

H Holidays



Photo by Craig Huber

This is an Easter basket. Where do you think these Easter eggs are from?

Prep & Preview

You will learn about the major national U.S. holidays.
You might **celebrate** one holiday.
Cost: Free to cost of a party.

Before the Activity

1. What are the two biggest holidays in your country? In groups of three or four students, talk about the biggest holidays in your country.
2. What holidays do you know about in the United States? As a group, make a list of every U.S. holiday you know.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



There are ten federal legal holidays in the United States. Government offices, including post offices and schools, are usually closed on federal holidays. However, there are several other popular holidays that are not federal holidays. For example, Valentine's Day and Secretaries Day are big days for celebration in the United States, but offices don't close because of them.

3. As a class, combine your lists. Write all the holidays on the chalkboard.
4. Ask your teacher to help you complete the list of common U.S. holidays.
5. As a class, talk about these holidays. What do you know? Which are religious? Which are federal holidays? How are they celebrated?

6. Work in pairs. Choose one holiday from the list above. Write down everything that you know about the holiday: its beginning, its history, its purpose, related customs, foods, colors, common forms of celebration.

7. As a class, look on the next page at table 4, which is a list of federal and other popular holidays in the United States. Were there holidays that you had forgotten?
8. Work in pairs or small groups. Each group will choose one holiday from the list. You will research that holiday, become specialists, and make a presentation to the rest of the class. Look at the list and talk about which holidays interest you and which group you will be in.
9. As a class, decide which group will learn about which holiday. Try to cover all of the holidays.
10. Your group's holiday _____
11. Read through the activity that follows. Make sure you understand it. You may work with a classmate or ask your teacher if you have questions.

The Activity

TABLE 4. The Most Common Holidays in the United States

Holiday	Date Celebrated	Type of Holiday
New Year's Day	January 1	Federal
Martin Luther King, Jr., Day	Third Monday in January	Federal
St. Valentine's Day	February 14	Traditional
Presidents' Day	Third Monday in February	Federal
St. Patrick's Day	March 17	Traditional
All Fools' Day	April 1	Traditional
Easter	A first Sunday between March 22 and April 25	Religious
Memorial Day	May 26	Federal
Independence Day	July 4	Federal
Labor Day	First Monday in September	Federal
Columbus Day	Second Monday in October	Federal
Halloween	October 31	Traditional
Veterans Day	November 11	Federal
Thanksgiving	Fourth Thursday in November	Federal
Hanukkah	(Depends on Hebrew calendar)	Religious
Christmas	December 25	Federal, Religious, and Traditional
Kwanzaa	December 26 to January 1	Traditional and Cultural
Other holidays	You may know of other holidays that are celebrated in the United States. If so, you may want to study one of them.	

1. Your group's holiday _____
2. Research your holiday. You may go to the library. There are lots of great books on holidays in the children's and juvenile sections of the library. Also, you can read about holidays in the encyclopedia. You may also interview Americans to get information.