

St. George's Day

Who is the patron saint of England? It is St. George. English people celebrate St. George's Day every year on April 23rd.

It has to be said though that unlike the Scottish and Irish, who celebrate their patron saints in style and by drinking alcohol, the English really do not celebrate their day! In recent years efforts have been made to increase the day's importance, but it actually lacks serious effort by the English.

Back in the 60s, when I was a boy at primary school, in class we used to play St. George and the Dragon. This was done in the form of a *Mummers play*, as it was known. The story is that St. George would kill the dragon then rescue the damsel in distress. It is a fairytale. By the 12th century the legendary story had become widespread.

The longer version of the story tells of the well in the town of Silene - in today's Libya - being guarded by a ferocious dragon. In order to get water the inhabitants of the town had to offer a sacrifice every day to the dragon.

On the day a princess had been selected to be sacrificed, a knight from the crusades rode into town on his white horse. It was St. George and when he heard about this sacrifice he decided to rescue her. He slayed the dragon with his spear, saved the princess, and gave the people of Silene access to their water. In gratitude, they converted to Christianity.

St. George was actually born in Cappadocia - now Turkey - in 280 AD. He was a soldier in the roman Emperor Diocletian's army. By refusing to take part in the persecution of Christians George was tortured and killed in Palestine in 303 AD.

St. George actually didn't become famous till the reign of Alfred the Great in 899, when during the crusades knights claimed he appeared in visions before battle, thus spurring them on. The crusaders were so taken with him they took on his emblem, the red cross and placed it on the English flag.

Continued on page 4...

SPEAKING – WARM UP

Think of three things you know about St. George. Go round the room swapping details with others.

LISTENING – WRITING - DICTATION

The teacher will read some lines of the article slowly to the class.

READING

Students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

SPEAKING - UNDERSTANDING

1) The article – Students check any unknown vocabulary or phrases with the teacher.

2) The article - Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- 1) What is the article about?
- 2) What do you think about the article?
- 3) Was this an easy or difficult article to understand?
- 4) Was this a boring or interesting article?
- 5) Discuss the article.

3) Article quiz - Students quiz each other in pairs. Score a point for each correct answer. Score half a point each time you have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A questions

- 1) What date is St. George's Day?
- 2) Who was St. George?
- 3) Who was Alfred the great?
- 4) What happened in 899?
- 5) What are mummers plays?

Student B questions

- 1) Name three countries.
- 2) What happened in 1422?
- 3) What is Morris dancing?
- 4) Name the sports.
- 5) Name the hymn.

St. George's Day – 10th April 2016

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can about '**St. George**'. *One-two minutes.* Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs – Think of three things you read about St. George. Discuss together!

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Think of three things you know about the crusades. Write them down. Discuss together.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

SPEAKING - ROLEPLAY 2

In small groups – Roleplay the story of *St. George and the Dragon* as a mummings play. Allow 5 mins preparation time. 5-15 mins.

SPEAKING - ROLEPLAY 2

In small groups – Patron saints – Compare: *St. George v Your Country's Patron Saint*. 3-5 mins.

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) What is your country's patron saint?
- 3) What is sung in your country at football matches?
- 4) When do you sing the hymn 'Jerusalem'?
- 5) Have you ever had to rescue a damsel in distress?
- 6) Do you think the English should celebrate St. George's Day with a day off work?
- 7) Have you ever played the part of St. George, the princess or the dragon?
- 8) Do you wear your country's flag on your face on certain occasions?
- 9) Would you like to have been a knight taking part in the crusades?
- 10) Are the crusades similar to what is happening in this part of the world today?

SPELLING

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards check your answers.

- 1) martyrdom
- 2) George
- 3) legendary
- 4) serious
- 5) gratitude
- 6) persecution
- 7) reinstated
- 8) crusaders
- 9) reformation
- 10) mummings

SPELLING

Note the following:

Pass = 12

Good = 15

Very good = 18

Excellent = 20

- 11) fight
- 12) dragon
- 13) knights
- 14) rugby
- 15) English
- 16) huge
- 17) saint
- 18) emblem
- 19) actually
- 20) though

SPEAKING – ROLEPLAY 3

In groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are themselves. You are in the *Discussion FM* radio studio in London. Today's interview is: *St. George's Day*. 10 mins.

The teacher will choose some groups to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

DISCUSSION

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you've read?
- 2) Did you know the story of St. George before today's English lesson?
- 3) Have you ever been in a mummings play? If yes, when?
- 4) Have you ever seen a dragon?
- 5) Would you like to have been a crusader?
- 6) Have you ever played the part of a princess?
- 7) Do you celebrate St. George's Day?
- 8) Should the English celebrate St. George's Day like the Scottish and Irish celebrate their patron saint?
- 9) How would you promote St. George's Day?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

GAP FILL: READING

St. George's Day

Who is the patron (1)___ of England? It is St. George. English people celebrate St. George's Day every year on April 23rd. It has to be said though that unlike the Scottish and Irish, who celebrate their patron saints in style and by drinking alcohol, the English really do not (2)___ their day! In recent years efforts have been made to increase the day's importance, but it actually lacks serious (3)___ by the English.

Back in the 60s, when I was a boy at primary school, in class we used to play St. George and the Dragon. This was done in the form of a (4)___ *play*, as it was known. The story is that St. George would kill the dragon then rescue the (5)___ in distress. It is a fairytale. By the 12th century the (6)___ story had become widespread. The longer version of the story tells of the well in the town of Silene - in today's Libya - being guarded by a (7)___ dragon. In order to get water the inhabitants of the town had to offer a sacrifice every day to the (8)___.

dragon / ferocious / celebrate / damsel / saint / mummers / effort / legendary

On the day a princess had been selected to be sacrificed, a (1)___ from the crusades rode into town on his white horse. It was St George and when he heard about this (2)___ he decided to rescue her. He slayed the dragon with his (3)___, saved the princess, and gave the people of Silene access to their water. In (4)___, they converted to Christianity. St. George was actually born in Cappadocia – now Turkey - in 280 AD. He was a soldier in the roman Emperor Diocletian's army. By refusing to take part in the (5)___ of Christians George was tortured and killed in Palestine in 303 AD. St. George actually didn't become famous till the reign of Alfred the Great in 899, when during the crusades knights claimed he appeared in visions before battle, thus spurring them on. The (6)___ were so taken with him they took on his (7)___, the red cross and placed it on the English (8)___.

flag / emblem / sacrifice / knight / gratitude / persecution / crusaders / spear

GAP FILL: GRAMMAR

St. George's Day

Who is the patron saint of England? It is St. George. English people celebrate St. George's Day every year on April 23rd. It has to be said (1)___ (2)___ unlike the Scottish and Irish, who celebrate (3)___ patron saints in style and by drinking alcohol, the English really do not celebrate their day! In recent years efforts have been made to increase the day's importance, but it actually lacks serious effort by the English.

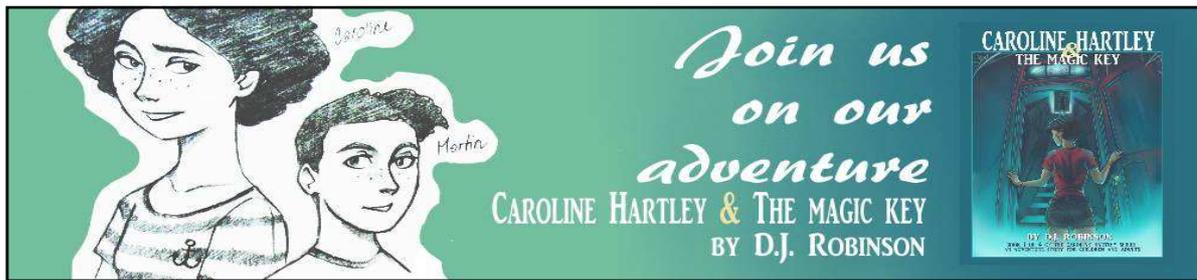
Back in the 60s, (4)___ I was a boy at primary school, in class we used to play St. George and the Dragon. (5)___ was done in the form of a *Mummers play*, as it was known. The story is that St. George (6)___ kill the dragon (7)___ rescue the damsel in distress. It is a fairytale. By the 12th century the legendary story had become widespread. The longer version of the story tells of the well in the town of Silene - in today's Libya - being guarded by a ferocious dragon. In order to get water the inhabitants of the town had to offer a sacrifice (8)___ day to the dragon.

every / when / their / though / then / this / that / would

On the day a princess had been selected to be sacrificed, a knight from the crusades rode into town on his white horse. It was St. George and when he heard about this sacrifice he decided to rescue (1)___ . He slayed the dragon with (2)___ spear, saved the princess, and gave the people (3)___ Silene access to their water. In gratitude, they converted to Christianity. St. George was actually born in Cappadocia – now Turkey - in 280 AD. He was a soldier in the roman Emperor Diocletian's army. (4)___ refusing to take part in the persecution of Christians George was tortured and killed in Palestine (5)___ 303 AD. St. George actually didn't become famous till the reign of Alfred the Great in 899, when during the crusades knights claimed (6)___ appeared in visions before battle, thus spurring them on. The crusaders were so taken with (7)___ they took on his emblem, the red cross and placed (8)___ on the English flag.

he / by / of / it / his / her / him / in

St. George's Day – 10th April 2016



GAP FILL: LISTENING

St. George's Day

Who is the _____? It is St. George. English people celebrate St. George's Day every year on April 23rd. It has to be said _____ the Scottish and Irish, who celebrate their patron saints in style and by drinking alcohol, the English really do not celebrate their day! In _____ have been made to increase the day's importance, but it actually lacks serious effort by the English. Back in the 60s, when I was a boy at primary school, in class we used to play St. George and the Dragon. This was done in the form of _____, as it was known. The story is that St. George would kill the dragon then rescue _____. It is a fairytale. By the 12th century the legendary story had become widespread. The longer version of the story tells of the well in the town of Silene - in today's Libya - being guarded _____. In order to get water the inhabitants of the town had to offer a sacrifice every day to the dragon. On the day a princess had been selected to be sacrificed, a knight from the crusades rode into town on his white horse. It was St. George and when he heard about this sacrifice he decided to rescue her. He slayed the dragon with his spear, saved the princess, and gave the people of Silene access to their water. In gratitude, they _____.

St. George was actually born in Cappadocia – now Turkey - in 280 AD. He was a soldier in the roman Emperor Diocletian's army. By refusing to take part in the _____ George was tortured and killed in Palestine in 303 AD. St. George actually didn't become famous till the reign of _____ 899, when during the crusades knights claimed he appeared in visions before battle, thus spurring them on. The crusaders were so taken with him they took on his emblem, the red cross and placed it _____.

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READING - FROM PAGE 1

St. George is also the patron saint of Germany, Lithuania, Malta, and Georgia, as well as being the patron saint of the city of Moscow in Russia.

He is most famous for his fight against the dragon. This part of the legendary story started in England in the Middle Ages – though it originated from the Eastern Orthodox Church. You need to slay a dragon to rescue a damsel in distress – right!

It wasn't however till 1422 that St. George became the patron saint of England. That came about because in 1202, the Synod of Oxford declared the date of St. George's martyrdom, 303 AD, April 23, a feast day and a huge national holiday.

In 1422, during the English reformation, all other saints' banners were abolished in favour of George becoming the official patron saint of England.

Today in England there is no public holiday on St. George's Day, as this idea died out in the 18th century following the union with Scotland in 1707. Many English people nowadays would like to see a public holiday reinstated on April 23rd.

The hymn 'Jerusalem' is often sung in English churches on or around April 23rd. For the last 600 odd years traditional English Morris dancing has been associated with St. George's Day.

Lastly, many English people like to paint their faces with a red cross on St. George's Day. They do this at football, cricket and rugby matches as well! They also like to wave the English flag – the red cross - at these events. It brings out the English in them!