

Read the text and think of the word which best fits each gap.

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY



Saint Patrick is Ireland's national saint. Every year, (1) _____ March 17th, a celebration is held in (2) _____ honour. It is said that Patrick introduced (3) _____ new type of religion to Ireland. He (4) _____ born in the UK in around 385 AD. (5) _____ he was 14, he was captured (6) _____ Irish pirates, brought (7) _____ to Ireland and made a slave (8) _____. He spent six years working (9) _____ a shepherd herding sheep before he managed to escape. (10) _____ his awful childhood experience, Patrick returned to Ireland (11) _____ his 30s to spread his religious faith.

So is Saint Patrick's Day a religious celebration? Perhaps (12) _____ was mainly originally, but it (13) _____ changed a (14) _____ over the years. The celebration we (15) _____ familiar (16) _____ today is very different (17) _____ how it used to (18) _____. It did start as a quiet, religious event: a day of prayer (19) _____ Irish people. Indeed, (20) _____ until the 1970s, all pubs, bars and shops were closed on March 17th, and (21) _____ was an official parade of army members (22) _____ the streets of Dublin. It was quite a serious affair.

What changed? Well, the Irish celebration (23) _____ recognise today was actually inspired by events in America. For several hundred (24) _____, Irish people have (25) _____ abroad in vast numbers to (26) _____ for work and a better life. Many of these immigrants settled in the USA and Canada. Today, millions of Americans proudly claim to be (27) _____ Irish origin. In the 1700s-1800s, though, the Irish people who went abroad were poor and (28) _____ well educated. (29) _____ were quite unpopular in their (30) _____ home in America, (31) _____ they decided to organise something they (32) _____ be proud of: a day to celebrate (33) _____ Irish.

(34) _____ of the first American parades (35) _____ place in Boston in 1737, and, by the end of the 19th century, Saint Patrick's Day parades has spread to most major American cities, (36) _____ Chicago, New York and New Orleans. March 17th gradually became a day where the focus was on (37) _____ fun and celebrating the best things about Irish American culture. Parades became more colourful and were (38) _____ of music and dance. Irish Americans wanted to celebrate (39) _____ their pride in being American and their Irish roots. Many Americans could relate (40) _____ this idea of celebrating their background and (41) _____ love of America (42) _____ the same time, so, in time, this day of fun was embraced not just by Irish Americans, (43) _____ Americans in general.

Meanwhile, back in Ireland, (44) _____ the 1970s onwards, the focus of the celebration also began to change. Parades there became equally colourful and fun-filled, and something (45) _____ the day began to have a wider appeal. Celebrations started being organised in more and (46) _____ countries. In Japan, for example, the first parade was not organised by Irish people at (47) _____, but by locals who found the day interesting. In Moscow, Russia, the Saint Patrick's Day parade was the first public march through Red Square. Today, famous landmarks (48) _____ the world, from the pyramids of Giza in Egypt to the Statue of Liberty in the USA turn green on March 17th, and people celebrate the idea of having fun and being proud (49) _____ their identity, (50) _____ Irish or not.