

# Go for it! B2

## Go for it! Museum of Special Occasions → P. 75, c

Print and cut out the texts. Give one text to each group of students.



**Saint Patrick's Day** is a celebration of Irish culture. It is on 17<sup>th</sup> March because this is thought to be the day that St Patrick – who brought Christianity to Ireland – died.

It used to be a religious holiday on which Irish people went to church. But today, parades and festivals are common, and they take place all over the world. The first St Patrick's Day parade was in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and it wasn't even in Ireland – it was in Boston, in the US. Since the 1960s, the Chicago River has been coloured green each year for the St Patrick's Day parade.

Eating big meals and drinking lots of alcohol is an important part of the holiday. It is usually during Lent (a time when Catholics give up something they enjoy, such as chocolate, meat or alcohol), but in the past, the Church officially said that people could eat and drink what they wanted on this day of celebration.

Shamrocks – a traditional symbol of Ireland – have always been part of St Patrick's Day celebrations. Some people think that shamrocks bring good luck, just like the colour green. That is why people often wear green and pin shamrocks to their clothes on St Patrick's Day.

**Glossary:** Christianity Christentum \* parade Umzug \* Lent Fastenzeit \* shamrock Kleeblatt

**Holi**, also known as the festival of colours, is an important Hindu festival that is celebrated in India and Nepal. It is about saying goodbye to winter and enjoying spring. It is also a day to forgive people that you have had conflicts with in the last year.

Holi has been celebrated for many centuries. In the past, it was a time when married women prayed to the goddess of the full moon, hoping to bring health and happiness to their families. Today, Holi is still celebrated at the full moon, in February or March – but it is for everyone.

The night before Holi, people meet to sing and dance in front of big bonfires. The bonfires symbolise evil spirits being burned away. The fun really begins the next day, when people go outside and throw brightly coloured powder or water on each other. On this happy day, there is no difference between young and old, rich and poor. In the evening, people wash off the colour, put on nice clothes, and visit their friends and relatives. They enjoy special foods, including gujiya (a kind of dumpling) and malpua (pancakes), and drinks.

**Glossary:** goddess Göttin \* evil spirit böser Geist \* dumpling Teigtasche

On 31<sup>st</sup> December people in countries all over the world celebrate **New Year's Eve** with parties and firework displays. The tradition of fireworks goes back to ancient China, when people thought that loud noises and flashes of light could scare away evil spirits at the darkest time of the year. People often kiss each other at midnight. This might be because in the past, a priest kissing you was believed to protect you against evil. Many people in the English-speaking world sing a traditional song called "Auld Lang Syne" (which means "for old times") to say goodbye to the old year and welcome in the new one. The Scottish poet Robert Burns wrote down the words of the song in 1788; it is sung to an old Scottish folk tune.

The earliest New Year's celebrations that we know about were around 4,000 years ago in Babylon, where people used to celebrate a big religious festival for 12 days. As part of the festival, people made promises to the gods so they would protect the city in the coming year. Today, many people make New Year's resolutions, which are a kind of promise to themselves that they will do certain things in the new year: eat healthier food, spend more time with friends, etc.

**Glossary:** Eve Vorabend \* ancient alt, antik \* flash Lichtstrahl \* evil spirit böser Geist \* evil das Böse \* tune Melodie \* resolution Vorsatz



**Thanksgiving** is celebrated in the United States on the fourth Thursday in November. Originally a harvest festival, it is now a day when families get together and have big dinners.

Native Americans gave thanks for successful harvests by holding ceremonies with music and dancing. Their traditions later became mixed with Christian harvest festivals. The first Thanksgiving was probably celebrated in 1621 by the Pilgrims (early European settlers in America) together with Native Americans. The Native Americans had shown the Pilgrims how to grow foods they hadn't known before, and these were the main foods that were – and are – eaten at the celebrations. These include cranberry sauce (to go with roasted turkey), sweet potatoes, sweetcorn, and pumpkin pie.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Thanksgiving was a time to spend with family and enjoy the foods that were available locally. It became a national holiday around 1900.

One modern Thanksgiving tradition is American football. There are always big matches on this date. After dinner, many families watch the sport together on TV, so they sometimes wear their team's T-shirts rather than fancy clothes.

**Glossary:** **harvest** Ernte \* **Native Americans** Indianer / Ureinwohner Amerikas \* **Pilgrims** Pilgerväter \* **settler** Siedler \* **sweetcorn** Mais \* **pumpkin pie** Kürbiskuchen

**Halloween** is a 'scary' holiday celebrated in countries all over the world. Many of this holiday's traditions originally came from Ireland and Scotland. In ancient times, people there believed that ghosts returned to the Earth on 31<sup>st</sup> October. Some people wore costumes, perhaps to protect themselves from evil spirits.

Nowadays, Halloween celebrations are just meant to be fun. Many people wear scary or funny costumes, such as ghosts, crazy doctors, or characters from popular films. People eat scary-looking food at Halloween parties: sausages that look like fingers, candy spiders, etc. People who really enjoy the scary side of Halloween might even pay money to go to a 'haunted house', where they experience lots of scary moments.

Children often knock on people's doors in their Halloween costumes and shout "Trick or treat!" This means that if you don't give them a treat (something sweet), they will play a trick on you. Many people make lanterns by cutting faces into pumpkins and put them in front of their houses.

**Glossary:** **scary** gruselig, unheimlich \* **evil spirit** böser Geist \* **haunted house** Spukhaus \* **treat** Süßigkeit \* **play a trick on s.o.** jdm einen Streich spielen \* **lantern** Laterne \* **pumpkin** Kürbis