

Reading Skills

Part 1: Answer the following questions based on the reading passage. Don't forget to go back to the passage whenever necessary to find or confirm your answers.

Customs & Traditions

Cross-Curricular Focus: History/Social Science



Native American Indian groups in North America lived in different cultural regions, each of which developed its own **customs** and **traditions**. A custom is the specific way in which a group of people does something. This can include how foods are prepared, what clothing is worn, the kinds of celebrations and much more. The set of customs developed and shared by a culture over time is a tradition.

A culture's customs are often determined by the natural resources found in their environment. In the Desert Southwest region, cloth weaving developed as a custom. The area has fewer large animals whose skins can be used for making clothing or blankets. Cloth weaving was a way of meeting the need for clothing without using animal skins. In the Eastern Woodlands area, however, hunting and fishing were daily activities. Since it was easy to get animal skins, developing skills like weaving were less important.

The traditional roles of men and women in the native tribes varied as well. In hunting cultures, men were often away from home during the day to hunt animals for food. Women did many chores around the village while they were gone. In cultures where crops were grown, it was usually the men who tended them.

Folklore was an important part of all Native American cultures. They had no written language. Telling the tribe's stories orally was the way they preserved them from generation to generation so they would not be lost. The tribe used chanting, storytelling and singing as a way to remember the tribe's folklore. The stories told the tribe's history, funny adventures and accomplishments. Folklore also helped unite the people of the tribe.

Religion was an important part of Native American cultures. The celebration of the tribe's faith and worship often involved special **ceremonies**. Harvest ceremonies were a common way to give thanks to the tribe's gods for a good crop. Other ceremonies combined religious songs and dances with social activities. The ceremonies reinforced the people's trust in their leaders' ability to provide for their needs.

- 1) What is a custom?
- 2) What are the ways that Native Americans told their stories?

- 3) Contrast what you have learned about the historic Native American cultures and what you know about your own culture. How are they different?
- 4) In your own words, explain the importance of folklore.
- 5) Explain why some tribes developed weaving.

Part 2: Read the article and match five of the highlighted words with the definition.

New year, old customs

by travel editor, Lauren Briard

Have you ever made a New Year's **resolution**? Perhaps you have decided to learn a new language, or take up more exercise? You are not alone. In many cultures, people choose to change something about their life at the beginning of the year. And all over the world, people celebrate the new year with interesting **customs**.

My favourite traditions come from Mexico and other Latin American countries. For example, at midnight on New Year's Eve in many Spanish-speaking cultures, everyone eats twelve grapes – one grape for each month of the year. People say that eating the grapes brings good **fortune** for the new year. And don't be surprised if your friend from Peru wants to walk around the outside of his or her house with heavy luggage. Traditionally, if you complete this **challenge** you will be a successful traveller in the new year. Would you like to go on a **dream** holiday next year? Then try it!

Cleaning the house is perhaps the most common new year tradition. From Mexico to Japan people **sweep** their homes from top to bottom. Some people believe this **removes** bad luck and allows good luck to enter the house. In other countries, such as Britain and Iran, the cleaning happens later in the year, so it's called 'spring cleaning'. In Iran, just before the March spring **festival**, people empty their houses of all their furniture. They clean the house from top to bottom, **mend** broken furniture or replace old items. People bring flowers and **herbs** indoors too so their homes smell fresh and clean.

New Year is often celebrated with friends, so my final story is from Denmark. If you are in Denmark at New Year, you will probably see piles of broken plates outside front doors. What's going on? Well, traditionally, people take their old or broken plates and **smash** them on their friend's front door. It brings good luck to your friend. It's great fun, too! So, a big pile of broken plates means you are a popular person. Enjoy the new year festival, wherever you are in the world. I hope you are ready with your grapes, luggage and plates!

- 1 a promise to yourself _____
- 2 luck, particularly good things that happen _____
- 3 to clean with a brush or a broom _____
- 4 perfect or ideal _____
- 5 to fix or repair _____

Part 3: Read these statements, then read the texts again and tick the correct column for each one

Hi, I'm Juan. La Tomatina is celebrated in the town of Bunol near Valencia in Spain. It's my favorite festival. It's organized on the last Wednesday of August. Thousands of people join this festival every year. It's the most famous food fight in Europe. Old clothes and closed shoes are worn for this fight. In addition, goggles are put on. And then the food fight starts with a signal. Tomatoes are thrown to each other. It lasts for only an hour. Of course, there are some rules. You mustn't enter the festival area with bottles or hard objects as you may cause harm. Moreover, you mustn't tear others' clothes. You should also squash the tomatoes before you throw them. In this way, the hit will be less painful. And you should stop when you hear the second signal. In the end, the streets are cleaned by fire engines. The atmosphere is terrific. The festival is fantastic.



Hello! I'm Eva. I love Chocolate Festival. It's held in Amsterdam, the capital city of the Netherlands every October. It's one of the sweetest events in Europe. Over 700 different flavors of chocolate can be tasted there. I find this fascinating. It's a two-day festival. You can meet chocolate experts from many different countries as well as the Netherlands. They teach you all about chocolate. You can learn the process of making chocolate from bean to bar. The festival organizers don't forget children. They can create masterpieces of art with chocolate. They can also join entertaining activities like face painting. What's more, there's live music in the afternoon and evening. You can enjoy yourselves a lot at this festival.



1. People wear new clothes at La Tomatina.
2. Bottles and hard objects mustn't be taken to the festival area.
3. The tomatoes should be squashed before throwing.
4. La Tomatina is a two-day festival.
5. You can taste more than 800 different flavors of chocolate at Amsterdam Chocolate Festival.
6. The festival lasts for two days.
7. You meet only Dutch chocolate experts at the festival.
8. Children can join creative activities at the festival.

YES NO

☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐