

Notting Hill Carnival – Fact or fiction?

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| Time | 50-60 minutes |
| Interaction | Individual reading and groupwork |
| Level | B1 (Intermediate) to C1 (Advanced) |

Language areas practised

Sub-skills and Functions

- describing events
- making recommendations

Grammar and Lexis

- festivals and celebrations

Preparation

Photocopy the text page (1 per student), and the 2 activities below (1 per group of 3-4 students). Cut up as indicated. If you can, organise for learners to have access to the Internet to research their fact or fiction texts.

Procedure

1. Begin with a discussion - find out from the learners what they know about carnivals, either in their country or around the world.
2. Hand out the text page (1 per student) and explain the reading task. Check they are familiar with 'fact or fiction'.

Encourage them to discuss their answers when they finish.

Answers: a.7; b.12; c.15.

3. Learners do the vocabulary check at the bottom of the page. Check answers. **Answers:** 2.f; 3.a; 4.h; 5.c; 6.b; 7.e; 8.g.
4. Hand out the extension activities (below), and after checking they understand the discussion questions, give them 3 to 5 minutes to prepare their ideas. Encourage them to make notes only. If your learners are from the same country, make a list of possible festivals they could choose from on the board, and get group members to choose different ones.
5. Learners tell their groups about the festival they chose. Encourage them to ask follow-up questions as appropriate.
6. Introduce the 2nd extension activity; 'Create your own fact or fiction text'. Explain the task and set a time limit (15-20 minutes). Make sure each group chooses a different festival. Monitor to provide assistance with the writing and research as appropriate.
7. As groups complete the writing task, swap their texts over and tell them to try to identify the 3 'fiction' sentences. Learners may like to display their texts on the classroom noticeboard.

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Discussion - Festivals in your country

1) What are the most important festivals in your country or city? Choose one and prepare to tell your classmates about it. Make notes on these questions:

1. When does it take place?
2. What does it celebrate?
3. What do people do?
4. What food do people eat?
5. What do you like about it?
6. Think of 3 recommendations for visitors.

2) Now work in small groups. Take turns to talk about your festivals.

Create your own fact or fiction text

Work in small groups. Choose a festival or celebration from your country. Write a short text about it with between 10 and 15 sentences. Include 3 'fiction' sentences that are not true. You can use the Internet to research your text. Remember that your 3 fiction sentences must be completely untrue.

When you have finished, swap texts with a different group. Try to find their 3 fiction sentences.



Notting Hill Carnival – Fact or fiction?

1) Read this short text about the Notting Hill Carnival in London, UK. Most of it is fact, but there are three sentences which are not true. Find these three 'fiction' sentences and write the numbers in these boxes:

a. b. c.

- 1 The Notting Hill Carnival is the largest Carnival in the UK, and is almost 50 years
 2 old. Unlike other carnivals which usually take place in February, it takes place at
 3 the end of August. It was originally organised by members of the West Indian
 4 ethnic and religious communities. The West Indian origins of the Carnival are still
 5 evident in the sound of steel drums, and the taste of traditional Jamaican 'jerk'
 6 chicken.
- 6 Many people are surprised that it takes place in August, but this is due to the cold
 7 climate in the UK. Carnival participants often wear few clothes, walking along the
 8 streets in bikinis or shorts. In 1979 an attempt to run a mini carnival in Notting Hill
 9 in February, when the temperature was 8°C, led to over 40 of the participants
 10 going to hospital suffering from cold-related complaints.
- 11 The Notting Hill Carnival is a popular family event today and usually fairly safe.
 12 However, in its early days it was illegal, and the police often tried to stop it from
 13 happening. In 1976 the carnival turned into a riot and 60 people were arrested -
 14 even as recently as 2008 over 500 people were arrested. Today over 10,000
 15 members of the police come from all over the UK to make it a safe event, although
 16 pickpocketing is still a problem on the crowded streets. An old law in London
 means that only official participants in the Carnival are allowed to dance and each
 year a number of spectators are arrested for dancing.
- 17 The Carnival costs over £5 million for the policing alone, although it is estimated to
 18 make nearly £100 million for the local economy. Apps are now available to help
 19 you find your way around the Carnival. There is even a videogame in which players
 20 have to avoid pickpockets and improve their carnival costume to score points. If
 you are interested in going, remember to plan your day well, and don't forget your
 camera!

2) Match the underlined words from the text with their definitions below. An example has been done for you:

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| 1. ethnic | a) a musical instrument traditionally made from metal oil containers |
| 2. evident | b) when a group of people break the law (often in protest) |
| 3. steel drums | c) a two-piece swimming costume for women |
| 4. due to | d) connected with a specific race or community |
| 5. bikini | e) stealing from people's pockets |
| 6. riot | f) clear / obvious |
| 7. pickpocketing | g) somebody watching an event |
| 8. spectator | h) because of |

