



How a Small Festival Became a Big One

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

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

1 In Jewish tradition, Hanukkah is a fairly minor festival. It is not commanded in the Torah, work is permitted, and for centuries it was mostly celebrated quietly at home. Yet in North America today, it is one of the best-known Jewish holidays. Historians link this change to its timing: Hanukkah usually falls in December, close to Christmas.



2 In the nineteenth century, as Christmas grew into a major family and shopping season in America, Jewish leaders began to present Hanukkah as a holiday for children. Gift-giving spread, and stores started selling Hanukkah decorations. Today, some families even give a small present on each of the eight nights. Later, from 1974, public menorah lightings brought the festival into city squares, and in 1979 a U.S. president attended one near the White House.

3 Not everyone welcomes this growth. Some argue that Hanukkah has been turned into a copy of Christmas, while others say its message fits modern life well. After all, it is a story about a small minority that kept its identity under pressure from a powerful culture. For many Jewish families, lighting candles in a window during the Christmas season carries exactly that meaning.

Comprehension

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- (A) Hanukkah is the most important holiday in the Jewish calendar.
- (B) Hanukkah was created in America in the nineteenth century.
- (C) Christmas and Hanukkah tell the same story in different ways.
- (D) A fairly minor festival became well known in North America, partly because it falls near Christmas.

2. Which fact shows that Hanukkah is a fairly minor festival in Jewish tradition?

- (A) It is not commanded in the Torah, and work is permitted.
- (B) It usually falls in December.
- (C) Stores sell decorations for it.
- (D) A U.S. president attended a public lighting.

3. According to the passage, what happened in 1979?

- (A) The first public menorah lighting took place in a city square.
- (B) Jewish leaders began to present Hanukkah as a holiday for children.
- (C) A U.S. president attended a public menorah lighting near the White House.
- (D) Families started giving a present on each of the eight nights.

4. Why do some people probably say that Hanukkah "has been turned into a copy of Christmas"?

- (A) Because Hanukkah now lasts as long as the Christmas season.
- (B) Because gift-giving and store decorations made it look like Christmas.
- (C) Because Hanukkah is now celebrated on December 25.
- (D) Because Jewish families stopped lighting candles at home.

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

- (A) required
- (B) forgotten
- (C) allowed
- (D) paid

6. Why does the writer end with candles in a window during the Christmas season?

- (A) To show how the old message of Hanukkah still has meaning for many families today.
- (B) To advise readers to decorate their windows in December.
- (C) To prove that Hanukkah is now more popular than Christmas.
- (D) To explain how candles are made for Hanukkah.



Vocabulary, Paraphrase & Summary

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

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|-------------|---|
| 1. minor | a. to show or say that two things are connected |
| 2. permit | b. to show or describe something in a particular way |
| 3. link | c. to go to an event, a meeting, or a ceremony |
| 4. present | d. a small group of people who are different in race, religion, or culture from most people around them |
| 5. attend | e. the qualities, beliefs, and history that make a person or group who they are |
| 6. minority | f. a strong influence that pushes someone to act or think in a certain way |
| 7. identity | g. small and not very important when compared with other things |
| 8. pressure | h. to allow someone to do something, often by a rule or law |

Paraphrase — say it in your own words

1. “Historians link this change to its timing: Hanukkah usually falls in December, close to Christmas.”

Hint: Start with "Historians think" and use "happened because". Change "falls in" to "comes in".

2. “Not everyone welcomes this growth.”

Hint: Use "Some people" and "are not happy that". Change "growth" to "has become bigger".

3. “After all, it is a story about a small minority that kept its identity under pressure from a powerful culture.”

Hint: Use "The story shows how" and change "kept its identity" to "stayed true to who they were".

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: It is a good thing that Hanukkah has grown bigger because of Christmas.

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- Public menorah lightings help other people learn about Jewish culture and make Jewish families feel included in December.
- Gift-giving and games make the holiday fun for children, so they are more likely to keep the tradition.
- Lighting candles in a window during the Christmas season shows the original message of Hanukkah, a minority keeping its identity.

Add your own reason:

AGAINST 反対

- Hanukkah has its own story, and copying Christmas customs can hide that story.
- The holiday is fairly minor in Jewish tradition, so making it a big shopping season changes its true place in the calendar.
- If a small festival grows only because of a bigger one, it may lose its identity, which is the opposite of the Hanukkah story.

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>