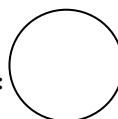


ANGLAIS (60 MINUTES)

Note :



Total des points : ____ /49 points

Votre nom et prénom : _____ N° de candidat : _____

Read the text below and do the exercises that follow.

Why do we eat birthday cake?

by Jess Galley (Spotlight Online)

Ever wondered why we eat birthday cake?

Whether it's a rich chocolate cake, a Victoria sandwich or a brightly coloured cupcake – one thing most of us would agree on is that no birthday celebration would be complete without something sweet to eat – preferably cake.

It's the ancient Egyptians who are **credited with**¹ having invented the concept of birthdays. The earliest known reference to a birthday can be found in the Bible: "Now the third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a **feast** for all his officials" (Book of Genesis, 40:20). However, historians think this was in reference to the pharaoh's birth as a god, **rather than**² his actual birth, as it was believed that pharaohs became gods when they were **crowned**.

Food for the gods

While the ancient Egyptians are credited with inventing birthdays, it wasn't until the ancient Greeks arrived that people began marking such occasions with cake.

¹ Credited with = Être attribué à

² Plutôt que

Historians believe the ancient Greeks celebrated the birthdays of their 12 gods by **baking** moon-shaped³ cakes. The round shape was a **tribute** to Artemis, goddess of the moon, and it's still the most common shape for birthday cakes.

The cakes, which were more like bread than modern-day cakes, were also decorated with **candles**, to make them shine like the moon in the night sky.

Birthday celebrations were reserved for gods and **rulers** until the Romans began celebrating the birthdays of individual citizens, inviting guests to feasts, giving presents and making religious **offerings**. One of the oldest surviving references to a birthday party is an invitation that dates back to AD 100. Known as one of the Vindolanda Tablets, the invitation was discovered on Hadrian's Wall in the north of England. It's written on a postcard-sized **wooden** tablet and says: "On the third day before the middle of September, sister, for the day of the celebration of my birthday, I give you a warm invitation to make sure that you come to us, to make the day more **enjoyable** for me by your arrival, if you are present."

Noodles⁴ for longevity

The Germans transformed birthday celebrations in the 15th century, when bakeries began making cakes specially for people's birthdays, especially children's. This was when cakes became sweetened and were baked **in layers**.⁵

However, there are, of course, cultures that traditionally mark birthdays with foods other than birthday cakes. In China, for example, it's traditional to throw a birthday banquet with food that includes **hard-boiled eggs**⁶ **dye**d red for happiness, dumplings for good fortune and a longevity egg noodle, which must be eaten as one continuous **strand** to ensure a long life. Perhaps even stranger to us is the tradition in Japan, where, until the 1950s, almost everyone celebrated their birthday on the same day: New Year's Day.

³ En forme de

⁴ Des nouilles

⁵ En couches

⁶ Des oeufs durs

A. Comprehension check / 12 marks

Underline the best answer to each question according to the text.

1. The ancient Egyptians are credited with inventing the concept of birthdays because historians think that...
 - a. they celebrated the birthday of their most important god.
 - b. they celebrated the days their pharaohs were crowned.
 - c. they held grand feasts for the entire population.
2. The first birthday celebration not connected to gods and rulers took place in...
 - a. Contemporary Egypt.
 - b. China.
 - c. the North of England.
3. Ancient Greeks baked birthday cakes that would...
 - a. be decorated with fruits.
 - b. look like a full moon.
 - c. be offered to Artemis.
4. The candles on the cakes of the ancient Greeks were supposed to represent...
 - a. the stars in the sky.
 - b. the moon's light.
 - c. the fire in the night.
5. Which statement is NOT true for the Romans?
 - a. They started inviting people for birthdays.
 - b. They made gifts for the people who celebrated their birthday.
 - c. They made religious presents to individual citizens.
6. The shape most commonly associated with modern-day birthday cakes is...
 - a. triangular.
 - b. circular.
 - c. star-shaped.
7. The Vindolanda Tablet is significant because it...
 - a. contains one of the oldest birthday invitations.
 - b. is one of the first postcards that includes a birthday invitation.
 - c. was written on Hadrian's Wall in the north of England.
8. What new characteristics did cakes have in the 15th century, especially in Germany?
 - a. They were baked in one layer and sugar was added.
 - b. They became less sweet, and more ingredients were used.
 - c. Sugar was added and several layers were used.

9. To throw a birthday banquet means...
 - a. to hold a birthday banquet.
 - b. to cancel a birthday banquet.
 - c. to be invited to a birthday banquet.

10. In China, longevity egg noodles are eaten to...
 - a. bring happiness.
 - b. guarantee a longer existence.
 - c. celebrate good fortune.

11. According to the text: Which of these statements is wrong?
 - a. Today, people in Japan celebrate their birthday at the beginning of the year.
 - b. People in China eat eggs for their birthdays.
 - c. The Germans started making birthday cakes for children in the 1400s.

12. The main intention of the text is...
 - a. to explain the history of birthday cakes in different cultures.
 - b. to criticize various ways of celebrating birthdays around the world.
 - c. to show that cakes are the most important way to celebrate birthdays.

B. Vocabulary / 10 marks

a mis en forme

Match the key words in the box with the definitions according to their meaning in the text (highlighted in grey).

⚠ There are **two** extra words/expressions which you do not have to use!

feast | strand | to bake | tribute | candle | ruler
offering | wooden | enjoyable | longevity | to dye | to crown

1. _____ a homage
2. _____ made or consisting of wood
3. _____ a leader
4. _____ pleasant, fun
5. _____ to officially recognise someone as monarch
6. _____ the fact of having a long life
7. _____ to cook by heating in an oven
8. _____ a celebration
9. _____ a gift
10. _____ moulded wax with a string that can be burned

C. Grammar / 15 marks

Change the following sentences into a) yes-or-no questions, b) negative sentences, c) sentences in the past.

1. I celebrate my birthday every year.
a. question: _____
b. negative: _____
c. past simple: _____
2. Birthday celebrations are reserved for gods and rulers.
a. question: _____
b. negative: _____
c. past simple: _____
3. You can decide who to invite to your birthday party.
a. question: _____
b. negative: _____
c. past simple: _____
4. A birthday cake comes in many different colours and shapes.
a. question: _____
b. negative: _____
c. past simple: _____
5. You have to spend a lot of time to organise a birthday party.
a. question: _____
b. negative: _____
c. past simple: _____

