

Valentine's Day

WORKSHEET 1

On February 14th, lovers all around the world send their partners a message of their love. Although the tradition is similar in most countries, there are some slight differences.

1. What do you know about Valentine's celebrations in these countries? Discuss in pairs or small groups.

United States of America China France Germany Korea
Denmark Great Britain Italy Japan

2. Read Worksheet 2 and answer these questions:

- a) Which countries have more than one Valentine's Day?
- b) Which country has a Valentine's Day for people without a partner?
- c) Which country offers people an opportunity to end their relationship on this day?
- d) In which country did young women use to dream about their future husband the night before Valentine's Day?
- e) Which country celebrates Valentine's Day on the seventh day of the seventh month?
- f) In which country is the Valentine's card signed in code?
- g) In which country is the Valentine's card unsigned?
- h) Would a German woman be happy to receive six red roses on Valentine's Day?
- i) In which country is it the custom for young couples to get engaged on Valentine's Day?
- j) Where could you see young women throwing images of their Valentines in the fire a long time ago?
- k) Where would you expect to eat black food if you are single?
- l) In which country do women give chocolates to more than one man on Valentine's Day?

Valentine's Day around the world

WORKSHEET 2

China

The Chinese celebrate Valentine's Day on February 14th, but they also celebrate a special Valentine's Day on July 7th of the Chinese lunar calendar. This celebration comes from a Chinese fairy tale from a long time ago. It is the only night in the year when two stars meet in the skies above. One star represents a shepherd boy and the other is his love, a weaver.

Great Britain

In Great Britain on the eve of St. Valentine's Day, women used to pin four bay leaves to the corner of their pillow and then eat boiled eggs with salt. They believed they would dream of their future husbands. Another custom was to write the names of eligible young men on pieces of paper and stick them to balls of clay. They would then drop them into water and watch and wait. The first name to rise first would, they believed, be their future husband.

These days it is more customary to send your secret love an unsigned greetings card, in the hope that he or she will know who sent it and send a card in return.

Japan

In Japan there are two Valentine's Days. The first is on February 14th and the other is on March 14th. On February 14th women give chocolates not only to their boyfriends but also to their bosses and to boys who are friends. The men don't have to give anything. On March 14th, which is called 'White Day', the men must buy chocolates (or other sweets) for their girlfriends or wives.

United States of America

Most people in the United States treat Valentine's Day as an opportunity to express their feelings towards their loved one or to offer the hand of friendship to others. However, a popular trend these days is to send an 'anti-Valentine' card. These cards either contain an insulting message (to your enemy) or say goodbye (to your existing partner). If you receive a card with the message *C-Ya!* (See you!), it means your boyfriend or girlfriend wants to end your relationship.

Denmark

In Denmark, people swap poems and sweets. Some people also send joke cards, which are called *gaekkbrev*, and instead of writing their name, they sign it in dots. If the person who receives the card correctly guesses the identity of the sender, they will get a candy egg from the sender at Easter time.

Italy

There is a custom in Italy for young couples to get engaged on Valentine's Day. Some shops sell china baskets and cups which are filled with sweets and tied with ribbons. The young romantics offer these to each other as a token of their love.

France

A long time ago, the French custom for Valentine's Day involved young women going into one house and young men going into another house, opposite the first house. They would then call out of the windows to each other. If, in the end, the man was not attracted to his partner, he would desert her. Later on in the day, a bonfire would be lit and the women would insult and burn images of the young men who had deserted them.

Korea

The Valentine's Day tradition in Korea is similar to that of Japan. On February 14th, many young women give candies to their boyfriend, and on March 14th their boyfriends buy them chocolate. However, the young people who didn't have a girlfriend or boyfriend in February or March get to celebrate their own day on April 14th. On this special day, called 'Black Day', young singles sit with their friends, who are the same situation, and eat *jajang* noodles, which are black. This ensures that everyone has a day to celebrate.

Germany

Young German men present their loved ones with a beautiful bouquet of flowers on Valentine's Day, along with a message of love. They must remember, though, to give an odd number (1, 3, 5 etc.) and not an even number (2, 4, 6 etc.), otherwise it could bring them bad luck.

