



Source: When's The Next Holiday by Canadian Resources for ESL

Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is February 14. It's a time for romance and love. People send their loved ones cards called valentines. Some valentines are serious and romantic, others are funny. Lovers give each other gifts such as chocolates, perfume, red roses or other flowers. Children also get involved. They exchange valentines at school with friends and make presents and valentines for their parents.

Some researchers trace the beginnings of Valentine's Day to an ancient Roman fertility festival called Lupercalia. Two youths dressed in animal skins would run around the city slapping people with strips of goat skin. This was supposed to make them fertile and keep away evil.

In Roman mythology, Cupid the god of love was a baby with magic arrows. If he shot your heart with one of them, you fell in love with the first person you saw. But since Cupid enjoyed making trouble, he might not shoot an arrow at the person you had just fallen in love with!

Some say Valentine's Day started when Claudius the Second was the Roman Emperor. He needed men to fight in his army and so he wouldn't let them marry. However the men wanted to marry and stay home with their wives. Lovers were very unhappy with the emperor's law. A Roman bishop named Valentine disobeyed Claudius and performed marriages in secret. After Claudius discovered what Valentine was doing, he put him in jail. While Valentine was in prison, children threw gifts and notes through the bars. This may have started the tradition of sending valentines. Claudius had Bishop Valentine beheaded on February 14, 269 A.D. Two-hundred years later, the Roman Church chose this day to remember him as the special saint of lovers.

The last explanation about the origins of Valentine's Day goes back to an old English belief. February 14 was the day birds were thought to begin mating. It seemed like a good idea to follow the example of nature and choose a mate on this day.

Whatever the true origin of Valentine's Day, symbols from all these stories appear on valentines. Every February 14, Canadians send more than 60 million cards with cupids, roses, birds, hearts and poems on them.





Describe the Differences

Look carefully at the two pictures. How is the picture on the left different from the one on the right? Write a sentence to describe each way the pictures are different.



Write a sentence to describe each way the pictures are different.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____





Match the Word to the Meaning

arrows
saint
heart
roses
lovers
emperor

trouble
mate
tradition
romance
notes
behead

prison
magic
perfume
cards
poems
English

Claudius
fertility
Lupercalia
explanation
Cupid
chocolates

1. _____ marry; to choose a partner
2. _____ mysterious power; enchanted
3. _____ the ability to have children
4. _____ short letters
5. _____ writings in rhythmic lines
6. _____ a meaning or reason given for something
7. _____ a piece of paper with a message we send at birthdays, Valentine's Day, Christmas etc. More than one.
8. _____ to cut off the head
9. _____ the people who live in England
10. _____ pointed shafts shot from a bow
11. _____ another word for problems or pain
12. _____ jail
13. _____ very good person
14. _____ god of love
15. _____ a red part of the body which is in the chest
16. _____ custom
17. _____ a nice smell
18. _____ the Roman fertility festival
19. _____ a kind of flower with a prickly stem
20. _____ a love affair
21. _____ people who are in love
22. _____ leader or ruler of an empire
23. _____ a Roman Emperor
24. _____ candy made with cacao beans and sugar





Ask Your Partner

1. When is Valentine's Day celebrated?
2. What is the name for the cards that people give each other on Valentine's Day?
3. What is the name of the ancient Roman fertility festival?
4. Who is Cupid, and how does he make trouble?
5. Why didn't the Emperor Claudius want his men to marry?
6. Why did the Emperor Claudius have Valentine put in jail?
7. What did the children do while Valentine was in jail?
8. In what year did the Roman Church choose February 14 to remember Bishop Valentine?
9. What is an old English belief about February 14?
10. What are some of the symbols that we find today on Valentine's Day cards?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____





True or False- Correct the false statements

1. Valentine's Day is for children and adults.

2. During Lupercalia, people were slapped with strips of goat skin to make them walk faster.

3. Cupid was the Roman Emperor.

4. Claudius was the god of love.

5. In England on February 14 people thought the birds flew south for the winter. People followed this example of nature by taking a vacation in Florida.

6. Sending valentines in Canada is not a popular custom.

