

Festivals and feast days

MATERIALS NEEDED

Videos, audio-recordings, pictures, books, objects, traditional artefacts and internet resources about the events; poster paper, pencils, scissors, glue

AIM OF THE ACTIVITY

The aim of this activity is to improve the pupils' awareness of festivals and fest days in their own and the various cultures in their class. The pupils learn about traditions, ceremonies, music, songs, and various cultural aspects of celebrating festivals and feast days in their own and other families, countries, or cultures. It also provides opportunities to reflect on their own way(s) of celebrating festivals and fest days.

PREPARATION FOR THE ACTIVITY

The teacher selects or asks the pupils to collect materials for the presentation of festivals and feast days whenever events occur during the school year. If teachers choose to use videos or pictures for the initial discussion, they need to prepare the videos or a collection of pictures which can be shown to the pupils as an introduction to the activity.

SIGNIFICANT BENEFIT OF THE ACTIVITY

The activity initiates and/or consolidates the pupils' cultural awareness for the diversity in festivals and feast days in their families and countries/cultures. Moreover, it makes them consider the value of cultural diversity in that the pupils will collect new information about festivals and feast days in other countries and cultures. Thus, they will become able to reflect on and compare their own traditions and culture with those of others. Pupils with a multilingual or different cultural background get a chance to present aspects of their traditions and culture to their peers. This potential for authentic input about language and culture should be made use of and valued in class.

PROCEDURE

The teachers need to explain the aim of the activity to initiate data collection and a class-discussion about festivals, feast days, traditions, and culture.

Possible questions for the discussion would be:

What are your favourite festivals and feast days? What are they called in your language?

(→Multilingual Walls)

What are your favourite traditional activities and why?

What do these traditions mean to you and your family (members)?

How does your family celebrate this festival/feast day/tradition?

Prior to the discussion in class, the teacher can initiate storytelling/narration with the help of pictures of different cultural events. The pictures can then create a shared understanding for the selected event before the class-discussion: The pupils can describe the pictures and make suggestions about what is going on in them, where the pictures may originate from, and what event is being celebrated.

For their own project, the pupils are encouraged to choose a cultural event, tradition, object, or activity, which they like or find interesting to work on. Their topic can be from their own or from another culture, which they would like to get to know. The pupils should work in small groups on a selected topic. At home or during class-time, the pupils should prepare a presentation of their topic taking a multimodal approach using posters, video, acting, singing, etc.

The presentation should include information about:

What festival, feast day, tradition, or object is presented?

When, why, and how is this event/object celebrated?

To which culture and countries does this festival, feast day, tradition, or object belong?

Why did the group choose the topic?

What does it mean to them and why?

The pupils should also create a multilingual wall with typical words and phrases connected with the chosen festival, feast day, tradition, or object, expressing compliments, lyrics, rhymes, or important key words used during the celebration to connect cultural and linguistic aspects.

The presentations should be performed in class or at a school-event with enough time for asking and answering questions.