

Theme: American holidays

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American holidays

American holidays are various in character. Some of them are religious and some are connected with American history. American holidays are almost always celebrated by gathering together family and friends. There are often traditional meals. There are ten main holidays in the USA. They are:

New Year.

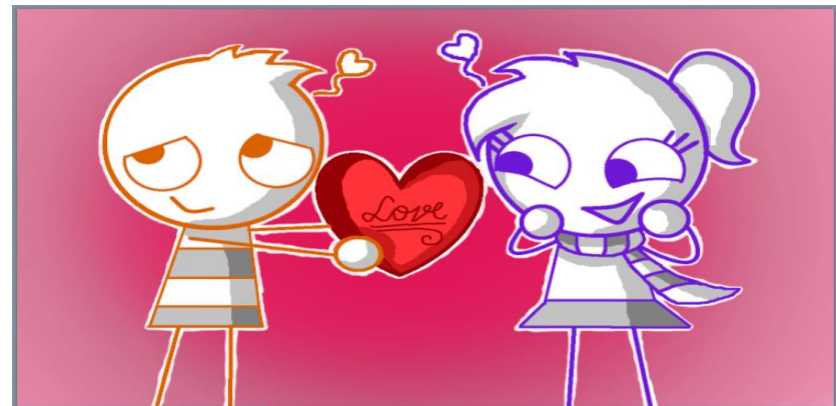
New Year's Eve is celebrated on December 31. At midnight, bells ring, horns blow and friends exchange hugs and kisses. Everyone stays up late to celebrate the arrival of another year. New Year's Day is traditionally the time to start new programmes and give up bad habits. In big cities it is celebrated with parades, sporting events and fireworks.



Valentine's Day



On February 14, or St. Valentine's Day, people in America remind the people who are important to them that they are loved. Husbands and wives, parents and children, children and teachers give each other cards and candy that show how they really feel.



Happy Easter!

Easter is a religious holiday that comes on a Sunday between March 22 and April 25. Christians believe that Christ rose from the dead on Easter. Other people celebrate Easter as a sign of the coming of spring. Americans paint eggs pretty colours and give them as gifts to children. According to tradition, a rabbit called the "Easter Bunny" brings the eggs and hides them for children to find.



Memorial or Decoration Day



This holiday comes on May 30 and is dedicated to the servicemen who gave their lives in past wars. Schools, clubs and churches decorate cemeteries and hold memorial services. They hang American flags on the main streets of towns.





Memorial Day Parade

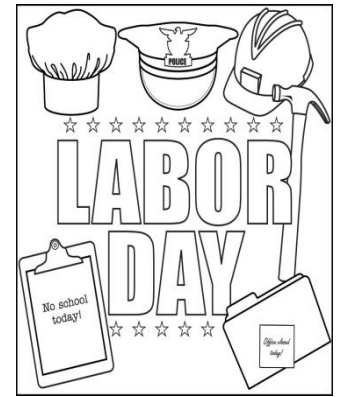
The Fourth of July (Independence Day)

This is the biggest national holiday of the USA. It is celebrated as the birthday of the country, because on this day in 1776, the colonies declared their independence from the British Crown and became the United States of America. On Independence Day, Americans march in parades and gather with friends and family. They cook hamburgers and hot dogs over a fire. In the evening, people watch fireworks.



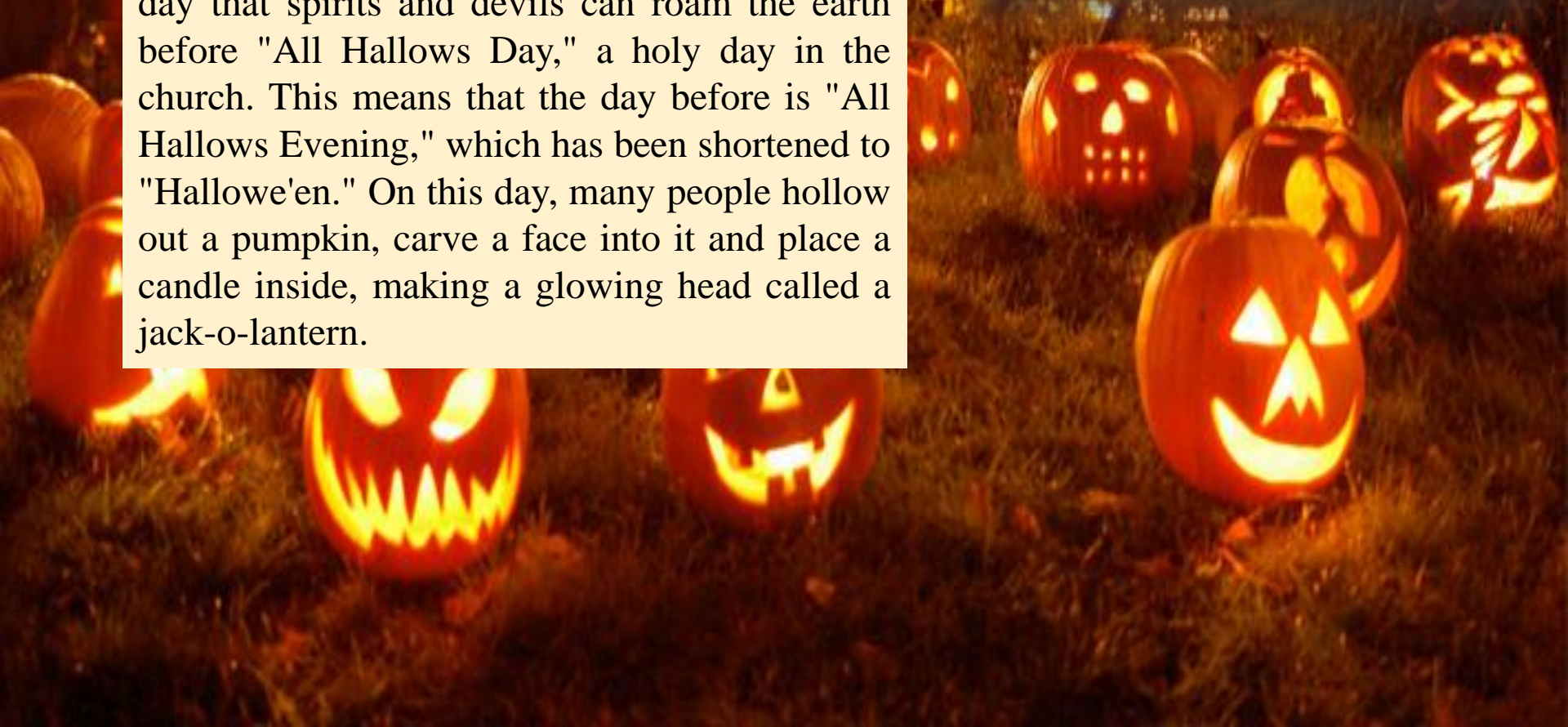
Labour Day

This is the holiday dedicated to the American working class and comes on the first Monday of September. It marks the beginning of autumn and is the last real holiday of summer. Many families take a vacation the week before Labour Day, as it is the end of summer vacation before the beginning of school.



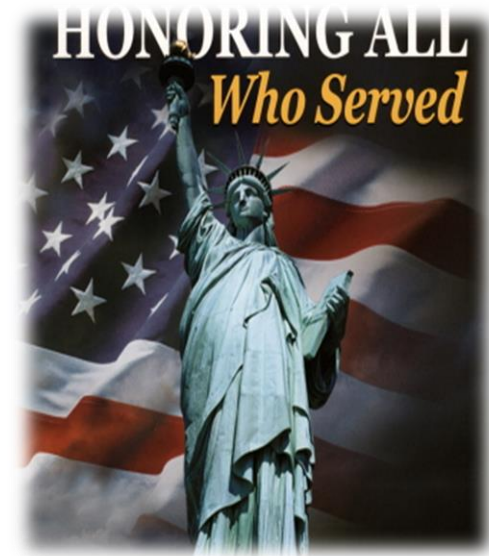
Halloween

October 31 is a day when people, mostly children, dress up in costumes, enjoy parties, and collect candy from their neighbours, saying "Trick or treat." The tradition started because, according to superstition, October 31 is the last day that spirits and devils can roam the earth before "All Hallows Day," a holy day in the church. This means that the day before is "All Hallows Evening," which has been shortened to "Hallowe'en." On this day, many people hollow out a pumpkin, carve a face into it and place a candle inside, making a glowing head called a jack-o-lantern.



Veterans' Day

This comes on November 11 and is usually marked with parades and ceremonies in which people honor those who have served in the country's military.



Thanksgiving Day

This holiday comes on the fourth Thursday in November and is a national holiday too. It is the day for being thankful for what one has and for the harvest. The tradition began when, in the 17th century, the colonists from Plymouth colony in Massachusetts held a big harvest celebration with their Native American friends who had helped them grow food after a terrible harvest the previous year. On Thanksgiving Day, families traditionally eat roast turkey. People travel long distances in order to be with their family on this holiday.



Christmas

Christmas is a religious celebration. It is celebrated on December 25 as the birthday of Christ. It is a family holiday, and every house tries to have a Christmas tree, which is brightly decorated. As a rule, presents for children, relatives and close friends are placed under the tree. There are many traditional songs, sweets and treats associated with Christmas. According to tradition, a mythical grandfatherly old man named "Santa Claus" brings presents to all the children while they are sleeping. He places them in the stockings (socks) that they leave for him to fill.



**Merry
Christmas!!!**