

A

Describing festivals

Read this short text about a Kenyan cultural festival.

TRAVEL

AFRICA **Mombasa Carnival**

The Mombasa Carnival **falls** in November each year in this Kenyan city. People from all over the country, and the world, travel to Mombasa to participate in the festivities. The carnival **features** people dressed in spectacular costumes parading through the city's streets, performing traditional songs and dances to celebrate their cultures. Promoting integration within this multicultural region remains the focus of the carnival.

noun	verb	adjective
There are big celebrations on New Year's Day.	New Year's Day is celebrated in many ways. The festival celebrates the New Year.	It was a public holiday and everyone was in a celebratory mood.
The festival is held in March. [special day(s)/event] The festivities go on for days. [enjoyable activities]		There was a festive mood in the village during the spring holiday.
The parade in the town square was a very colourful spectacle .	On the anniversary of the battle, soldiers paraded through the streets. *	The parade is always very spectacular . *
Everyone in the village attends a big feast in the evening [big meal to celebrate something].	During the national holiday, there is a whole week of feasting and celebrations.	
Many of the customs have their origin in ancient ceremonies .		A ceremonial procession goes through the streets of the city.
The festival is a time of renewal .	Each year, the festival renews the national spirit of the people.	The celebrations at the end of the war brought renewed hope to the people.

* There is no verb for *spectacle* and no adjective for *parade*.

B

Other words and phrases connected with festivals

A lot of people are very **superstitious**, especially about numbers and colours. [have illogical beliefs about hidden forces in nature]

The festival celebrated the **centenary/bi-centenary** of the country's independence. [100th anniversary / 200th anniversary]

The Rio de Janeiro Carnival is always a very **flamboyant** and **raucous** event. [extremely colourful and exaggerated] [very noisy]

The Festival of the Dead is very **sombre** and **atmospheric**. [serious, heavy and sad] [has a special feeling or atmosphere] It can be **traced back to pagan times**. [its origin may be found in] [the times when people believed that nature had special powers]

The annual holiday **commemorates** all those who died in the country's civil war. [respects and remembers officially; *formal*]

Exercises

37.1 Use words and phrases from A opposite to rewrite the underlined words. Use the word class indicated and make any other necessary changes.

- 1 For Christians, Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. (verb)
- 2 The festival events included parades, sports and musical gatherings. (noun, plural)
- 3 There was a feeling of celebration about the whole weekend. (adjective)
- 4 For people who live in the country, the spring festival renews the fertility of the land. (noun)
- 5 There was an atmosphere of ceremony as the military bands took part in a parade around the main square. (adjective, verb)
- 6 People were in a mood for a festival when the harvest was successfully completed and a huge meal was held in the village. (adjective, noun)
- 7 You should go and see the lantern festival. It's always spectacular. (noun)
- 8 The festival is always on the first Monday in July. It is in memory of a famous battle. (verb, verb)
- 9 It was the 100th anniversary of the founding of the university and the 200th anniversary of the city itself. (noun, noun)
- 10 The gymnastic display involving 300 children was a real spectacle. (adjective)

37.2 Here is an extract of someone talking about a festival using rather informal language. Write it as a more formal description, using words and expressions from the box instead of the underlined words. Make any other necessary changes.

parade	atmospheric	focus	associate	trace back to	raucous	pagan	symbolise
sombre	superstitious	flamboyant	renewal				

Well, it was called the Festival of Flowers, and it was to do with the coming of spring, after the dark, serious winter months. It was a time of everything being new again. Its origin can be seen in the religious tradition of taking flowers to offer them to the gods. Spring flowers were the main thing in the festival, and there was always a big group of people marching through the streets. It was all very lively and extremely colourful and probably rather noisy, and there was a great atmosphere. The flowers meant new life, and people thought they would be guaranteed a good harvest later in the year if they were offered to the gods. Nowadays, most people don't have such funny beliefs about nature, but there are still some festivals that are all about nature's special powers celebrated every year.



37.3

Over to you

- Which of these important days are celebrated in your country? What happens on them?
Mother's Day Independence Day May Day Valentine's Day
- What is the most important day of the year in your country? What does it symbolise or commemorate? What does it feature? What are its origins? What sort of atmosphere does it have?