

Independence Day



Dear Jessica,

Hooray for the red, white, and blue! (That's what my dad says. :-))
Happy Fourth of July to you.

I like July 4th best of all celebrations. For one thing, it happens in summer. That means warm days and no school. Also, my whole family gets together. None of us wants to miss the fun! My uncles buy really good fireworks. They get sparklers for the kids. You should see this place after dark!

Did you know I have seventeen cousins? That's enough for two softball teams. It seems like we play games and swim all day long! Capture the Flag is a good game for July 4th. We play with an American flag that Grandma made. She said that July 4th is America's birthday. That is why it is so exciting.



My family always goes to the big parade in town. Each one of us waves a flag. My cousin plays in the marching band. Here is a photo I took. The parade made me feel proud to live in America. I really love my country.

DID YOU KNOW?

July 4th is America's birthday. In 1776, we told the king of Great Britain that we wanted to be free. After a long, hard war, a new country was born.

After the parade, we watch a pie eating contest. Some of the pies look like American flags. Mom says things like, "That's as American as apple pie." Do you think that's why we eat a lot of pie on July 4th? I could never eat as much or as fast as the winner!

Later today, we'll start cooking. We make red, white, and blue foods. Aunt Sarah makes a salad with red potatoes. We have blue corn chips. Uncle Doug cooks the reddest hot dogs he can find. Later, we have berries and vanilla ice cream!

I can't wait for the fireworks tonight. I hope you see some, too. Happy Fourth of July!

Love,
Brianna



CHUSEOK (추석)



My family lives near Seoul, the biggest city in South Korea. Every fall when there is a full moon, South Koreans celebrate *Chuseok*. *Chuseok* is like America's Thanksgiving, but it lasts for three days. We give thanks for a good harvest of rice and other foods. We also honor our ancestors. Ancestors are family members from long ago.

We have a lot of things to do before *Chuseok*. Everyone in my family gets some new clothes. My mother and sisters prepare rice cakes, called *songpyeon*. They try to make each one perfect. We also plan what to do and see on our last day.



songpyeon

The day before *Chuseok*, we take a train to my father's village. The train is always crowded with other families leaving the city. Like us, they are happy and excited. We compliment each other's *hanbok*, which is the traditional dress of Korea. After a few hours, we're there!



a park in Seoul, Korea

My father's parents live on a small farm. They have lived there all their lives. They grow rice and vegetables on their farm. We all greet each other as we crowd into their small house.

Early the next morning, we have a special ceremony called *charye*. We give thanks to our ancestors. We honor them by cleaning their graves. Later, we give thanks for a good harvest and for all our blessings. Then we sit down and eat, eat, eat!

On the last day of *Chuseok*, our family goes into Seoul. Usually the city streets are crowded, but not on this day. So many families are still out in the country! It's a good time to see the beautiful temples and parks in Seoul. I think my favorite is the Korean Folk Village.

DID YOU
KNOW?

Ancestors are very important in many Asian countries. People honor them because they lived before us. They helped make us who we are.

EARTH DAY



The first Earth Day was on April 22, 1970. It was started by Americans who were worried about the environment. They wanted people to take better care of Earth. Now, more than 190 countries around the world have Earth Day activities and celebrations.

People have different ways of celebrating Earth Day. Some groups plant trees or collect trash. Some towns have parades. The idea is to get everyone thinking about the planet. Earth Day is about clean air to breathe, fresh water to drink, and open spaces for everyone to enjoy. Earth Day reminds us that every one of us can help protect our home.

Today's children are tomorrow's adults. Earth Day activities for children are especially important. In India, students can enter art contests and win prizes. There is a Canadian website that shows kids how to grow sprouts or build a bee house. These may sound like very small things to do, but they can make a difference. The hope is that fewer people litter and more families try to turn off lights and use less water.

A great part about Earth Day is the food. Every celebration has special foods. For Earth Day, why not try new

DID YOU KNOW?

An American family like yours can **help the Earth**. Use less water. Ride bikes or take a bus instead of driving. Turn off the lights when you leave a room.

foods that are healthy for the planet? For example, eat foods that come in their own packaging, like bananas!

Your school probably has an Earth Day program. If not, you can help our planet by starting one. You're going to be living here for a long, long time. Why not start today and make your home as healthy as it can be? Happy Earth Day!



Independencia



Mexico is an independent country now, but it wasn't always. For 300 years, it was a colony of Spain. That started to change on September 16, 1810, in a little village called *Dolores*. The people there were tired of being poor and hungry. Their priest, Father Hidalgo, tried to help them. He asked them to join him in fighting the Spanish. His fiery speech started Mexico's long battle for independence.

Now, Independence Day is a big holiday in Mexico. Late at night on September 15, the President of Mexico stands on the balcony of his palace. A crowd cheers below him. Then a church bell rings. The President

Mexico's Independence Day parade

gives a speech and then cries, “Mexicanos! Viva México!” The crowds shout back, “Viva México! Viva México! Viva México!” This is the *Grito de Dolores*, the battle cry of Mexican independence.



A Mexican leader speaking on Independence Day

All over Mexico, people celebrate Independence Day with fireworks, festivals, rodeos, and dancing. They fly red, white, and green flags everywhere. They make foods that are red, white, and green.

Many places in Texas also celebrate Mexico’s Independence

Day. San Antonio has a big parade every year. *Caballeros*, or cowboys, ride horses and carry flags from Texas and Mexico. The city of Austin has a celebration at the Fiesta Gardens. Musicians from Mexico and Texas play all kinds of music. Dancers in colorful costumes perform Mexican folk dances. Mexican foods, like *gorditas* and tacos, are served all day.

Mexico’s fight against Spain was not easy. It took eleven years, and there were many battles. Today’s holiday celebrations remind us about that long, hard fight.

DID YOU KNOW?

Mexico is the country that borders the United States to the south. Many people have moved from Mexico to Texas. That is why so many cities in Texas celebrate *Diez y Seis*.

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BY JENNIFER SIMON
Bay Times Staff Writer

SAN FRANCISCO—It's that time of year again. Dragons snake through the streets of our city. Lions dance. Children carry lanterns under a full moon. Thousands of people come to Chinatown. Everyone celebrates Chinese New Year!

You will hear “Gung hey fat choy!” This is a Chinese greeting that wishes you joy and good luck. You will see a lot of people wearing red. To the Chinese, red is a bright color that brings a happy new year.

The Chinese New Year lasts for fifteen days. You can imagine how much has to be done to get ready.

People clean their houses from top to bottom. They buy special foods and candy. They make sure to have flowers in their home.

For Chinese families, the New Year is a time to be together. It is a time when people honor their family members from long ago.

Each day of the celebration has a different meaning. A family must do certain things on each day. They don't want to bring bad luck on themselves.

There is always a full moon on the last night of Chinese New Year. People

hang lanterns in their homes. The lanterns mark the return of spring. Children carry lanterns in a big, noisy parade for the Lantern Festival. People eat round balls of sticky rice flour, called *Tang Yuan*. Eating this food is important on Chinese New Year.

Many Chinese people live in San Francisco. That means that San Francisco is a great place in the United States to be for Chinese New Year. Just watch out for the dragons, lions, and firecrackers!



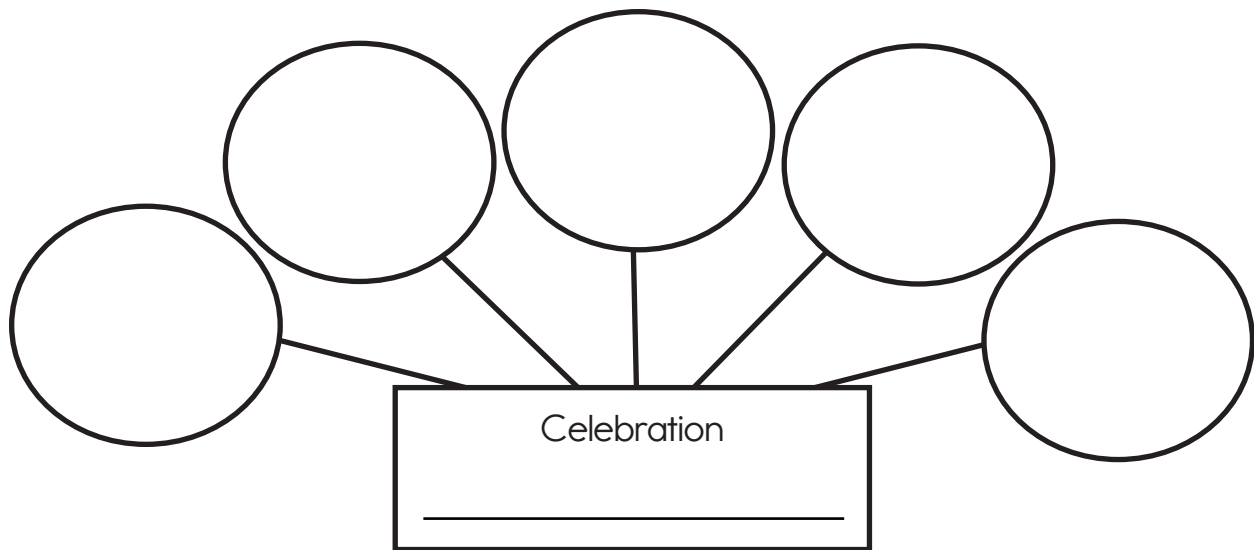
DID YOU KNOW?

Chinese New Year is a very old celebration. Long ago, people believed that they could make their own luck. Even today, people hope for good luck in the new year.

Name _____

 **Key Question***What makes a celebration great?* **On Your Own**

1. Read the Key Question. Then read the passage. Look for details in the text that help you answer the Key Question. Circle or underline these details.
2. Now look at the Web Diagram below. In the bottom box, write the name of the celebration your passage tells about. Write details in the balloons that tell what makes the celebration great.



3. Think about the Key Question. Write your answer to the Key Question using the details you found in the passage you read.

 **My First Answer**

Name _____

Key Question

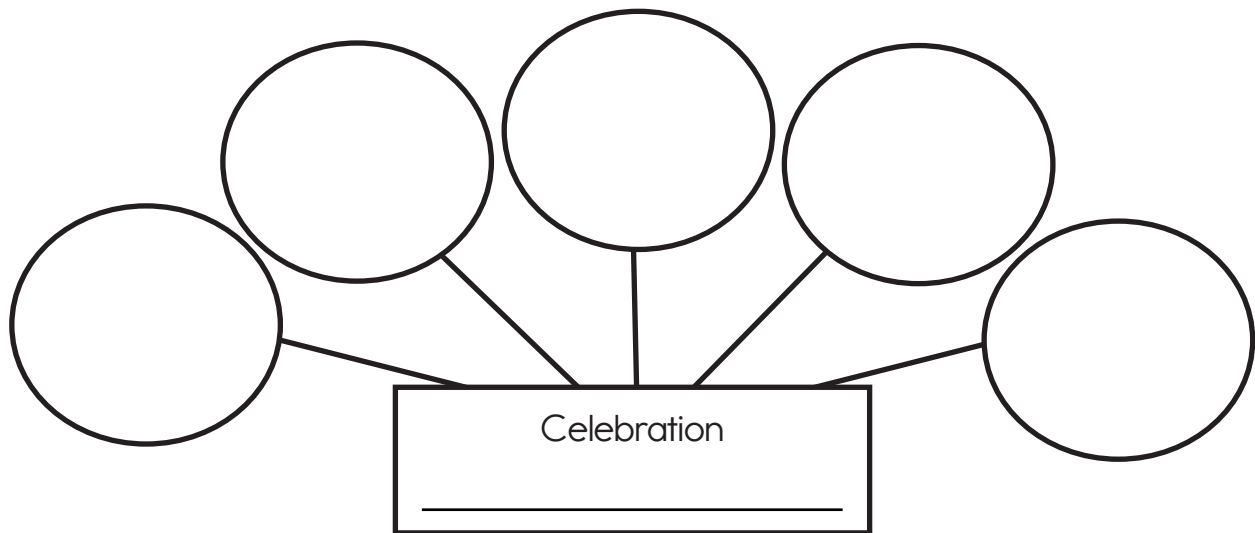
What makes a celebration great?

Share Your Ideas

Meet with your team. Talk about each passage your team read.

1. Tell the team about the celebration you read about. Show your Web Diagram. Describe what the people in your passage did to celebrate.
2. Look at the Web Diagrams your team made. Compare ideas about what makes a celebration great. Answer these questions together:
 - *How are the celebrations in the passages alike? How are they different?*
 - *What are some things that all people did to celebrate?*

Write the details that answer the Key Question on the diagram below.
Include only the details that connect to every passage your team read.



Answer the Key Question

Review the details on your team's diagram. As a team, write an answer to the Key Question. Use details from the passage to support your answer.

What makes a celebration great?

Our Team's Answer
