

POMPOMS



1

Warm up

Look at the pictures and match each one with a job description.



sailors



a priest



a soldier



a cheerleader

1. _____ works for a Christian church or other religious groups
2. _____ work on ships at sea
3. _____ works in sports
4. _____ works in the army

Now, answer the questions.

1. All of these pictures show pompoms, but which picture is different from the others?
2. What is the **purpose** of each pompom?
3. Where do pompoms come from?
4. How old do you think pompoms are?

2

Vocabulary

You are going to read an article about pompoms. First, read this paragraph and try to understand the words in bold. Then match them to the definitions below.

Traditional crafts have become very popular on social media recently.
Knitters can find advice about how to make sweaters, hats or even **costumes** for their kids or pets.
 There's also a lot of interest in using natural materials like wool **to make decorations for your home**.

1. _____ : activities which involve making something by hand from a basic material like wool, cloth, paper or wood
2. _____ : clothes that people wear for various types of special events
3. _____ : describing how a group of people have done things for a long time
4. _____ : people who use wool and two long needles to make clothes
5. _____ : things that people use to make a place or a thing look more beautiful and special

Read these sentences and complete the gaps with a word from the box. Then explain the meaning of the words in bold.

First grandmother Internet queen trousers umbrella

1. There's a huge **statue** of the _____ in the middle of the main square of the town.
2. The _____ rock and roll music **appeared** in the 1950s.
3. This necklace **belonged** to my _____. She bought it in India.
4. These days, the _____ is the most important form of **communication**.
5. I think I ate too much over the holidays. My _____ are too **tight**, and I can't close the zip.
6. I'm so glad I brought my _____. It **protected** me from the storm.

Reading

Read the article about pompoms and then decide if these sentences are true or false, according to the information. Use the glossary at the end of the article to help you understand the words marked with a star *.

People started to make pompoms around 100 years ago.

1. _____

Pompoms on a hat use colour to show information about the person wearing it.

2. _____

Pompoms on hats were there to keep people warm all the time.

3. _____

You can make pompoms from different materials.

4. _____

It's too difficult for children to make pompoms.

5. _____

Pompoms always make people think of cold weather.

6. _____



Pompoms forever!

There's more to pompoms than most people think.

- ^{1.} In 1904, a strange old statue was found on a Swedish farm. It showed the god Freyr wearing a tall hat with a small round ball on top - an early example of the pompom. It's possible that people who made hats like these in the 11th century put a pompom on top to hide the untidy place where the hat was finished. Pompoms have appeared in costumes and crafts from all over the world. They are still popular today with both fashion designers and home knitters.
- ^{2.} Pompom may sound like a funny word, but it comes from the old French word *pombe*, which described a decoration made of ribbons*. At the end of the 18th century, a traditional Hungarian group of soldiers called the Hussars added pompoms to their hats, or *shakos*. They quickly became popular for soldiers all over Europe; different colours showed which regiment* each man belonged to and even which rank* they held. Today, priests in the Catholic Church wear a hat called a *biretta* and the pompom colours show which religious group they belong to.
- ^{3.} So, pompoms have been used for communication, but they can have other purposes as well, like keeping people safe. Some people think that pompoms made hats easier to remove if people were wearing tight gloves, which were popular in the past. This prevented people from getting dangerously hot. Hats with pompoms may have protected sailors from hitting their heads on the low ceilings of ships.
- ^{4.} Pompoms also make great decorations. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, people used pompoms as a cheap way of making old clothes look more exciting. Pompoms can also be made from paper, and these became popular with cheerleaders for sports like American football.
- ^{5.} Finally, pompoms are used in art and art education. Making a pompom helps young children learn how to use their hands, and kids love using them to decorate two- and three-dimensional shapes. Artist Suzan Shutan creates large colourful works of art with hundreds of little wool pompoms. People enjoy touching them and seeing them move.
- ^{6.} One of the most interesting things about pompoms is how they make us think of different seasons. Of course, a woolly hat with a pompom makes us think of winter and snow. But pompoms on a summer hat or bag take us to a relaxing holiday at the beach.

Sources: marthastewart.com; montessorihandwork.com

Glossary

ribbons: long strips of colourful material

regiment: a large group of soldiers who often come from the same town or region of the country

rank: a position in an organisation, some are high and others are low



4

Language point

Adjectives are describing words that often come before a noun. Can you remember the missing adjectives in these sentences from the article? The first letters of the missing words are given.

	first adjective	second adjective + noun	
In 1904,	a ¹ s_____	old statue	was found on a Swedish farm.
It showed the god Freyr wearing a tall hat with	a small	² r_____ ball	on top - an early example of the pompom.
At the end of the 18 th century,	a ³ t_____	Hungarian group of soldiers	called the Hussars added this type of decoration to their hats, or <i>shakos</i> .
Artist Suzan Shutan creates	large	⁴ c_____ works of art	...
... with hundreds of	little	⁵ w_____ pompoms.	

When we want to use more than one adjective in front of a noun, there is an order we should follow. This depends on the type of adjectives.



Look at the first sentence in the table. The adjective *strange*, which relates to opinion, comes before *old*, which relates to age.

Now, decide which families the adjectives in the other sentences belong to.

The rules for adjective order seem like a lot to remember, but you probably won't be using more than two or three adjectives with each noun. If you get the order wrong, people will still understand you, but it won't sound natural. To avoid mistakes, think about what sounds right.

Read the sentences out loud.

5

Reading and speaking

Put each adjective you are given in the column on the right in the correct place. It might go before the other adjective in the sentence or after it.

Example:

... an unmarried woman wears a shawl with (0) many large _____ pompoms. (0) *many*



The Balmoral bonnet is a (1) **knitted** hat that forms part of ⁽²⁾ traditional Scottish costume, dating back to the 16th century. It is made from dark material and there are (3) **silk** ribbons at the back. On top sits a ⁽⁴⁾ small red pompom called a *toorie*.

In the Black Forest area of Germany, women have traditionally worn a (5) **wide** hat called a *bollenhut* since around 1750.

⁽⁶⁾ Fourteen red pompoms on the hat mean that the woman is single.

The same number of (7) **large** pompoms means that the woman is already married.

It's not just hats that have pompoms. In Greece, the Presidential Guard wear ⁽⁸⁾ red leather shoes called *tsarouchia* which are topped with a (9) **black** pompom on the toe. Some people say that the pompoms keep the soldier's feet warm, but others say that they were useful for hiding ⁽¹⁰⁾ small sharp objects inside, which could be used when fighting the enemy.

Knitting is a/an (11) **traditional** craft on Taquile Island in Lake Titicaca in Peru. Women collect wool and use ⁽¹²⁾ local natural dyes to colour it, but it's the men who knit items to use and sell. The bags and shawls that the men make use pompoms to show who is married or in a relationship, and who is not. For example, a man who is in a relationship carries a bag with (13) **colourful** pompoms. All women wear shawls around their head and body, but a married woman's shawl has a ⁽¹⁴⁾ single small pompom attached while an unmarried woman wears a shawl with many large pompoms.

(1) *wool*

(3) *short*

(5) *straw*

(7) *black*

(9) *silk*

(11) *important*

(13) *attractive*

6 Talking point

Discuss these questions in pairs or small groups.

1. Do any items with pompoms **belong** to you? Describe the items and say what the **purpose** of the pompom is.
2. Can you think of any more uniforms with pompoms, perhaps from your country? Can you explain why the pompoms are there?
3. What **traditional costumes** or **decorations** are popular in your country today? Do pompoms appear in any of these?

Why is it important for children **to do crafts**? Think of several reasons besides the one you read about.

