

Quinceañera

- 1** In Latin American countries, *Quinceañera* is a well-known celebration for girls around their fifteenth birthday. Attended by family and friends, the celebration includes music, food, and dance. Many people believe when the Spanish first came to parts of the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. Of course, ancient civilizations like the Inca, Maya, and the Aztecs probably already had their own coming-of-age ceremonies, but the Spanish changed these to include European customs, such as the *Quinceañera* waltz.³ This waltz between the teenage girl and her father symbolizes⁴ her coming of age.



Bull jumping

- 2** The Hamar tribe in southern Ethiopia is known for its unique tradition of "bull jumping"—part of the coming-of-age ceremony for boys in Hamar culture. A row of bulls are lined up, and the boy has to jump over them. He must run back and forth twice across the backs of the bulls. The bulls are covered in dung to make them slippery. If the boy falls off, he must wait a year to try again. Hamar men have to do this before they can marry. After choosing a bride, the groom-to-be will have to pay the bride's family a "bride price" of about thirty goats and twenty cows. Because of the costs involved, Hamar men are usually in their mid-thirties and the women aged about seventeen when they marry. As a result, the husband often dies many years before his wife, so many Hamar households are headed by women who have survived their husbands.



Seijin-no-Hi

- 3** The second Monday of January is a public holiday in Japan. It's a day when all twenty-year-olds are to celebrate their coming of age. Called *Seijin-no-Hi*, the young men and women wear formal clothes and attend ceremonies. Twenty is an important age in Japanese society because you get several adult legal rights, such as the right to vote in elections. In recent years, the number of young people celebrating *Seijin-no-Hi* has decreased. This is partly due to Japan's low birth rate, but it could also be because modern twenty-year-olds are less interested in these kinds of social traditions.



- 2** Look at the photos and the title of the article on page 75. What do you think the expression "coming of age" means? Discuss with your partner.

- 3** Read about the three different coming-of-age ceremonies. Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 *Quinceañera* is celebrated in many different countries. T F
- 2 The writer thinks the Spanish introduced coming-of-age celebrations to South America. T F
- 3 The Hamar groom-to-be must pay money to the bride's family. T F
- 4 In Hamar culture, a husband is usually younger than his wife. T F
- 5 In Japan, you have more legal rights when you turn twenty years old. T F
- 6 The attitudes of some young people toward *Seijin-no-Hi* are changing. T F

- 4 These pairs of words (1–4) are in the article. Match the words with their definitions (a or b).

- 1 country b culture a
a the ideas and customs of a group of people
b an area of land with its own government
- 2 celebration ____ ceremony ____
a an enjoyable event such as a party
b a traditional and formal event on a special day
- 3 bride ____ groom ____
a a man on his wedding day
b a woman on her wedding day
- 4 legal rights ____ social traditions ____
a what the law allows you to do
b activities or behavior based on the past

Word focus *get*

- 7 Work in pairs. Look at the highlighted word *get* in the article. What word could replace *get* in this expression?
- 8 Read the description of a wedding. Match the uses of *get* (1–6) with their meanings (a–f).

Once a couple ¹**gets** engaged, people start to ²**get ready** for the big day! On the morning of the wedding, everyone ³**gets up** early. Family and friends sometimes have to travel long distances, but it's a great chance for everyone to ⁴**get together**. At the wedding, the bride and groom ⁵**get** a lot of presents. When they ⁶**get back** from their honeymoon, they move into their new home with all their presents.

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|----------------|-----------------------|
| a becomes ____ | d receive ____ |
| b meet ____ | e return ____ |
| c prepare ____ | f starts the day ____ |