

*Hello everyone!*

The topic for this week's class is: "American Holidays and Celebrations"

We will learn the different kinds of holidays in the U.S. and answer the question:  
*What is the difference between a federal, state and social holiday?*

We will also review common cultural activities concerning celebrations such as:  
birthdays, weddings, graduations, etc.



*What is expected of you?*

Activities:

- 1) Review the different types of holidays and celebrations.
- 2) Role-play real life situations with holidays and celebrations.
- 3) Questions and comments.

# American Holidays

## Questions:

Chose a holiday and answer the questions:

1. When is this holiday celebrated?
2. Who celebrates this holiday?
3. Why is this holiday celebrated?
4. What are some things that are done on this holiday?
5. Is it strictly an American holiday?
6. What kind of holiday is it? Federal, State or Social?



Halloween



Independence Day



Christmas



Thanksgiving Day



Oktoberfest



Valentine's day



St. Patrick's day



Easter



New Year

# Holidays Observed in the U.S.

- Federal Holidays - Holidays declared by the U.S. Congress.
- State Holidays - A holiday in recognition of a specific person or event relevant to that state.
- Social Holidays - “unofficial” holidays derived from social customs and traditions.

*Why is there a difference?*



# Fun Fact



- Each of the 50 states has jurisdiction over its own holidays.
- U.S. Congress has authority to create holidays only for federal institutions.  
Some federal institutions: INS, IRS, FBI, NASA, U.S. Postal Service, etc.
- However, **most** states also observe **most** federal holidays.

# Federal Holidays

- Also commonly called "legal holidays" "public holidays" or "bank holidays."
- Most government offices are closed and government employees get the day off from work – with pay!
- Other institutions such as banks, stock exchanges, libraries and schools are closed.
- Private businesses are *not required* to be closed on these holidays, but many chose to, especially for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Day.



# Federal Holidays

In the U.S., there are currently 11 officially observed federal holidays each year.

1. New Year's Day: January 1
2. Martin Luther King Day: 3rd Monday in January
3. President's Day: 3rd Monday in February
4. Memorial Day: last Monday in May
5. Juneteenth: June 19
6. Independence Day: July 4
7. Labor Day: first Monday in September
8. Columbus Day: second Monday in October
9. Veterans Day: November 11
10. Thanksgiving Day: 4th Thursday in November
11. Christmas Day: December 25

**11 Official Holidays per year**





# State Holidays

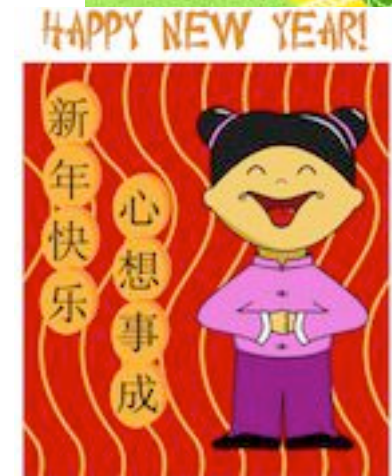
## California State Specific Holidays 2023

- Lunar New Year - January/Feb. *(new as of 2023)*
- Cesar Chavez Day – March 31
- Genocide Remembrance Day – April 24
- Juneteenth – June 19th
- California Admission Day – September 9<sup>th</sup>
- Native American Day – September 24



## Social Holidays (Cultural, Traditional, Religious)

- *Not* created by the U.S. federal government.
- *Not* observed by state or federal governments.
- Part of our culture and traditions.
- Many social holidays can be traced back to our immigrant past.
- They provide enjoyment, fun amusement, etc.





## Social Holidays

- April Fool's Day: April 1
- Easter: Spring, Sunday, date varies
- Halloween: October 31
- Mother's Day: May; second Sunday
- Fathers Day: June; third Sunday
- Cinco de Mayo; May 5
- St. Patrick's Day: March 17
- Lunar New Year: January or February
- Valentine's Day: February 14

And many more. . .



**No one gets a day off from work**

# U.S. Holidays - Role-play activity

## The St. Patrick's Day Party

Your neighbor, who you know slightly and would like to get to know better, has invited you to a St. Patrick's Day party at his home. There will be four other people and the party will start at 6:00pm. You are pleased to be invited and want to attend. He mentions that they will be serving a traditional St. Patrick's Day meal of corned beef and cabbage. You are a strict vegetarian.

Questions:

1. How do you accept the invitation?
2. What will you wear?
3. What will you bring?
4. What time will you arrive?
5. As you meet the other guests, do you offer to shake hands?
6. What are some possible small talk topics to use?
7. What kind of holiday is it: federal, state or social?



## Celebrations in the U.S. (non holidays)

The two most popular celebrations:

1. Birthdays

2. Weddings



# Birthday Traditions in the U.S.

- A birthday is a special day!
- A day to be extra nice to the birthday person.
- A day to treat and “spoil” the birthday person.



## Top 3 Birthday Traditions in the U.S.

#1. Wish the birthday person “Happy Birthday.”

#2. Birthday cake with candles and “Happy Birthday” song.

#3. Give a present.

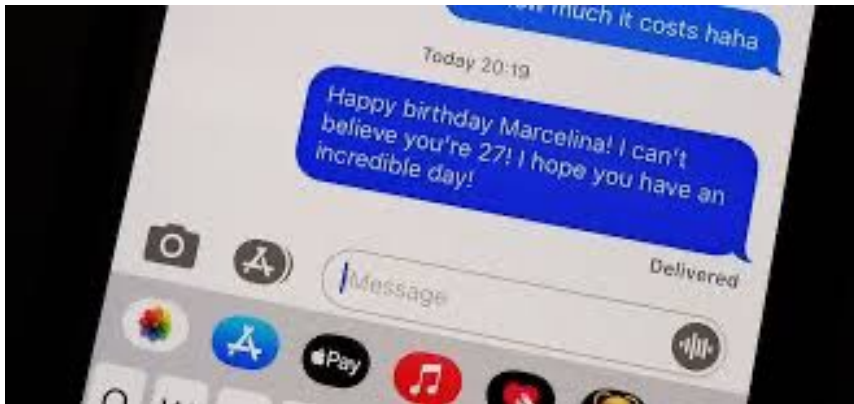


*You are Queen or King for a Day!*



## #1. Wish the birthday person “Happy Birthday”

- Send a birthday greeting card.
- Send a text message or email, or call.
- If you see them “in person” – say to them “*Happy Birthday.*”



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## #2 Birthday Cake with candles and “Happy Birthday song”

- The cake is usually in the flavor and color the person likes.
- The cake is highly decorated and usually has the name of the person written on it.
- We put little candles on the cake and light them.
- We present the cake to the person and everyone present sings the “Happy Birthday song”
- After the song, the person makes a wish and blows out the candles. If they blow all of the candles out in one breath, the wish will come true! (But they must keep the wish secret.)



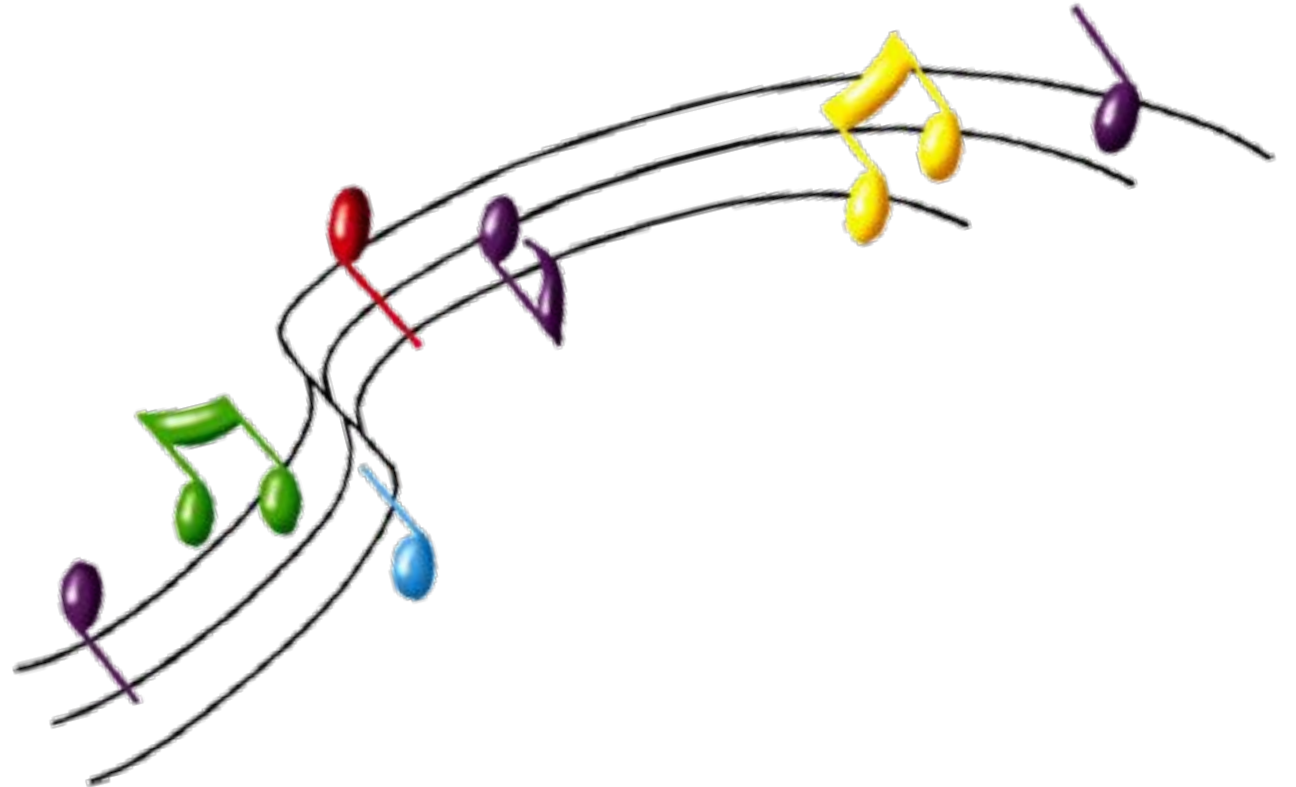
# The Happy Birthday” Song

*Happy Birthday to you*

*Happy Birthday to you*

*Happy Birthday dear (name of person)*

*Happy Birthday to you!*



### #3. Give a birthday present!

- It is custom to give a present to the birthday person, if they are a close friend or a relative.
- The gift is usually wrapped in colorful paper and ribbon.
- The gift is, hopefully, something the person will *really* like.



# A quick grammar lesson!

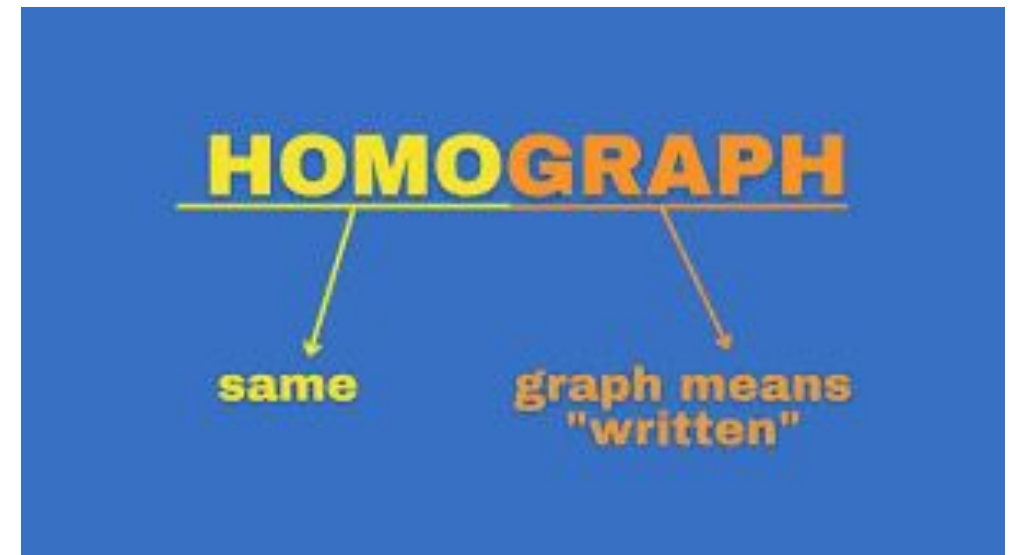
The word “present” is an example of a homograph.

- A group of words that look or sound the same, but have different pronunciations and different meanings.

(1) Present: used to mean a gift, as in “giving a birthday present.”

(2) Present: to be physically present as in “being in the room.”

(3) Present: to give a talk or speech as in “she will present the new budget at the meeting.”





# Weddings –American Style

There are lots of traditions for weddings!

- Proposal /Engagement
- Engagement party
- Bridal Shower (Couples Shower)
- Bachelor or Bachelorette Party
- Rehearsal Dinner
- Traditional Wedding Clothes (bride gown, Tuxedo)
- Wedding ceremony
- Wedding Reception



Proposal



# Weddings –American Style

To **legally marry** in the U.S you must do two things:

1. Obtain a **marriage license**.



2. Exchange vows before an authorized official.  
“**Officiant**”

*officiant*





# Traditional Wedding



# Weddings American Style Anything Goes!

# Non Traditional Wedding



# U.S. Celebrations - Role-play activities

## The Wedding Invitation

You have received an invitation to the wedding of the daughter of an American friend. You are honored to be invited and plan to attend.

Questions:

1. When do you return the RSVP card?
2. What is a “gift registry”?
3. What time do you arrive?
4. What do you wear?
5. Do you bring anything?
6. How do you introduce yourself to other guests?
7. Do you shake hands with the other guests?
8. What are some small talk topics you can use?
9. When ready to leave, do you say goodbye to the hosts?

