

Talking about festivals and celebrations experiences

Present Perfect and Past Simple practice

Ask your partner about one experience of a festival or celebration, perhaps using one of the words on the following pages. If they have had that experience, they will explain that in as much detail as they can. Just listen, then when they finish ask as many extra questions as you can to find out more information. If they say “No” to the first question, keep asking about different experiences until you find an experience which they have had.

If you are scoring, you get one point for each follow-up question which you ask, but lose one point for each “No” answer you got when you tried to find an experience that they have had. You don’t get a point for questions which your partner can’t answer or which they have already said the answer to.

Your teacher will tell you if you can use the suggested questions below to help you or not.

Ask about anything below you don’t understand, sharing your experiences each time.

Grammar presentation

First of all without looking at the example questions, try to answer these questions in pairs:

- What tense are first questions to ask about experiences (usually) in?
- What tense are follow-up questions asking about more details (usually) in?
- What are the differences in meaning and use between those two tenses?

Use the example questions below to start checking your answers, then discuss as a class.

Choose a topic to speak about as long as you can, with your partner asking as many questions as they can afterwards. If you’re scoring, you get a point for each 15 seconds you can speak for, and your partner gets one point for each suitable follow-up question.

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Suggested questions about festivals and celebrations

Suggested initial questions about experiences

- Have you ever...?
- Have you... recently?
- Have you... this year/ this...?
- Have you... in the last twelve months/ in the last few years/ in the last ... (s)?

Suggested follow-up questions about experiences

- How many times have you... (in your life/ this year/ in the last twelve months)?
- When did you (last)...?/ When was...?
- What was it like?/ How was it?/ How was the experience?
- Did you enjoy it?
- How long did it take?
- How much did it cost?
- What did you do (after.../ then)?
- What happened (first/ before/ after/ when...)?
- Where did it happen?
- Who did you... with?

Suggested festivals and celebrations words to talk about your experiences of

- attend a cherry blossom viewing party
- attend a coming-of-age ceremony
- attend a graduation ceremony
- attend a local festival
- attend a New Year party
- attend a summer festival
- attend a wedding ceremony/ a wedding reception/ a Western-style wedding
- attend an end-of-year party
- be a bridesmaid
- be blessed
- burn something/ light something (e.g. candle or a joss stick)
- buy a lucky charm
- carry a portable shrine/ see a portable shrine being carried
- dance a traditional dance
- do something for good luck
- do something romantic on Valentine's Day
- do trick or treat
- dress up/ wear traditional clothes/ wear traditional footwear
- drink rice wine
- eat a special dish
- eat from a street stall/ buy something from a street stall
- eat lucky food
- give a speech/ listen to a speech
- go to church
- have a lucky year/ have an unlucky year
- have a picnic
- have turkey for Christmas dinner
- have your fortune told
- listen to traditional music/ play traditional music
- meet your extended family
- play a traditional game/ play a traditional sport/ play with a traditional toy (e.g. a kite)
- pray at a household shrine
- pray to your ancestors
- put up decorations
- receive cash
- see a dragon dance
- see fireworks
- send a card/ give someone a card
- sing a traditional song
- spring clean your house
- stay up all night
- visit a cemetery/ visit a graveyard
- visit a shrine/ visit a temple
- watch a procession/ watch a parade
- watch New Year television