



One Date, Two Memories

Read the passage and answer the questions. (CEFR B1–B2)

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

1 National holidays are not only days off; they are statements about what a country chooses to remember. November 3 in Japan is a striking example, because the same date carries two very different memories. Before the war, it honored Emperor Meiji, whose reign saw Japan become a modern industrial and military power. After 1948, it celebrated a constitution that renounced war and placed sovereignty in the hands of the people.



2 Since 2011, some groups and lawmakers have campaigned to rename the holiday Meiji Day, and a cross-party group with 92 members formed in 2022. Supporters say the Meiji era laid the foundations of modern Japan and deserves recognition. Critics, including some scholars and former politicians, argue that the current name reflects postwar ideals of freedom and peace, and that changing it would send the wrong message.

3 Whatever one's view, the debate shows that a calendar is never neutral. Holidays also change slowly over time, because each generation reads old dates in new ways. Japanese students today may know November 3 mainly as a day for school festivals, museums, and autumn walks. Each red day on the calendar is a quiet decision about which stories a nation wants its citizens to keep.

Comprehension

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- (A) November 3 should be renamed Meiji Day as soon as possible. (B) Japanese students do not care about national holidays.
- (C) Emperor Meiji wrote Japan's postwar constitution. (D) November 3 shows that holidays reflect choices about what a nation remembers, and the date carries two different memories.

2. How many members did the cross-party group have when it formed in 2022?

- (A) 92 (B) 11
- (C) 48 (D) 1,948

3. According to the passage, what did the postwar constitution do?

- (A) It made Japan a military power. (B) It renounced war and gave sovereignty to the people.
- (C) It made November 3 the emperor's birthday. (D) It created school festivals.

4. What can be inferred about many Japanese students today?

- (A) They strongly support renaming the holiday. (B) They study the Meiji era every November 3.
- (C) They may not think much about the political history of November 3. (D) They want to go back to the old name, Meiji Setsu.

5. In paragraph 1, the word "renounced" is closest in meaning to

- (A) announced proudly (B) officially gave up
- (C) started again (D) studied carefully

6. Why does the writer say that "a calendar is never neutral"?

- (A) To argue that every holiday reflects a choice about which stories to remember. (B) To complain that calendars are too expensive.
- (C) To prove that Meiji Day is the correct name. (D) To explain why November 3 is usually sunny.



Vocabulary, Paraphrase & Summary

Match the words with the definitions. Then rewrite and summarize.

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|----------------|--|
| 1. statement | a. the basic idea or system that something else is built on |
| 2. striking | b. praise or respect for something good that someone has done |
| 3. reign | c. a belief or principle about how things should be |
| 4. renounce | d. something that clearly shows an opinion or idea, in words or actions |
| 5. sovereignty | e. very easy to notice because it is unusual or interesting |
| 6. foundation | f. the period of time when a king, queen, or emperor rules |
| 7. recognition | g. to officially say that you will no longer do or have something |
| 8. ideal | h. the power to make the final decisions about how a country is governed |

Paraphrase — say it in your own words

1. “National holidays are not only days off; they are statements about what a country chooses to remember.”

Hint: Make two sentences. Use "more than" and "show".

2. “Supporters say the Meiji era laid the foundations of modern Japan and deserves recognition.”

Hint: Start with "People who support the change believe" and use "built the base".

3. “Holidays also change slowly over time, because each generation reads old dates in new ways.”

Hint: Start with "Because" and use "understands" instead of "reads".

Summary

Summarize the passage in about 50 words.



Debate & Opinion Essay

Prepare for a debate. Then write your opinion (100–150 words).

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Motion: November 3 should be renamed Meiji Day.

FOR 賛成

- The Meiji era laid the foundations of modern Japan, including schools, railways, and a modern government, so it deserves a national day of recognition.
- November 3 was a holiday for Emperor Meiji's birthday long before 1948, so the new name would honor the older history of the date.
- Japan already has Constitution Day on May 3, so the constitution would still be remembered even if November 3 were renamed.

Add your own reason:

AGAINST 反対

- Lawmakers in 1948 chose the date because the constitution was promulgated (officially announced) that day, and the law says the day is for loving freedom and peace.
- The Meiji era also saw Japan become a military power. Honoring it by name could send the wrong message to neighboring countries.
- Today many people know November 3 as a day for culture, museums, and school festivals. Changing the name could break a meaning that has grown over 70 years.

Add your own reason:

Opinion	<i>I believe / I think that ...</i>
Reason 1	<i>First, ... For example, ...</i>
Reason 2	<i>Second, ... In fact, ...</i>
Counter	<i>Some people say ... However, ...</i>
Conclusion	<i>In conclusion, ...</i>