



Festival of the Dead

Listen!



Let's Think

1. Is there a festival related to death in Hong Kong?
2. What do people do at this festival?

You are Daniel. You are reading a web page about a special festival.

http://www.el_dia_de_los_muertos.com

FESTIVAL OF THE DEAD



What is death to the Mexicans?

The Mexicans hold a special view on death. We can understand more about it through the traditional Mexican festival—el día de los muertos (The Day of the Dead).

The natives in Mexico and South America had developed their own religions and traditions long before the two regions were colonised. They were based on the belief that death is not an end, but a stage that leads to the afterlife. Later when the Spanish arrived, the natives adapted their customs to the European and Christian traditions, and selected All Souls Day, a Christian occasion, as the time to pray for the dead.

When and how is the festival celebrated?

The Day of the Dead falls on 2nd November. During the festival, oversized skulls and skeletons can be seen on every corner: in the form of costumes on the streets and paintings in homes and restaurants. Cookies and pastries are prepared by many families. Shrines are decorated with orange flowers. Some people choose to spend the festival beside the graves of their loved ones.

This festival is similar to the Chinese Ghost Month where people believe the dead can connect with the living during the festival. However, the atmosphere of this Mexican festival is not gloomy at all since it is a time when the Mexicans celebrate life and honour those who have passed away.



(226 words)

Part A

Answer the following questions using the information from the web page. Choose the **BEST** answer and blacken **ONE** circle only.

- The main purpose of web page is to _____.
 - A. explain how special the Mexicans are
 - B. describe how the Spanish colonised Mexico
 - C. introduce a Mexican festival that shows respect to those who have died
 - D. introduce the drinks and food made for The Day of the Dead
- During both the Chinese Ghost Month and the Festival of the Dead, it is believed that _____.
 - A. those who have passed away will be brought to life again
 - B. ghosts with no homes will come back for food
 - C. the dead can connect with the living
 - D. the more food you prepare, the luckier you will be
- The word 'gloomy' in line 23 is closest in meaning to '_____'.
 - A. happy
 - B. nervous
 - C. unhappy
 - D. excited
- People in Mexico think of death as _____.
 - A. the final end of life
 - B. the path to the afterlife
 - C. nothing meaningful
 - D. something to be fared
- According to the article, _____.
 - A. Mexico was once under Spain's rule
 - B. the Festival of the Dead is celebrated in the same month as Chinese Ghost Month
 - C. the Mexicans prepare no food for the festival
 - D. some Mexicans like to decorate the graves of their loved ones with paintings

Grammar Corner

We use **prepositions of place** to talk about where someone or something is.

e.g. *Skeletons can be seen on every corner: in the form of costumes on the streets and paintings in homes and restaurants.*
(Lines 14-16)

e.g. *Some people choose to spend the festival beside the graves of their loved ones.*
(Lines 17-18)

Read the words after 'gloomy' in the same sentence. Is the verb 'celebrate' positive or negative?

Part B

Answer the following questions using the information from the web page. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1. What is the other name of the Festival of the Dead?

2. In line 7, what does 'They' refer to?

3. How did the Spanish affect the Mexicans after they arrived in Mexico?

4. What are the two purposes of the Festival of the Dead?

(a) To _____

(b) To _____

5. Complete the following fact sheet about the Festival of the Dead. Fill in each blank with one word only. All the words can be found on the web page.

| | Festival of the Dead |
|-------------------|--|
| Food | • (a) _____ and (b) _____ |
| Decoration | • (c) _____ and (d) _____ |
| | • (e) _____ are decorated with orange flowers |
| Custom | • people stay beside the (f) _____ of their loved ones |

6. Find a word which means 'places where people show respect to their loved ones who have passed away' in the third paragraph.

Vocabulary Bank

The following are things related to the Festival of the Dead. Match each of them with the correct pictures. One of the words is not used.

- orange marigolds catrina makeup cemetery
- calavera mask pan de muerto (bread of the dead)
- mariachi band calaca figurine sugar skull pumpkin



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.

Let's Discuss

1. The Mexicans view death in a positive way. How does Chinese culture view death? Why?
2. How do Chinese people show respect to their ancestors?