

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: You will listen to an article about St. Patrick's Day. The article is a little more than 4.5 minutes long. Listen only, and don't worry about understanding everything.

Step 2: Look at the questions. Read and understand them, then listen again. As you are listening, try to answer the questions in your head. Don't write the answers yet. Next, listen again and write the answers this time. Compare your answers with a partner.

Step 3: Read the article. Check in your dictionary any unknown words. Now listen again. Can you understand more?

Step 4: Listen! Listen! Listen! Listen to the article on the train or in your free time. Each time you listen, you will slowly improve!

QUESTIONS

Answer the questions to check comprehension. If you don't know an answer, don't worry. Skip it. Then listen again.

1. What happens in Chicago on St. Patrick's Day?

2. What happens in New York on St. Patrick's Day?

3. Why do we celebrate St. Patrick's Day?

4. What happened to St. Patrick when he was a boy?

5. Besides Ireland, what countries that celebrate St. Patrick's Day are mentioned in the article?

6. What used to happen in Ireland on March 17th?

7. Why did the Irish government create such a large festival for St. Patrick's Day?

8. How long was the festival in 1997?

9. What do people often wear on St. Patrick's Day?

10. What do people often drink on St. Patrick's Day?

the ARTICLE

What does St. Patrick's Day mean to you? For many, it means being honorary Irish for a day. It means a large parade with marching bands, floats, and folk dressed in green top hats and tails. It means green beer, and a lot of it. In Chicago, the river is dyed green. In New York, 150,000 marchers participate in the parade. And in Dublin, the party lasts for five days!



The holiday honors St. Patrick, who is the patron saint of Ireland and believed to have died on March 17th. He lived in the 6th century A.D., and came to Ireland to convert its people to Christianity. Much of his real life has been mixed with legend and stories, though, and scholars disagree on many points. For example, some say that Irish pirates captured and enslaved Patrick as a boy. Or, according to legend, he herded all the snakes out of Ireland and into the sea, even if scientists now know that Ireland has never had any snakes. In fact, some

historians boldly state that the St. Patrick we know today is actually the composite of two people who lived in the 5th and 6th centuries.

Besides Ireland, in countries where the holiday is celebrated, many people of Irish descent usual live. In the U.S., for example, New York, Boston, and Chicago all have very large Irish communities, and so the cities have a long tradition of festivities. But Munich in Germany, Birmingham in England, and even Moscow in Russia celebrate the day, too, as the holiday has become more and more commercialized and common.

It's in Dublin nowadays that you can find the largest goings on. Not too long ago, the Irish celebrated St. Patrick's Day as a religious holiday only. In fact, all the pubs were closed on March 17th in observance of the day, which didn't change until the 1970s. Since the mid-1990s, though, the Irish government has used the holiday as an opportunity to display Ireland and Irish culture to the world. Specifically, they wanted a festival that equaled the best celebrations anywhere in the world, provided motivation for people of Irish descent, and portrayed a positive and accurate image of the country. What began as a one day festival in 1996, became a three day festival the next year. In 2006, it lasted five days!



And green is the theme of the day, of course. The nickname of Ireland is the "Emerald Isle," due to the rich green of the countryside. People often wear a shamrock in their lapel or cap, as well as a green, white, and orange badge in honor of the Irish flag. Let's not also forget the beer, an important tradition to any St. Patrick's Day celebration, which gets a squire of green dye.

So now, what does St. Patrick's Day mean to you? And do you have any plans?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (optional)

1. Which paragraph was the easiest to listen to? Which paragraph was the most difficult? Look at the vocabulary and sentence structure, then think why one paragraph was easy and another difficult.

2. Listen for these words, understand the context, then try to repeat the information from the sentence:

honorary (paragraph 1)

enslaved (paragraph 2)

Irish descent (paragraph 3)

opportunity (paragraph 4)

shamrock (paragraph 5)

3. Listen and write the sentences:

The holiday honors St. Patrick... (paragraph 2)

Since the mid-1990s, though, the Irish government... (paragraph 4)

Let's not also forget the beer... (paragraph 5)

ANSWERS

| QUESTIONS |
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| 1. In Chicago, the river is dyed green. |
| 2. In New York, 150,000 marchers participate in the parade. |
| 3. The holiday honors St. Patrick, who is the patron saint of Ireland. |
| 4. Some say that Irish pirates captured and enslaved Patrick as a boy. |
| 5. The U.S., as well as Munich in Germany, Birmingham in England, and even Moscow in Russia celebrate the day, too. |
| 6. All the pubs were closed on March 17th in observance of the day. |
| 7. They wanted a festival that equaled the best celebrations anywhere in the world, provided motivation for people of Irish descent, and portrayed a positive and accurate image of the country. |
| 8. What began as a one day festival in 1996, became a three day festival the next year. |
| 9. People often wear a shamrock in their lapel or cap, as well as a green, white, and orange badge in honor of the Irish flag. |
| 10. People often drink beer, which gets a squire of green dye. |
| EXTENSION ACTIVITIES - Listen and write the sentences. |
| ... who is the patron saint of Ireland and believed to have died on March 17th. |
| ... has used the holiday as an opportunity to display Ireland and Irish culture to the world. |
| ... an important tradition to any St. Patrick's Day celebration, which gets a squire of green dye. |