

HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Lesson Length: 1 hour + Extension Activities

Vocabulary & Expressions: Words related to holidays and celebrations

Language/Culture Point: Capitalization

Objective: Students will become familiar with U.S. holidays and be able to talk about different ways of celebrating.

Materials: Items and pictures related to holidays including all U.S. federal holidays, calendar, chart paper, markers, *students' personal artifacts, construction paper*



STEP 1: ACTIVATE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
5 minutes	- Various items/pictures from holidays - Calendar	- Using Pictures - Authentic Materials

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. When students come in, have displayed a variety of pictures or items related to holidays, such as a party hat, a turkey, fireworks, an MLK day march, a Christmas tree, a jack-o-lantern, etc. See which items students can identify.
2. Ask students to tell you what date/time of the year the item is for, and write/circle the dates on a calendar.

STEP 2: MINI-PRESENTATION WITH PROMPT

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Various items/pictures from holidays - Calendar	- Authentic Materials - Using Pictures

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Go through the different items/pictures, and use them as props while you talk about each holiday. For example:



HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

I love Thanksgiving. I get to see my family, and we eat a big dinner with turkey and gravy, mashed potatoes, stuffing, and pumpkin pie. Christmas is probably my favorite holiday. I love the lights everywhere. They make everything look so pretty! On New Year's Day we don't usually do much, but we do have a tradition of making...

2. Put up a list of the U.S. federal holidays (see below). Note that some dates change each year so be sure to check dates for the current year:

New Year's Day - January 1
Martin Luther King Day - (third Monday in January)
President's Day - (third Monday in February)
Memorial Day - (last Monday in May)
Independence Day - July 4
Labor Day - (first Monday in September)
Columbus Day - (second Monday in October)
Veterans Day - November 11
Thanksgiving Day - (fourth Thursday in November)
Christmas Day - December 25

3. Explain that these are U.S. government holidays and that people who work for the government don't have to work on these days. Go through the holidays by giving a short description of each one.

STEP 3: DISCUSSION AND COMPREHENSION CHECK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Pictures representing the U.S. federal holidays	- Using Pictures

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Ask students to get in pairs. Give each pair a picture that corresponds to a holiday, and have them decide which holiday their picture represents.
2. Ask students, "Who has a picture of how we celebrate __?" Tape the picture next to the corresponding holiday. Highlight 2-3 vocabulary words for each picture.
3. Ask the students, "Which holidays aren't on this list? What do you celebrate?" As you discuss, make a list of additional holidays and when they're celebrated.



HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

STEP 4: HIGHLIGHT LESSON FOCUS AND MODEL TASK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Chart paper - Markers	- Chalk Talk

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Tell students, “Today we are talking about holidays and celebrations. What is your favorite day to celebrate?” Have a few students share about how they celebrate their favorite holiday.
2. Say, “My favorite holiday is __.” Write the name of the holiday on a piece of chart paper. As you write the date, say, “I celebrate it on (date).”
3. Use Chalk Talk to illustrate as you talk about things you like to do on your favorite holiday.

STEP 5: GUIDED PRACTICE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
5 minutes	- Chart paper - Markers	

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Give each group of students a piece of chart paper and some markers. Have the students pick a holiday to present to the class. Give them a minute to discuss which holiday they want to present.
2. Ask each group, “Which holiday do you want to present? When do we/you celebrate __?” Have them write the holiday and its date on their chart paper.



HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

STEP 6: PAIR OR SMALL GROUP WORK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
20 minutes	- Chart paper - Markers	

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Once each group has picked a holiday, give them time to decorate the chart paper and illustrate the ways they celebrate.
2. Have each group share with the class.

STEP 7: HIGHLIGHT HOW ENGLISH WORKS

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
5 minutes		

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Refer back to the list of federal U.S. holidays from Step 2. Ask students what patterns they notice in the words, trying to elicit that several of the words are capitalized.
2. Break up the class into groups. Based on what they observe in the list of holidays and their dates, have the groups write rules for capitalization of dates, days of the week, and holidays.
3. Have each group report its rules to the class, creating one master set of rules. Examples of rules include:
 - Names of months are always capitalized
 - Names of holidays are always capitalized including the word “Day,” which isn’t capitalized when not part of a holiday name
4. Compare and contrast these rules to rules in the students’ native languages.



HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

STEP 8: QUICK CHECK AND REVIEW

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes		- Exit Check

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Write down the dates of the U.S. federal holidays on separate slips of paper, and give each student a slip.
2. As students leave class, have them tell you the holiday that corresponds to the date on their slip and how people celebrate on that day.

HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES: SHOW & TELL/HOLIDAY CARDS

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
Varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal artifacts - Construction paper - Markers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authentic Materials

TEACHING ACTIVITY #1

1. Have students bring in a personal item that represents a holiday or tradition that is special to them and present it to the class.

Additionally, students can bring in a food that they always make for a certain holiday, present on it, and then share it with their classmates.

TEACHING ACTIVITY #2

1. Model how to make a holiday card using construction paper and markers.
2. Working in groups, have each student pick a holiday and make a card. While making their cards, students should talk about the holiday they chose and how they celebrate.