

● What are public holidays?

Public holidays are days when you don't have to go to school / work / shops are closed / people have a day off / we remember an event like the end of a war or a religious day, such as a saint's day. In the UK and USA, a public holiday can also be called a 'bank holiday' because all the banks and shops are shut.

● Can you name any festivals / holidays that are specific to English-speaking countries?

Halloween is celebrated in October in the USA and the UK. Thanksgiving in Canada / America is a special family meal / celebration in October / November. Bonfire Night / Guy Fawkes' Night is on November 5th in the UK and people have big fires and fireworks. Independence Day is celebrated in the USA on the 4th of July with fireworks and barbecues. In Australia, Anzac day, on April 25th, is a day to remember the soldiers who died in the wars. Valentine's Day is celebrated around the world on February 14th, especially by people who are in love. Some countries celebrate Mother's Day / Father's Day and people send cards and presents to their parents.

● What do you know about Halloween?

It is celebrated on October 31st in the UK and the USA. In the past, people believed that on that day the dead came back to Earth. Children dress up as monsters / ghosts / witches and walk around their neighbourhood / streets and say "trick or treat". In return they are given sweets (BrE) / candy (AmE). Some people decorate their houses to look scary. People cut faces into pumpkins to make Jack O'Lanterns / Halloween lanterns.

● Where is Thanksgiving celebrated and what do they do?

Thanksgiving is celebrated in the USA on the last Thursday in November and in Canada on the second Monday of October. It is a big family occasion / celebration. People spend time with their families and have a special meal with roast turkey / cranberry sauce / vegetables / mashed potatoes / gravy / pumpkin pie. They are thankful for being together / for the food on the table. The holiday started when the Pilgrims, the first English people to move to America, survived the first winter with

help from the Native Americans and they celebrated with / by eating a big meal together.

● Can you describe what St Patrick's Day is and where it is celebrated?

St Patrick's Day / St Paddy's Day is a big Irish holiday celebrated in Ireland / by Irish people around the world. It is / takes place on March 17th. It is the national day of Ireland. They remember the patron saint of Ireland, St Patrick. People wear green / dress up with the Irish national symbol, a shamrock / a three-leaf clover / drink Irish beer called Guinness / Irish whiskey / parade around the streets / have a big party.

● Can you think of any Czech public holidays?

Czechs have a public holiday on May 8th to remember the end of the Second World War / Liberation Day. On July 5th and 6th we have Cyril and Methodius Day, a religious holiday, and Jan Hus Day / we remember the day Jan Hus was burnt at the stake. We have a holiday on September 28th called St Wenceslas Day, to celebrate the patron saint of the Czech Republic. On October 28th we remember the day Czechoslovakia was formed and on November 17th we celebrate Freedom and Democracy Day, when the students demonstrated / protested against the Communists and the regime ended.

● Can you tell me about how Easter is celebrated in your country or English-speaking countries?

At Easter we decorate eggs and make 'pomlázka' / special whips decorated with ribbons / we whip girls / the girls give the boys decorated eggs. In America / the USA and the UK children get Easter baskets / chocolate eggs / decorate eggs for egg-rolling races / have Easter egg hunts / have a special family meal.

● What is your favourite holiday and why?

I love / like Christmas because we get presents / gifts / see family / I like the winter holiday best. I enjoy / my favourite holiday is Easter because the weather is warmer / I like the tradition of decorating eggs. I love 'masopust' / carnival because it is a time when people dress up in carnival costumes and celebrate before the start of Lent (= půst před Velikonocemi).

*Christmas will be included in the next Speaking Card.

