

Describing festivals with passive voice

Describing festivals with passive voice guessing game

Describe one of the festivals on the next page until your partner guesses which one you chose. They can only guess once per hint. Then take turns describing and guessing. Your teacher will tell you if you can use the example sentences, table, etc below to help.

Describing festivals with passive voice brainstorming game

Choose one of the festivals below, then take turns trying to make true sentences about it, continuing until no one else can think of anything true to say. Your teacher will tell you if/ when you can use example phrases etc below to help.

If you haven't yet, use the examples of descriptions to play the guessing game. Then ask about any descriptions which you don't understand, don't think are correct, etc.

Passive voice grammar presentation

Without looking below, use your memory and/ or grammar knowledge to put the verbs in brackets in the right tenses. Some should not and cannot be put in the passive voice.

Songkran

- It _____ (celebrate) in Thailand.
- It _____ (think) to start the monsoon.

April Fool's Day

- Practical jokes _____ (play) on people.
- The name _____ (mean) something like "day for making people look stupid".
- Tricks shouldn't _____ (play) on people after midday.

Groundhog Day

- The weather _____ (predict) by a small animal.
- It first _____ (occur) in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania.

White Day

- It _____ (first celebrate) in 1978 in Japan.

Oktoberfest

- 7.7 million litres of beer _____ (drink) in 2014.
- It _____ (celebrate) in Munich since 1810.
- It _____ (last) from 16 to 18 days.

Lent

- Animal products such as butter didn't use to _____ (eat) during this period.
- Nowadays, one thing such as chocolate tends to _____ (give up).

Hina matsuri

- Not putting ornaments away in time leads to marriage _____ (delay).

Check as a class or with the example descriptions. Then try to make extra sentences about those festivals and/ or similar ones about different festivals.

Festivals and celebrations to describe and guess

- Hatsumode
- Japanese Coming of Age Day
- Epiphany/ The end of Xmas
- Chinese New Year
- Groundhog Day
- St Valentine's Day
- Shrove Tuesday/ Mardi Gras
- Lent
- Setsubun
- Hina matsuri
- White Day
- Holi
- St Patrick's Day
- April Fool's Day
- Hanami
- Songkran
- Good Friday
- Easter Sunday
- May Day
- Cinco de Mayo
- Mother's Day
- (American) Independence Day
- Tanabata
- Bon festival
- Ramadan
- Oktoberfest
- Halloween
- All Saints Day/ Mexican Day of the Dead
- Guy Fawkes Night/ The 5th of November
- Armistice Day/ Remembrance Day/ Memorial Day/ Peppero Day/ Pocky Day
- Shichigosan
- Thanksgiving
- Krampus Nacht
- Xmas Eve
- Xmas Day
- Boxing Day
- New Year's Eve

Example descriptions

- ... appears (...)
- ... are blessed by...
- ... are bought.
- ... are burnt/ lit.
- ... are cleaned.
- ... are closed.
- ... are cooked/ eaten/ drunk.
- ... are decorated/ displayed/ put up/ hung up.
- ... are forbidden/ not allowed.
- ... are given/ received (by...)
- ... are invited/ visited (by...)
- ... are rewarded/ punished (for...)
- ... are sung.
- ... are thrown.
- ... are traditionally...
- ... are worn.
- ... are written (on...)
- ... is based on...
- ... represents/ is represented by...
- ... should be/ has to be/ must be...
- ... tends to be...
- ... used to be...
- In 20... it was/ will be + celebrated/ held/ marked...
- It comes...
- It commemorates the Declaration of Independence on 4 July 1776.
- It first happened/ occurred/ took place...
- It happens/ occurs/ takes place...
- It has been celebrated/ been held/ been marked since...
- It has been happening/ occurring/ taking place/ going on since.../ for...
- It is attended by...
- It became well known...
- It is becoming/ has become...
- It is believed that/ thought that/ said that...
- It is called/ known as... (in...)
- It is celebrated once a year/ once every two years/...
- It is watched/ viewed...
- It lasts...
- It was first celebrated/ held/ marked...
- It was started by...
- Its name can be translated as...
- Its name means...
- The date varies from year to year.
- This day was made a national holiday...

It	-	allow/ forbid	by descendants
The date	is	appear	by...
The name	are	attend	a holiday
A ceremony	was	base on	animals
A (Hollywood) movie	were	become/ get/ turn	at home
A parade	has	believe/ think/ say	at this time
Activities like...	has been	bless	bring...
Ancestors	have	bring/ take	by President...
Animal products	have been	buy	enthusiastically
Bonfires/ Fireworks	will	call	first
Cakes	will be	cancel/ close	for... days
Candy/ Chocolate	should	celebrate/ hold/ mark	for... years
Cards	should be	clean	for...
(Good) children	must	come	from sunrise
Churches/ Shrines	must be	commemorate	in ... State
Coloured...	has to	cook	in 18...
Dances	has to be	decorate	in 19...
Decorations/ Dolls	have to	display/ hang up/ put up	in Mexico
Figures/ Models	have to be	drink/ eat	in most countries
Flowers/ Blossom	tend to	frighten/ scare	(in order) to...
Fortunes	tend to be	give/ receiver	in the UK
Good luck	used to	happen/ occur/ take	in the US
Graves	used to be	place	in the street
Jesus/ Buddha	can	invite	in...
Jokes/ Tricks	can be	know as	on this day
Lots of...		last/ go on	mainly
Lucky charms		leave out/ put out	most
Money/ Offerings		light/ burn	popular
Old fashioned...		make	recently
Pancakes		mean/ translate	the moon
Passers-by		perform	traditionally
Picnics		pray for	until sunset
Rabbits		predict	well known
Races		represent	
Santa Claus/ St Nicholas		reward/ punish	
Shoes/ Stockings		sing	
(...) speech		start	
The (...) river		take down	
The weather		throw	
Traditional...		vary	
Turkey		visit	
... war		watch/ view	
Water		wear	
Wishes		write	

Examples of descriptions for particular festivals

Hatsumode

- Temples and shrines are visited to pray for luck in the new year.
- Arrows are sometimes burnt to take away bad luck from the previous year.
- Wishes are written on wooden blocks and hung up.
- Lucky charms are often bought.
- People's fortunes are told on slips of paper which are hung up if bad luck is predicted.

Japanese Coming of Age Day

- A formal kimono called a hakama is traditionally worn.
- A ceremony is held at the town hall.
- It was established as a national holiday in 1948.

Chinese New Year

- Its date is based on the lunar calendar.
- Mooncakes are eaten.
- The new year is represented by a different animal from the choice of 12.

Groundhog Day

- It first occurred on February 2nd, 1886 in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania.
- The weather is predicted by a small animal. If it sees its shadow, winter will go on for six more weeks.
- A Bill Murray comedy was based on this day.

St Valentine's Day

- Chocolates are often given.
- In Japan, chocolates are given to men by women.
- In most countries, women are usually given chocolates and/ or flowers, and only cards are given to men.

Shrove Tuesday/ Mardi Gras

- Pancakes are cooked in order to use up the luxurious foods that won't be eaten during lent.
- Pancake races have been going on in the UK for over 500 years.
- A big parade takes place in New Orleans.

Lent

- Animal products such as butter didn't use to be eaten during this period.
- Nowadays, one thing such as chocolate tends to be given up.

Setsubun

- Beans are thrown at people dressed up as devils/ demons to take away bad luck.
- Children are often scared on this day.

Hina matsuri

- Old-fashioned dolls which are dressed in clothes from the Heian period are displayed in the house.
- The decorations are traditionally put away the day after the festival.
- It is said that not putting the ornaments away in time leads to the daughter's marriage being delayed.
- Small coloured rice crackers are eaten.
- A non-alcoholic saké is often drunk.

White Day

- The cost of the chocolates should be calculated to be two or three times the price of the Valentine's chocolates.
- It was first celebrated in 1978 in Japan.
- It was started by the Japanese National Confectionary Industry Association.

Holi

- It is mainly celebrated in India.
- Water and powdered paint are thrown.

St Patrick's Day

- The Chicago River turns green.
- Green is worn.
- Green beer is drunk.
- It was started in Ireland, but it is most enthusiastically celebrated in America.
- A parade is held in Boston which is viewed by up to a million people.

April Fool's Day

- Practical jokes are played on people.
- Tricks shouldn't be played on people after midday.
- The name means something like "day for making people look stupid".

Hanami

- Picnics are held under cherry trees.
- Cherry blossom is viewed.

Songkran

- It is celebrated in Thailand.
- Water used to be sprinkled as part of a religious ceremony, but it has turned into a big water fight.
- It is thought to start the monsoon.

Good Friday

- The date varies from year to year.
- Jesus was executed on this day.
- Hot cross buns are eaten.
- In Germany, some fun activities such as dancing and horse racing are forbidden.

Easter Sunday

- Jesus came back to life on this day.
- Chocolate eggs are hidden around the house and/ or garden.
- It is believed that eggs are brought by a special rabbit.
- The themes of spring and rebirth are represented by chicks, rabbits and eggs

May Day

- In the UK, traditional spring festivals take place where long ribbons are held as people dance around a pole.
- Workers' rights are demanded in demonstrations and sometimes strikes.

Cinco de Mayo

- It was first celebrated in Mexico, but now it has become more popular in the USA.
- The French army of the Emperor Napoleon III were beaten by the Mexicans on this day in 1862.
- The name can be translated as "The fifth of May".

Mother's Day

- In the UK, breakfast is often brought to the mother's bed.
- In 1914, this day was made a national holiday by President Woodrow Wilson.
- In most countries this is celebrated in May but in the UK it happens in the middle of March.

(American) Independence Day

- It commemorates the Declaration of Independence on 4 July 1776.
- Many fireworks are launched.
- Parades are held.
- It is known as the American national day.

Tanabata

- It is celebrated in China, Korea and Japan, but in English the Japanese name is most often used.
- In Chinese folklore story The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl, it is said that two lovers were separated but were allowed to meet on the seventh day of the seventh month. However, if it rains then their meeting is delayed until the following year.

Bon festival

- People are said to be visited by the spirits of their ancestors.
- Ancestors' graves are cleaned.
- Traditional dances are danced.

Ramadan

- The date varies.
- No food is eaten from sunrise to sunset.
- The end is marked by a big feast.
- In 2026, it will be marked from February to March
- It lasts about a month.

Oktoberfest

- Leather shorts called lederhosen are worn.
- It has been celebrated in Munich since 1810.
- Lots of beer is drunk.
- 7.7 million litres of beer were drunk in 2014.
- Lots of sausages are eaten.
- It lasts from 16 to 18 days.
- It is attended by over six million people a year.

Halloween

- Traditionally ancestors' spirits are thought to visit their families.
- Recently women's costumes have become more skimpy than scary.
- It is becoming more and more popular.

All Saints Day/ Mexican Day of the Dead

- Ancestors' graves are cleaned by their families.
- Candies in the shape of skulls are eaten.
- The Pixar animation Coco was based on this day.

Guy Fawkes Night/ The 5th of November

- On this day in 1605, Catholics were arrested trying to blow up Westminster Palace when King James I was visiting.
- Bonfires are lit.
- Figures called "Guys" are put on top of the bonfires. "A penny for the Guy" is traditionally asked for to passers-by.
- Fireworks are launched/ set off/ let off/ lit.
- It is getting less popular as Halloween is becoming more popular.

Armistice Day/ Remembrance Day/ Memorial Day/ Peppero Day/ Pocky Day

- The end of the First World War is commemorated.
- Red poppies are worn before and during this day.
- One minute's silence or two minutes' silence is held at eleven minutes past eleven.
- Long breadsticks with chocolate on are eaten because they look like the numbers in the day and month of this date.

Shichigosan

- In Japan, three-year-old, five-year-old and seven-year-old children are dressed up smartly, taken to a temple, and sometimes blessed by a priest.

Thanksgiving

- It is usually marked with a big family reunion and roast dinner.
- It has been celebrated since 1621.
- Indigenous American foods like turkey and potatoes are usually eaten.
- It is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November.
- American football is shown on TV.
- The first was attended by 90 Wampanoag indigenous people and 53 Pilgrims.

Krampusnacht

- Well behaved children are rewarded by Saint Nicholas but badly behaved children are punished by Krampus.
- It is celebrated in the Alps.
- Children are frightened by people dressed as a kind of horned devil.
- It became well known after a Hollywood horror film was based on it.

Xmas Eve

- Stockings are hung up.
- Wooden shoes are left out by Dutch children.

Xmas Day

- Present are given and received.
- Turkey is eaten with cranberry sauce.
- Jesus was born./ Jesus is said to have been born.
- The Queen's speech is watched on TV.
- All trains and buses are cancelled.
- Paper crowns are worn.
- Terrible jokes are read out.
- It's a Christian festival, but what we do is often based on earlier traditions.
- If you are caught under the mistletoe, the other person is allowed to kiss you.

Boxing Day

- It comes just after Xmas Day.
- No one knows for sure why this day was originally given this name.

New Year's Eve

- In Spain, 12 grapes are eaten.
- Auld Lang Syne is sung.
- Champagne is drunk.
- Soba is eaten in Japan.
- Santa Claus still appears on the street in Turkey.

Part Two: Describing things related to festivals with passive voice

Choose a thing related to festivals and take turns describing it until someone gives up or try to guess what it is as one person describes it.

Possible things related to festivals to describe and guess

- Advent calendar
- Amazake
- Auld Lang Syne
- Baubles
- Bon-odori
- Butsudan
- Candles
- Carols
- Christmas pudding
- (Xmas) crackers
- Cranberry sauce
- Daruma-san
- Easter eggs
- Fireworks
- Giri-choco
- Guy
- Kouhaku Uta Gassen
- Koi nobori
- Marzipan
- Maypole
- Mince pies
- Mistletoe
- Mulled wine/ Gluhwein
- Nativity/ Nativity scene
- O-sechi/ Sechi-ryori
- Piñata
- Portable shrine
- Santa Claus
- Toshi-koshi soba

Try to add descriptions which are not such as more detail on those things or similar descriptions of things related to festivals which are not in the list above.

Advent calendar

- Xmas pictures and sometimes sweets are hidden by little card doors.
- One window is opened each day from the first of December.

Amazake

- It is like rice wine, but it doesn't contain alcohol.
- It is for children, but it is disliked by many of them.
- It is drunk during Japanese dolls festivals (also known as girls festival).

Auld Lang Syne

- In the UK, it is usually only sung when the new year starts.
- In Japan, the same tune is often played when shops close.
- Its name means "for old time's sake".

Baubles

- They are hung on Xmas trees.
- They are easily broken.
- They used to be made of glass.
- They come in many colours.

Bon-odori

- It is danced during traditional Japanese festivals.
- It can usually be easily copied from other people without much practice.
- It is usually performed in a circle.

Butsudan

- Offerings of food etc are left on it.
- Photos of ancestors are put on it.
- Joss sticks and candles are lit in front of it.

Candles

- They used to be hung on Xmas trees, but have been replaced by electric fairy lights.
- They are put in a menorah candelabra every Sabbath (Friday evening).

Carols

- They are sung around Xmas time, sometimes from door to door.
- Food is sometimes, or if money is given then it is usually passed onto a charity.

Christmas pudding

- It can be made up to a year before.
- It can be eaten with cream, ice cream, custard, or just a little sugar.
- It is heated before it is eaten.
- A coin is put in it. If the coin is found, that is good luck.

(Xmas) crackers

- A small bit of gunpowder is exploded by it being pulled by two people.
- A paper crown, a toy and a silly joke are stored inside.

Cranberry sauce

- It is eaten with turkey.
- It is made from fruit and sugar, but it still tastes quite sour.

Daruma-san

- It is based on a Buddhist saint who is said to have meditated so long that his arms and legs fell off.
- One eye is painted on when a wish is made and another is added when the wish is granted.

Easter eggs

- They are eaten on Easter Sunday.
- Other sweets or toys are sometimes stored inside.
- They are said to be brought by the Easter bunny.

Fireworks

- In the UK, they are often set off on the fifth of November.
- In the USA, they are often let off on the fourth of July.
- In many countries they are launched on

Giri-choco

- Its name can be translated as “duty chocolates”.
- It is given to colleagues, including ones who aren’t really your friends.

Guy

- It is a figure made of old clothes, newspaper and a face which is often made from a mask.
- He is named after Guy Fawkes, who tried to kill King James I in 1605.
- He is displayed in the street and passers-by are asked to donate money.
- He is put on a bonfire and burned.

Kouhaku Uta Gassen

- Singers are divided into two teams by gender and then compete.
- It is broadcast on the evening of New Year’s Eve.
- It has become less popular but is still watched by many people.

Koi nobori

- They are a kind of fish flag or kite which are hung up to blow in the wind.
- Traditionally one is hung up for each male child, but nowadays they are also often hung up for female children.

Marzipan

- It is made of almonds and sugar.
- It is usually either loved or hated.
- Xmas cakes are covered in it (then it is covered in white icing).
- It is put in stollen.

Maypole

- Long ribbons are hung from the top of it.
- It is danced around, especially in May Day village festivals.
- The ribbons are wound up and unwound as people go around it.

Mince pies

- They are named that way because meat used to be included.
- The pastry is filled with lots of dried fruit and suet.
- They are eaten around Xmas.

Mistletoe

- It is hung up at Xmas, but has been used as a decoration since before Christian times.
- It is a good Xmas decoration because it doesn't turn brown in autumn.
- If you are caught under it, you can't stop yourself being kissed by the other person.

Mulled wine/ Gluhwein

- It is usually drunk in the winter.
- Spices are added to red wine.
- The German name is quite often used in English.

Nativity/ Nativity scene

- It is put up before Xmas and taken down around the 12th day.
- It consists of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, shepherds, the three wise men and some animals.
- It is usually made of wood or China.

O-sechi/ Sechi-ryori

- It is prepared beforehand so the cook in the family can relax during the celebrations.
- Most of the foods are chosen for good luck.

Piñata

- It comes from Mexico, but it has also become popular in the USA.
- Sweets and sometimes toys are put inside.
- Someone is blindfolded and then it is hit in order for it to be broken.

Santa Claus

- He is called Father Christmas in the UK.
- His name comes from Saint Nicholas.
- He was first dressed in red and white in a Coca Cola advert.

Toshi-koshi soba

- It is eaten around New Year.
- The length of the noodles represents long life and so it is considered to be lucky.