

*In the UK and Ireland, they celebrate May Day on the first*

*\_\_\_\_\_ in May!*

1 Read the text and choose the correct words.

## The Origins of

# May

## DAY



### When is May Day?

May Day is a holiday that originated in Europe. It takes **1) place/part** every year on 1st May in most countries, but on the first Monday in May in the UK and Ireland.

### Why do we celebrate it?

May Day is a celebration of springtime and the start of summer. It is around halfway between the spring equinox in **2) late/latest** March and the summer solstice in late June. The origins of the May Day celebrations date back many years.

### Springtime celebrations

In ancient Rome, the Romans **3) commemorated/celebrated** a five-day springtime festival called Floralia from 28th April to 2nd May. This festival was **4) assigned/devoted** to Flora, the Roman goddess of flowers – this is where the tradition of the May Queen is thought to come from. The Romans worshipped Flora in the hope that she would **5) protect/prevent** all of the spring blossoms. During Floralia, people made floral crowns and wore them throughout the celebrations. They also took part in games and **6) viewed/watched** theatrical and circus performances. Further north in Europe, people in Scotland and Ireland celebrated the Celtic festival Beltane on 1st May. This was another celebration about the passing of winter and the start of summer. People celebrated the growth of plants and the birth of animals and livestock. They **7) collected/piled** wild flowers and made floral garlands. Then, in the evening, they lit bonfires and danced around them to celebrate the end of the dark winter months.

### Modern May Day celebrations

After the Romans invaded the British Isles, the two festivals, Floralia and Beltane, slowly became **8) joined/combined** to make May Day what it is today. Of course, over the years, some May Day traditions have **9) lost/disappeared** and some newer ones have appeared. One example of this is the maypole, a tall pole or tree trunk decorated with colourful ribbons. On May Day, in several European countries including the UK and Germany, people dance around the maypole and have done so since medieval times. However, the exact origin of this custom **10) remains/keeps** a mystery.



2 Using information from the text, answer this May Day quiz.

## May Day Quiz

- 1 What is true about May Day in the UK?  
A It is always on a Monday.  
B It takes place annually on 1st May.  
C It happens on the same date each year.
- 2 Where was Beltane NOT celebrated?  
A Scotland  
B Ireland  
C Italy
- 3 Flora, the goddess of flowers comes from \_\_\_ mythology.  
A Roman  
B British  
C Celtic
- 4 When did Beltane traditionally take place?  
A 28th April  
B 1st May  
C 2nd May
- 5 Where did the tradition of dancing around the maypole come from?  
A Germany  
B the UK  
C It is unknown.

Key: 1A, 2C, 3A, 4B, 5C

3 **ICT** In groups, find more interesting May Day facts from different countries and present them to the class.

### May Day FACT!

In Italy, May Day is thought to be the happiest day of the year!

## May Day A1

1

1 near

2 head

3 door

4 everyone

2

1 May Queen

2 maypole

3 May basket

3

M	B	A	S	K	E	T
A	H	Q	U	E	E	N
Y	A	P	M	P	Y	M
D	A	Y	M	D	A	Y
A	T	O	E	E	V	E
Y	R	Y	R	O	N	E
F	L	O	W	E	R	S
M	A	Y	P	O	L	E

HAPPY MAY DAY TO EVERYONE

## May Day A2

1

1C

2A

3D

4B

**2**

**DOWN**

**1** CELEBRATIONS

**2** JACK

**3** MONDAY

**ACROSS**

**4** MAYPOLE

**5** PARADE

**6** MORRIS

**3**

*Ss' own answers*

**May Day B1**

**1**

1 ribbons

2 parade

3 May Queen

4 tradition

5 bushes

6 luck

7 balloons

8 picnic

9 funnel cakes

10 rings

11 villagers

12 village

**2**

1 MAY QUEEN

2 RIBBONS

3 FUNNEL CAKE

4 FINLAND

5 BALLOON

6 MAYPOLE

**3**

Monday

### **May Day B2**

**1**

1 place

2 late

3 celebrated

4 devoted

5 protect

6 watched

7 collected

8 joined

9 disappeared

10 remains

**2**

Answers on document

**3**

*Ss' own answers*