



Two Birthdays, One Crown

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

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____



- 1 Monarchies around the world have found very different ways to turn a royal birthday into a public holiday. In the United Kingdom, the sovereign's official birthday has been marked since 1748, usually in late spring or early summer, simply because outdoor ceremonies are more likely to enjoy good weather. The Netherlands takes the opposite approach, turning the king's real birthday into a nationwide street festival in orange.
- 2 Japan's system is unusual because the holiday itself moves with each reign. Yet the old dates rarely vanish completely. November 3 survives as Culture Day, and April 29 survives as Showa Day, so the calendar quietly records more than a century of imperial history. Even December 23, now an ordinary working day, still reminds many people of the long weekends they enjoyed before Christmas in the Heisei era.
- 3 Japan once faced the same problem as Britain. During the Taisho era, the emperor's birthday fell in the heat of late August, so the main ceremony was held on October 31 instead. Comparing these customs shows that national holidays are shaped not only by tradition and politics, but also by something as ordinary as the weather.

Comprehension

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- (A) All monarchies celebrate royal birthdays on the real birthday.
(B) Countries celebrate royal birthdays in different ways, and even the weather can shape national holidays.
(C) Japan should copy Britain and create an official birthday.
(D) The Netherlands has the oldest royal birthday holiday in the world.

2. Why is the British sovereign's official birthday usually in late spring or early summer?

- (A) Because the king was born in June.
(B) Because it was the date of a famous battle.
(C) Because outdoor ceremonies are more likely to have good weather.
(D) Because schools are on vacation at that time.

3. According to the passage, what is November 3 now?

- (A) Culture Day.
(B) Showa Day.
(C) The Emperor's Birthday.
(D) An ordinary working day.

4. What can we infer from the sentence about December 23?

- (A) December 23 will become a holiday again soon.
(B) Most people have forgotten the Heisei era.
(C) Christmas is a national holiday in Japan.
(D) People can still feel connected to an old holiday after it stops being one.

5. In paragraph 2, the word "vanish" in "the old dates rarely vanish completely" is closest in meaning to

- (A) change their names
(B) become popular
(C) move to another month
(D) disappear

6. Why does the writer mention the Taisho era in the last paragraph?

- (A) To show that Japan also changed a celebration because of the weather, just like Britain.
(B) To explain why the Taisho emperor was born in August.
(C) To argue that August is the best month for holidays.
(D) To show that the Taisho era was longer than the Heisei era.



Vocabulary, Paraphrase & Summary

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

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1. monarchy | a. normal and not special in any way |
| 2. sovereign | b. a country that is ruled by a king, a queen, or an emperor |
| 3. approach | c. a king or queen who is the official head of a country |
| 4. nationwide | d. a way of dealing with a problem or doing something |
| 5. reign | e. happening or existing in every part of a country |
| 6. vanish | f. the period of time when a king, queen, or emperor rules |
| 7. survive | g. to disappear suddenly or completely |
| 8. ordinary | h. to continue to exist after a change or a difficult time |

Paraphrase — say it in your own words

1. "Japan's system is unusual because the holiday itself moves with each reign."

Hint: Start with "In Japan," and use "changes every time a new emperor".

2. "Yet the old dates rarely vanish completely."

Hint: Use "But" and "almost never disappear" or "often stay".

3. "Comparing these customs shows that national holidays are shaped not only by tradition and politics, but also by something as ordinary as the weather."

Hint: Start with "When we compare these customs, we can see that" and use "influence" instead of "shape".

Summary

Summarize the passage in about 50 words.



Debate & Opinion Essay

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

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

Motion: Old holiday dates should be kept with new names when their original meaning ends.

FOR 賛成

- November 3 and April 29 survive as Culture Day and Showa Day, so the calendar quietly records more than a century of history.
- People get used to a holiday, so keeping the date helps families and schools plan their year.
- A holiday with a new name can give people a new reason to think about culture, nature, or history.

Add your own reason:

AGAINST 反対

- If every old date stays, the calendar will have too many holidays, and that can be hard for workers and businesses.
- December 23 became an ordinary working day, and society worked fine, so not every old date needs to stay.
- A new name can hide the original meaning of the day, so people may not know its real history.

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>