

Big Book of Canadian Celebrations

Grades 4-6

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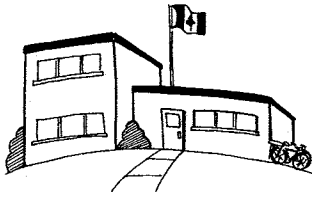
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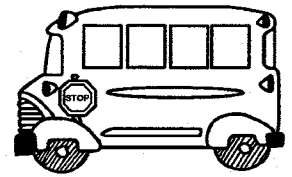
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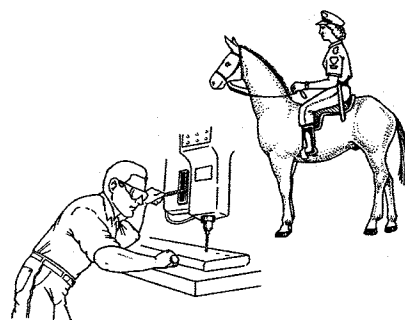
September



Welcome back! Thirteen special celebrations lead the way to a spectacular September. They are Labour Day, The International Hispanic Festival, The Autumn Equinox, The Iroquois Green Corn Festival and the Native Harvest Rice Festival, The Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, Trung-Tru, The International Peace Day, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot, Ramadan and Eed-ul-Fitr.

- The information sheets and follow-up activities may be reproduced and used as reading activities. The reading activities focus on the following skills: Recalling Facts, Completing Sentences, Recalling Information, Noting Details, Expressing Ideas, Classifying Sentences.
- **Labour Day** is a statutory holiday that celebrates the growth of labour unions and the improvement in working conditions and the treatment of labourers. Have the students read the information and compare the working conditions of the past with those of the present. Discuss the importance of this day for labourers.
- The **International Hispanic Fiesta** is celebrated by Spanish-speaking Canadians. The information and follow-up activity will acquaint your students with this festive event and the traditions and culture of the people. Listen to some Spanish music, watch a video on Spanish dancing or teach your students some Spanish words.
- The **Autumn Equinox** falls on either September 22 or 23. Use the information and follow-up to explain the changes that take place on this day. Have your students note the signs, smells and sounds of autumn.
- The **Iroquois Green Corn Festival** and **The Native Wild Rice Harvest** are two important Native festivals in September. The information and the follow-up activity will acquaint your students with the traditions and ceremonies pertaining to Native harvesting of crops.
- The section on the **Chinese Moon Festival** and **Trung-Thu** discusses the importance of the moon in the Chinese and Vietnamese culture. The information and follow-up will inform your students of the traditions, beliefs and foods. Your students may enjoy making Chinese lanterns or face masks for an art activity.
- The **International Day of Peace** takes place on September 21. The information provides a history of how the day came to be and ideas to be used to celebrate this important day. The follow-up will provide students with the opportunity to express their ideas in writing creatively. Help your students to plan a Peace Day program for the class or school using songs, poetry, sayings, etc..
- **Rosh Hashanah**, **Yom Kippur** and **Sukkot** are Jewish religious celebrations that fall in September or October depending on their religious calendar. Your students will enjoy reading about the history, traditions and food pertaining to these celebrations.
- **Ramadan** and **Eed-ul-Fitr** are Muslim celebrations that take place in the fall. The information will provide your students with the opportunity to learn about two Islamic holidays and the traditions involved during the festivities.

Labour Day



Labour Day is celebrated on the first Monday of September. It is a statutory holiday throughout Canada.

Labour unions have existed in Canada since the early 1800s. Many groups of workers, in many parts of the country, formed their own organizations despite the fact that it was considered illegal by the government and employers. Tradesmen from Britain brought with them the traditions of an older British trade union movement. In the early days some Canadian unions were tied to unions in Britain. Gradually this relationship disappeared as workers in Canada and the United States, with similar occupations, began to develop the international trade union movement which is an important aspect of the Canadian labour scene.

Trade unions grew slowly in Canada due to the economy and fear for their jobs. They felt very insecure and were hesitant to become more militant and demand better wages and working conditions. Over a period of time the workers' organization gained strength and confidence. One important development came in 1872 when printers in Toronto decided to campaign for the nine-hour day. At that time, workers worked six days a week and what they were seeking was 54 hour week. Today most Canadian workers work a fourty hour week and some even less. The Toronto publishers rejected their proposal and offered them \$10 for a sixty hour week which was about 16 cents an hour. The workers led by Daniel O'Don, a printer, decided to go on strike. The publishers headed by George Brown editor of the Globe and a prominent political figure of the day, previously fought against unions being formed. In the 1872 strike, he had thirteen leaders arrested for conspiracy and put in jail.

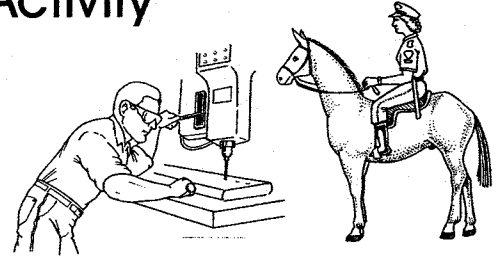
Brown's actions caused the first North American "working man's" demonstration on April 15, 1872. The parade of workers marched smartly to the music of four bands. About ten thousand citizens of Toronto turned out to see the parade and listened to the speeches calling for the abolition of the law which stated that unions were criminal conspiracies that stopped trade.

In September 3, 1872, members of seven unions in Ottawa organized a parade more than a mile long. It was headed by the Garrison Artillery band and was flanked by city firemen carrying torches. The Ottawa parade wound its way to the home of the Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald where the marchers hoisted him into a carriage and took him to Ottawa City Hall by torchlight. The Prime Minister was aware of the strikers feelings and declared, from the steps of City Hall, a promise to the marchers that his party would sweep away all such barbarous laws from the statute books.

Early Labour Day celebrations were held as demonstrations and picnics in September. Pressure was put on the governments of Canada and the United States to have a national holiday for Labour Day. On July 23, 1894, a bill was passed in Parliament that stated that Labour Day would be held on the first Monday of September to honour all workers who fought for their rights and better working conditions.

So on this day pause and think about how much better our working lives are today because of these courageous workers.

Labour Day Reading Activity



Read the information on "Labour Day" carefully.

Answer each question with a complete sentence.

1. Why did trade unions grow slowly in Canada?

2. What event caused the growth of unions to increase in size and strength?

3. What was the reaction of the workers when some of the fellow-workers were arrested and put in jail for striking?

4. Why was the parade in Ottawa an impressive one?

5. What did the workers in the Ottawa parade do that was a very effective action?

6. How did the speech the Prime Minister gave on the steps of Ottawa's City Hall change things for the workers?

7. When did Labour Day become a statutory holiday?

8. Why do you think workers should have a day that honours their accomplishments?

9. Design a flag that you think represents labourers today or draw a picture of either one of the parades that took place in 1872.

The International Hispanic Fiesta

A fiesta is a Spanish festival or celebration. Each year in September "The International Hispanic Fiesta is held in Toronto. At this festival, Spanish-speaking Canadians celebrate their customs and traditions and other national holidays held in their original homelands. Spanish-Canadians came from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Mexico.

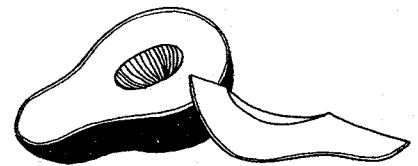
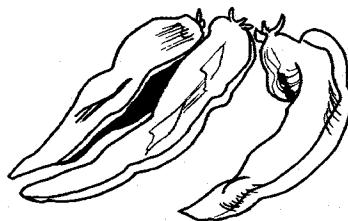
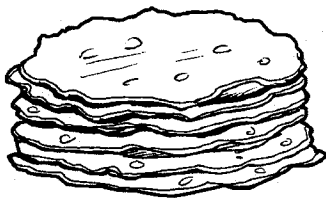


At the festival, traditional Spanish music is played by Latin American bands and Mariachi musicians. Many years ago, Mariachi were strolling bands of musicians who played and sang Spanish music on city streets. Sometimes, they were paid by men to sing love songs under their sweethearts' bedroom windows to win their hearts. They also sang on the streets for birthdays and religious days. Mariachi musicians were paid to sing and play at baptisms, weddings, patriotic events and even funerals. Traditional Spanish music is played with violins, guitars, mandolins and trumpets by Mariachi musicians while Latin American bands play more modern Spanish music for dancing such dances as the Salsa, Cumbia, Merengue and the Tango.

People who attend the festival thoroughly enjoy watching Spanish groups from countries all over the world dance in their brightly coloured costumes. One well know traditional Spanish dance is the "Flamenco". Flamenco dancing is done in a colourful costume using skillful footwork, forceful flowing arm movements, hand clapping and finger snapping. Sometimes the dancer uses castanets while performing. This type of dancing can be done as a solo or in a group. It also includes singing and a guitar playing the music.

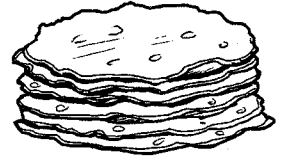
During the fiesta, the children are entertained by puppets, clowns and magicians. They make Latin American crafts such as pinātas, maracas and metal ornaments. Children enjoy breaking the pinātas to get the candy and toys.

Spicy, delicious smells of Latin American food fill the air. Everyone that visits the fiesta enjoys eating the wide variety of Spanish foods such as tacos, tortillas, enchiladas, refried beans, salsa, and sweets and other tantalizing dishes.





A Spanish-Canadian Fiesta



Read the information on "The International Hispanic Fiesta".

Complete each ending with the correct beginning found in the box at the bottom of the page.

1. _____
held in September each year in Toronto.
2. _____
play music in the streets.
3. _____
are instruments used to play traditional Spanish music.
4. _____
some of the delicious foods eaten at the fiesta.
5. _____
countries to perform at the fiesta.
6. _____
be performed by one person at the fiesta.
7. _____
entertain the children at the fiesta.
8. _____
by Maraichi musicians outside their homes.

- Puppets, clowns and magicians
- Maraichi are musicians who
- Spanish sweethearts were often serenaded
- The Flamenco is a famous, traditional dance that may
- Tacos, tortillas and enchiladas are
- Violins, guitars, mandolins and trumpets
- Spanish dancers come from other
- A Spanish-Canadian fiesta is