



# Holidays Made by Marketing: Is That a Bad Thing?

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

Class \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

**1** White Day is an unusual example of a holiday whose commercial origins are openly admitted. In 1978, a national association of candy makers decided at its general meeting that March 14 would be Candy Day, while a confectioner in Fukuoka launched its own Marshmallow Day the same year. Both still claim to be the original, and no one can prove that only one of them is right. What both sides agree on is the goal: they wanted to sell more sweets after Valentine's Day.



**2** Japan is not alone in this. In the United States, Sweetest Day was reportedly planned by a committee of candy makers in Cleveland in 1921. In South Korea, the 14th of almost every month has become a themed day for couples or singles, such as Black Day on April 14.

**3** Critics argue that such days pressure people to spend money and turn affection into an obligation. The decline of workplace giri chocolate in recent years suggests many Japanese people agree. Yet supporters point out that a custom can outgrow its origins. If people use White Day to express real gratitude, does it matter that a candy company invented it?

## Comprehension

### 1. What is the main point of the passage?

- (A) White Day was created by the Japanese government to support small shops.
- (B) Some holidays began as marketing, and people disagree about whether that makes them less valuable.
- (C) Korea has more holidays for couples than any other country.
- (D) Giri chocolate is becoming more popular in Japanese offices.

### 2. According to the passage, what do both sides in the White Day origin story agree on?

- (A) Marshmallow Day was the first name of White Day.
- (B) The first event was held in Fukuoka.
- (C) They wanted to sell more sweets after Valentine's Day.
- (D) Only the candy makers' association is the true original.

### 3. Which of the following is true about Sweetest Day?

- (A) It is held in South Korea on April 14.
- (B) It was started by the Japanese candy makers' association in 1978.
- (C) It is a day when single people eat black noodles.
- (D) It was reportedly planned by candy makers in Cleveland in 1921.

### 4. What can we infer from the phrase "no one can prove that only one of them is right"?

- (A) There is not enough clear evidence to say which group started White Day first.
- (B) The candy makers' association and the shop in Fukuoka are the same company.
- (C) White Day was not really started in 1978.
- (D) Both groups have agreed to stop calling themselves the original.

### 5. In paragraph 3, the word "obligation" is closest in meaning to

- (A) a happy surprise
- (B) something you must do because you are expected to
- (C) a kind of expensive gift
- (D) a feeling of love

### 6. Why does the writer end the passage with a question?

- (A) To show that the writer does not know who invented White Day.
- (B) To advise readers to stop giving gifts on White Day.
- (C) To invite readers to think about whether a day's origin matters if people use it for real gratitude.
- (D) To prove that supporters are wrong.



# Vocabulary, Paraphrase & Summary

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

Class \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

- |                |                                                                           |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. commercial  | a. to start a new product, plan, or event                                 |
| 2. admit       | b. to say that something is true, even if other people may not believe it |
| 3. association | c. a person who says what is bad about something                          |
| 4. launch      | d. a slow fall in the amount or importance of something                   |
| 5. claim       | e. the feeling of being thankful to someone                               |
| 6. critic      | f. connected with buying and selling things to make money                 |
| 7. decline     | g. to agree that something is true, often when you do not want to         |
| 8. gratitude   | h. a group of people or companies that work together for the same purpose |

## Paraphrase — say it in your own words

### 1. “White Day is an unusual example of a holiday whose commercial origins are openly admitted.”

Hint: Start with "Not many holidays" and use "people say clearly" for "openly admitted".

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### 2. “Critics argue that such days pressure people to spend money and turn affection into an obligation.”

Hint: Use "make people feel they have to" and "instead of".

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### 3. “Yet supporters point out that a custom can outgrow its origins.”

Hint: Use "But" and explain "outgrow its origins" with "become more than how it started".

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## Summary

Summarize the passage in about 50 words.

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# Debate & Opinion Essay

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

Class \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Motion: A holiday created for marketing is less meaningful than a traditional one.**

## FOR 賛成

- A marketing holiday was made to sell products, so its main message is to spend money, not to share a value or a story.
- Such days can pressure people to buy gifts, and the decline of workplace giri chocolate shows that many Japanese people feel this pressure.
- Traditional holidays connect people to their history and beliefs, while a day invented by a company has no deep roots.

Add your own reason:

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## AGAINST 反対

- Many people use White Day to thank family, friends, and coworkers, so the feeling behind the gift is real no matter who started the day.
- A custom can outgrow its origins. Many traditions began for practical reasons, and people later gave them deeper meaning.
- White Day spread to South Korea, Taiwan, and China, which shows that people found real value in it, not just companies.

Add your own reason:

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