

Valentine's Day

WORKSHEET A

Exercise 1

On 14th February each year, people around the world send their lovers a romantic message. Although the tradition is similar in many countries, there are some slight differences. What do you know about Valentine's Day celebrations in these countries? Discuss in pairs or small groups.

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

Exercise 2

Read the text on Worksheet B and answer these questions.

1. Which countries have more than one Valentine's Day?
2. Which country has a Valentine's Day for people without lovers?
3. Which country offers people an opportunity to end their relationship on this day?
4. In which country did young women use to dream about their future husband the night before Valentine's Day?
5. Which country celebrates Valentine's Day on the seventh day of the seventh month?
6. In which country are Valentine's cards signed in code?
7. In which country are Valentine's cards unsigned?
8. Would a German woman be happy to receive six red roses on Valentine's Day?
9. In which country is it the custom for young couples to get engaged on Valentine's Day?
10. Where could you see young women throwing images of their Valentines in the fire a long time ago?
11. Where would you expect to eat black food if you were single on Valentine's Day?
12. In which country do women give chocolates to more than one man on Valentine's Day?

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WORKSHEET B

Great Britain

In Great Britain on the night before 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 would, they believed, be the name of 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.

United States of America

Most people in the USA treat Valentine's Day as an opportunity to express their feelings towards their loved ones, including friends and family members. However, a popular trend these days is to send an 'anti-Valentine' card. These cards are intended to be humorous, and contain negative messages about Valentine's Day or love in general, for people who wish to protest the holiday. Some cards even contain a goodbye message to end a relationship!

Japan

In Japan there are two Valentine's Days. On 14th February, women give chocolates not only to their boyfriends and husbands but also to men who are friends or colleagues. The men don't have to give anything. On 14th March, which is called 'White Day', the men must buy white chocolate or marshmallows for their girlfriends, wives and female friends and colleagues.

Korea

Valentine's Day traditions in Korea are similar to those in Japan. However, in addition, the young people who didn't have a girlfriend or boyfriend in February or March get to celebrate their own day on 14th April. On this special day, called 'Black Day', young singletons 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!

China

The Chinese celebrate Valentine's Day on 14th February, but they also celebrate a special Valentine's Day on 7th July 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 lover, a weaver.

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 chocolate 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 go away and abandon 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 abandoned them.

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) of flowers and not an even number (2, 4, 6 etc), otherwise it could bring them both bad luck.

