

UNIT 9

CHAPTER 1 How Do You Celebrate?

Before You Read

Unique Festivals

- A** Which countries celebrate these festivals? Match the country to the festival.

Thailand England India Spain Mexico

- 1 **Day of the Dead:** People pray for the dead, and decorate graves with food, candles, and flowers. They also dress up as skeletons and bake bread in the shape of skulls. _____
- 2 **La Tomatina:** People gather to throw thousands of tomatoes at each other in the town square. _____
- 3 **Holi:** Participants sing and dance, and throw colored powders and water at each other. _____
- 4 **Songkran:** People try to soak each other using containers of water or water guns. They might also hide with garden hoses to splash people. _____
- 5 **Cheese Rolling Festival:** Each year, an official throws blocks of cheese down a very steep hill, and participants chase and try to catch them. _____

- B** Discuss your answers with a partner. What other unique festivals do you know?

Reading Skill

Scanning

When we scan, we look for information that we want and ignore other information. On tests, scanning can be useful when checking if a fact is true or false, or to find the place in a passage about which a question is asked.

- A** Read the expressions below. Circle the best word(s) to complete each expression.

- 1 (tell / share / say) goodbye
- 2 (have / make / teach) a promise
- 3 (use / lose / spend) weight
- 4 (all / most / total) night
- 5 (get / take / receive) place
- 6 (enter / jump / join) the party
- 7 (get / take / have) together

- B** Now scan the passage on the next page to find the expressions and check your answers.

- C** Read the entire passage carefully. Then answer the questions on page 110.

Set high expectations for yourself. Keep your learning goals high. Stay focused on your professional and personal goals for learning English. If you do, it will be easier to achieve them.

How Do You Celebrate?

New Year's Day

New Year is one of the most popular **festivals** in the world, even though it is **celebrated** at different times and in different ways. In many western countries, people get together with
5 family and friends on December 31 to eat, drink, and dance as they wait for January 1. Some of the biggest parties are held on New Year's Eve. In many cities, crowds gather in the center of town to welcome the new year at midnight with fireworks.

For many Asian countries like China, Taiwan, and Vietnam,
10 the New Year is based on a lunar calendar.¹ The date changes from year to year, but usually falls between January 21 and February 21. It is traditionally seen as a time for family **reunions**, with people traveling across the country and from overseas. Many people wear red clothes, as it is thought to be a lucky color. They also give "lucky money" in red
15 envelopes to friends and family, and set off firecrackers² to scare away bad luck.

What's common among these celebrations is the meaning of the new year; it is a time to say goodbye to the past and to think about new beginnings. For example, in Japan, people organize *bonenkai* parties ("year forgetting parties"), which are **dedicated to**
20 Year's resolutions—promises to themselves to make changes in their lives over the coming year, such as to lose weight, stop smoking, or learn a new skill.



Carnival

In late February or early March, some countries celebrate a special festival called Carnival. Carnival is thought to have
25 originated in Italy or Greece, and was held just before Lent, the 40-day period before Easter³. People dressed in costumes, wore colorful **masks**, ate, drank, and danced all night. This tradition **spread** to France, Spain, Portugal,
30 and later to Brazil and the United States.

Now, two of the biggest Carnival celebrations take place in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, and New Orleans in the United States. There are grand **parades** where people wear **flashy** costumes and dance and sing in the streets.
35 In New Orleans, Carnival is known as Mardi Gras. Many roads and shops are shut down for the celebrations which can last for up to three weeks. Millions of visitors travel from around the world to join the party, and many more watch the event on television.



¹ A **lunar calendar** is based on the stages of the moon rather than the sun.

² A **firecracker** is a small paper case that can be exploded to make noise

³ **Easter** is a religious holiday for Christians.

Reading Comprehension

Check Your Understanding

A Read the following sentences. Check (✓) true (T) or false (F). If the sentence is false, change it to make it true.

	T	F
1 In many western countries, New Year starts after midnight on December 31.		
2 In some Asian countries, the new year starts on January 21 and ends on February 21.		
3 Red clothes and envelopes are said to bring good luck.		
4 Carnival is one of the days of Lent.		
5 The Mardi Gras is famous all over the world.		

B Read the following sentences. Check (✓) whether they are true for New Year (N), Carnival (C), or both.

	N	C
1 People have parties and celebrations in the streets.		
2 People get together with friends and family.		
3 This festival is celebrated all over the world.		
4 This festival can last up to three weeks.		
5 People make promises to themselves during this time.		
6 People wear brightly colored clothes.		

Critical Thinking

C Discuss the following questions with a partner.

- Why do you think people need to welcome the start of the new year?
- Why do you think festivals are important? What purpose do they serve?

Vocabulary Comprehension

Definitions

A Match each word with its definition. The words in blue are from the passage

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1 _____ reunion | a to give something a lot of time and effort |
| 2 _____ spread | b very bright and colorful |
| 3 _____ mask | c to have a party (for a happy reason) |
| 4 _____ festival | d this covers your face or eyes |
| 5 _____ dedicate to | e to move in many directions |
| 6 _____ parade | f a day or time of year when people celebrate a special event |
| 7 _____ celebrate | g a meeting between people who haven't seen each other for a <i>long time</i> |
| 8 _____ flashy | h people walking down the street together with music and costumes |