Festivals in their cultural context

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
INTERMEDIATE | B1-B2

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Tick the correct category for each festival word.

Word | Origin | Practice | Feeling | Element

1 folklore [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
2 ritual [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
3 nostalgic [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
4 symbolic [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
5 ancestral [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
6 communal [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
7 procession [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
8 reverence [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

2 Correct the mistake in each sentence.

1 The festival comes from old folklore of. _____
2 They perform ritual every year. _____
3 She feels nostalgic about of the festival. _____
4 The colours are symbolic of. _____
5 It's part of their ancestral of custom. _____
6 The event is very communal of nature. _____
7 A procession move through the town. _____
8 They show great reverence for of tradition. _____

3 Choose the more suitable description.

1 For traditional stories and customs passed down orally: folklore / official history.
2 For a formal, repeated practice with symbolic meaning: ritual / random activity.
3 For a longing feeling for the past: nostalgic / indifferent.
4 For something representing a deeper meaning: symbolic / literal.
5 For customs passed down from earlier generations: ancestral / newly invented.
6 For an event shared and experienced together: communal / solitary.

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4 Complete the accounts with words from the box.

ancestral | communal | folklore | nostalgic | procession | reverence | ritual | symbolic

Account A: The festival is rooted in local 1 _____, with stories passed down for generations about its origins.
Account B: The 2 _____ meal is a central 3 _____ that brings the whole village together every year.
Account C: Elders describe feeling deeply 4 _____ during the festival, remembering childhood celebrations.
Account D: The 5 _____ colours worn by participants each represent a different 6 _____ value passed down through the community.
Account E: A long 7 _____ moves slowly through the streets, and onlookers show real 8 _____ as it passes.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Why festivals endure

Anthropologists studying festivals note that these events serve functions well beyond simple entertainment, reinforcing communal identity and connecting participants to ancestral tradition. Even festivals that have become heavily commercialised often retain symbolic elements rooted in much older folklore, though their original religious or seasonal significance may fade from everyday awareness. Younger generations sometimes feel less connected to a festival's traditional meaning, yet many still find genuine value in the shared ritual and sense of belonging it provides, suggesting that a festival's communal function can persist even as its symbolic content evolves over time.

1 What functions do festivals serve, beyond simple entertainment? _____

2 What do even heavily commercialised festivals often retain? _____

3 What may fade from everyday awareness? _____

4 How might younger generations feel about a festival's traditional meaning? _____

5 What do many younger people still find genuine value in? _____

6 What does this suggest about a festival's communal function? _____

6 Rewrite each phrase using the word in capitals.

1 The stories were passed down for generations. FOLKLORE _____

2 She felt a longing for the past. NOSTALGIC _____

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3 The colours each represent something deeper. SYMBOLIC _____

4 The whole community took part together. COMMUNAL _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 100-120 word account of a festival's cultural significance and how it has changed over time. Include specific examples.

[ ] Use at least ten target expressions. [ ] Include polite, precise wording. [ ] Organise the account clearly.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Categories

1 Origin 2 Practice 3 Feeling 4 Element 5 Origin 6 Element 7 Practice 8 Feeling

2 Corrections

1 comes from old folklore 2 perform a ritual 3 feels nostalgic about the festival
4 symbolic 5 ancestral custom 6 very communal in nature
7 procession moves 8 great reverence for tradition

3 Suitable descriptions

1 folklore 2 ritual 3 nostalgic 4 symbolic 5 ancestral 6 communal

4 Accounts

1 folklore 2 communal 3 ritual 4 nostalgic 5 symbolic 6 ancestral 7 procession 8 reverence

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Reinforcing communal identity and connecting participants to ancestral tradition.
2 Symbolic elements rooted in much older folklore.
3 Original religious or seasonal significance.
4 Less connected to it.
5 The shared ritual and sense of belonging it provides.
6 That it can persist even as its symbolic content evolves over time.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 The stories are part of local folklore. 2 She felt nostalgic.
3 The colours are symbolic. 4 The event was communal.

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check range, respectful register and clear organisation.