

The tradition of birthday parties started a long time ago. People thought that there was a special danger from evil spirits, so friends and family came together to bring good thoughts and wishes and even presents. At one time, only kings had birthday parties but as time went by, children and then adults

began to have their own birthday celebrations. There are some traditions – such as sending birthday cards, blowing out the candles on a birthday cake and singing the 'Happy Birthday' song, that you can find almost anywhere, any time. Others are more specific to certain ages ... and certain countries.

Birthday Traditions around the World

1 In China, everyone celebrates their birthday on New Year's Day: they become one year older on that day. On a child's second birthday, family members put a variety of objects on the floor around the child. According to Chinese tradition, the first object that the child picks up tells you what profession the child will choose later in life.

3, 5, 7 For Japanese children, the third, fifth and seventh birthdays are particularly important. At this age, there is a special celebration called *Shichi - Go - San* (seven, five, three in Japanese) when children go to the temple wearing a brand-new kimono. The priest gives them special sweets, and the parents usually organise a party for their friends in their home.

15 In Argentina, Mexico and several other Latin American countries, girls have a special birthday celebration when they reach the age of fifteen. After a religious ceremony, the girls dance a waltz with their father and other boys.

18 Eighteen is the traditional 'coming of age' – the age where you have the right to vote, join the armed forces and (in many countries), drink alcohol and (in the UK) buy a house or become a member of parliament!

21 In many English-speaking countries, a twenty-first birthday cake often has a key on top, or the cake itself is sometimes in the shape of a key. The key means that the young person is now old enough to leave and enter the family home at any time they want to!

30 In the past in parts of Europe, men who reached the age of thirty and were still single, had to clean the stairs of the City Hall. This way every girl could see that the man didn't have a girlfriend. – and how good he was at cleaning the house!

40, 50 After the age of thirty, many people prefer to forget their birthdays rather than celebrate them ... children often bring Mum (or Dad) breakfast in bed, and it's traditional to give a bunch of flowers and enjoy a special meal or party. It's also a day when your friends and family have to pay if you go out for drinks or a meal!

Reading

3 Find a word or phrase in the text that means: *4 pts*

- a as someone or something says *according to*
- b especially
- c completely new
- d a number of
- e a formal, public event
- f The Army, Navy or Air Force
- g the form of something
- h local government building

GRAMMAR 7.5 pts

Circle the correct answer, a, b, or c.

What's _____ name?

- a yours **b your** c you

1 I _____ in this house since I was a child.

- a live
b 'm living
c 've lived

2 I _____ in the park when I saw an enormous dog.

- a walked
b was walking
c 'm walking

3 This is the _____ city in the world.

- a most noisy
b noisiest
c noisier

4 A Would you like a coffee?

B No, thanks. _____ had four cups today.

- a I've had already
b I've already had
c I already have had

5 I _____ pass the exam.

- a don't think she'll
b think she won't
c don't think she won't

6 It's very hot in here. _____ I open the window?

- a Will
b Shall
c Won't

7 Paper _____ the Chinese.

- a was invented by
b invented for
c was invented for

8 Where _____ go next summer?

- a are you going to
b you will
c are you

9 When _____?

- a did Alfred Hitchcock die
b is Alfred Hitchcock dead
c has Alfred Hitchcock died

10 My brother _____ glasses.

- a used to wear
b use to wear
c used to wearing

11 A I don't have a car.

B Don't worry. _____ take you.

- a We
b We are
c We'll

12 I _____ about my grand mother.

- a dream often
b often am dreaming
c often dream

13 Radio newsreaders speak more _____ than before.

- a quickly
b quick
c quicker

14 If we _____ queues, the other will move more quickly.

- a change
b will change
c changed

15 What would you do if you _____ a bear?

- a saw
b will see
c see

b verb phrases 5 pts

Complete the phrases with a verb.

be get fall have, leave retire

_____ children

- 1 _____ in love
2 _____ school / university
3 _____ married / divorced
4 _____ when you're 65
5 _____ born

do pick up take tidy waste

- 1 _____ your room
2 _____ things on the floor
3 _____ the dog for a walk
4 _____ the washing up
5 _____ time

VOCABULARY

B Complete the words. 4 pts

1. You do this when you make something different. c _____
2. This is a person who is treated by a doctor or therapist. p _____
3. This is a type of UFO. f _____ s _____
4. You do this when you come back from somewhere. r _____
5. This is a room below a house. b _____
6. This is someone who does a job without being paid. v _____
7. Doctors use this to see if you have a temperature. t _____
8. This is an organisation which helps people in need. c _____

C Use the words in capitals at the end of each sentence to make words which fit in the spaces. 6 pts

- 1 I wrote a _____ about being a volunteer. *COMPOSE*
- 2 The specialist told me that my _____ would begin following week. *TREAT*
- 3 Many of the volunteers for the Olympic Games are given _____ training. *MEDICINE*
- 4 I find your story about the Egyptian curse totally _____; it can't be true. *BELIEVE*
- 5 All of my friends sent their _____ when they heard I had got the job. *CONGRATULATE*
- 6 The clinic has many _____ who are trained to help patients. *THERAPY*
- 7 Alex asked his teacher for _____ on what career he should follow. *ADVISE*
- 8 I was satisfied with my doctor's _____. *DIAGNOSE*
- 9 Unfortunately, there are still a lot of _____ which cannot be cured. *ILL*
- 10 She has so many different allergies that she always travels with her own _____ allergy specialist. *PERSON*
- 11 Did you know that my mum is a brain _____? *SURGERY*
- 12 Peter wants to be a _____ when grows up. *BIOLOGY*

D Complete the sentences with the correct form of these verbs. 4 pts

catch come do help learn look put run

- 1 Guess who I _____ into at the allergy clinic yesterday?
- 2 When I _____ back on my school days, I remember the crazy things we used to do.
- 3 The teacher asked us to _____ forward if we wanted to take part in the sponsored walk.
- 4 Joseph is _____ cancer research at King's College Hospital this year.
- 5 My sister _____ out at a local charity shop at weekends.
- 6 I heard a mysterious noise when I was _____ away some boxes in the attic last night.
- 7 Nobody knew how the house had _____ fire.
- 8 My teacher said I had to be able to _____ things by heart if I wanted to be an actress.

