

What do you know about Valentine's Day? In this article, read all about how people celebrate romantic love on 14 February.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. traditional
2. anonymous
3. a symbol
4. a dove
5. a poem
6. commercial
7. to propose
8. single

Definition

- a. to ask somebody to marry you
- b. a type of bird, usually white or grey
- c. without a name
- d. a picture that has a larger meaning
- e. a piece of writing with lines that often rhyme
- f. commonly done in a country or culture
- g. about money and buying and selling
- h. not married; without a romantic partner

Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is a traditional celebration of romantic love. It's celebrated on 14 February in many places. Here's how people celebrate it!

Cards

Sending a Valentine's card to someone you love is a custom that started more than a century ago. Couples give cards to each other, but you can also send an anonymous card to anyone you secretly love. Symbols on Valentine's cards include hearts, doves and the winged figure, Cupid, holding a bow and arrow.

Poems

Inside the cards, people normally write a message to show their feelings. One way to do this is by writing a poem in the card. Probably the most famous lines from a Valentine's Day poem are:

Roses are red, violets are blue,
Sugar is sweet, and so are you.

Gifts

As well as cards, 14 February is a day for giving gifts. Popular gifts include red roses, a box of chocolates, a teddy bear and a photo frame. More expensive ones include a meal in a nice restaurant, perfume, jewellery or a session at a health club.

However, some people complain that Valentine's Day has become too commercial. Actually, anything that your partner likes can be a great gift, and it does not need to be expensive. It can even be free! Some people make a video out of all their photos, add some nice music and then send it to their loved one on the day. You can also make a playlist of songs that you both like and share it with them. Perhaps even more meaningfully, you can simply spend time with your loved one on Valentine's Day and give them your time and attention.

Valentine's Day is also a popular day to either propose or get married – you'd never forget your wedding anniversary!

Not for everyone?

Not everyone likes Valentine's Day. It can be a difficult time for people who are single, lonely or missing somebody. Some people feel they show their love for their partner every day, so they don't need to buy things just because it's Valentine's Day. Other people, single or not, think Valentine's Day is boring and unoriginal.

Many people just take 14 February as a normal day or do something special to celebrate the love they have for their friends and family. There are even anti-Valentine's events for people who are not in a romantic mood! Having competitions to make the worst Valentine's Day card, inviting people to a 'broken-hearted disco' or organising fancy-dress dating events are just a few fun ideas.

Tasks

Task 1

Circle the best answer.

1. Which of these things are popular to give on Valentine's Day?
 - a. letters
 - b. cards
 - c. books

2. Which of these is a common Valentine's Day symbol?
 - a. a bow
 - b. sugar
 - c. Cupid

3. According to a famous Valentine's Day poem, what is sweet?
 - a. The person who wrote the poem.
 - b. The person who is reading the poem.
 - c. The person who sent the card.

4. Which of these is a common Valentine's Day gift?
 - a. chocolates
 - b. money
 - c. doves

5. What does the article say is important for a good gift?
 - a. It should cost a lot of money.
 - b. It should be a physical object.
 - c. It should be something the person who receives it will like.

6. What does the article say about celebrating Valentine's Day?
 - a. Everyone should celebrate it.
 - b. People can choose whether to celebrate it or not.
 - c. Nobody should celebrate it because it is too commercial nowadays.

Task 2

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

celebrate

do

include

need

organise

propose

send

spend

1. People Valentine's Day in many places around the world.
2. It's common to a card to someone you love.
3. Common gifts flowers and chocolates.
4. Valentine's Day gifts don't to be expensive.
5. Some people to their partner on Valentine's Day.
6. It's a good idea to time with your loved ones.
7. Some people don't anything special for Valentine's Day.
8. Some people anti-Valentine's events.

Discussion

Do you celebrate Valentine's Day? If not, is there a similar day in your country?

Answers

Preparation task

1. f
2. c
3. d
4. b
5. e
6. g
7. a
8. h

Task 1

1. b
2. c
3. b
4. a
5. c
6. b

Task 2

1. celebrate
2. send
3. include
4. need
5. propose
6. spend
7. do
8. organise