

Have you ever imagined what it would be like if a deceased loved one returned and joined you in a holiday celebration? The idea may make your hair stand on end, but this is the key concept of the Day of the Dead. You may have come across this popular Mexican festival in movies such as *Coco* and *Spectre*.

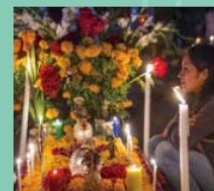
The Day of the Dead takes place in Mexico over three days starting on October 31. During this period, Mexicans honor the dead by making elaborate altars in their homes. These

altars, which include many candles and pictures of deceased relatives, are meant to welcome returning spirits. In some parts of Mexico, celebrants wear shells on their clothes so that when they dance, the noise will wake up the dead. Some might also dress up as the deceased. Most importantly, though, they visit cemeteries and decorate the graves of deceased loved ones.

In certain ways, the Day of the Dead is similar to Taiwan's Tomb

Sweeping Day, when families make trips to the cemetery to tidy up their ancestors' graves and decorate them with flowers. However, unlike the customs for Tomb Sweeping Day, in Mexico families may enjoy a picnic together near the graves of their loved ones.

The Day of the Dead is also unlike Halloween, which tends to portray spirits as being scary and malicious. By contrast, according to Mexican belief, it's the souls of loved ones that return to visit during Day of the Dead celebrations. The spirits mean no harm and have only returned to celebrate.



People visit cemeteries and decorate the graves of deceased loved ones.



Mexicans honor the dead by making elaborate altars in their homes.

Death may be a gloomy concept, but it is worthy of celebration. As the film *Coco* suggests, our deceased loved ones will remain alive so long as we remember them—regardless of the practices we use.

When the Dead Come Back to Celebrate with Us —

Mexico's Day of the Dead

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Did you know— Celebrating the Dead

Obon (Bon)

During Japan's Obon festival, families clean their household shrines to welcome the returning dead. Paper lanterns are lit and sent off downstream to guide the spirits back to where they came from.

Yu Lan

Yu Lan is the day when the gates of hell open and the spirits of those who did not receive a proper tribute at death may return. To appease the spirits, families burn incense and spirit money, as well as offer them food.

Reading Comprehension

- () Which of the following words best describes the atmosphere of the Day of the Dead?
(A) Spooky (B) Merry (C) Sad (D) Tense
- () Which of the practices is **NOT** followed in the Day of the Dead?
(A) Some celebrants dress up like deceased relatives.
(B) People decorate altars with candles and pictures of deceased loved ones.
(C) Some people make sounds to get rid of evil spirits.
(D) In some parts of Mexico, people welcome returning evil spirits by dancing.
- () During Japan's Obon festival, people guide the spirits back to where they came from by _____.
(A) hanging paper lanterns at the gate
(B) releasing paper lanterns in the river
(C) sending paper lanterns into the sky
(D) burning paper lanterns near the graves of their loved ones

Vocabulary ▶

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. deceased <i>adj.</i> 死亡的 | 11. tend <i>v.</i> 傾向；易於 |
| 2. concept <i>n.</i> 觀念；想法 | 12. portray <i>v.</i> 描繪；描寫 |
| 3. altar <i>n.</i> 祭壇；靈壇 | 13. malicious <i>adj.</i> 惡意的 |
| 4. include <i>v.</i> 包含 | 14. gloomy <i>adj.</i> 陰沉的；憂鬱的 |
| 5. celebrant <i>n.</i> 參加慶祝活動的人 | 15. remain <i>v.</i> 維持 |
| 6. shell <i>n.</i>
(堅果、蛋、動物的) 硬殼；貝殼 | 16. shrine <i>n.</i> 祠堂；神社 |
| 7. cemetery <i>n.</i> 墓園 | 17. tribute <i>n.</i>
致敬；(表達敬意的) 禮物；敬詞 |
| 8. grave <i>n.</i> 墳墓 | 18. appease <i>v.</i> 安撫 |
| 9. similar <i>adj.</i> 相似的 | 19. incense <i>n.</i> 香 |
| 10. offering <i>n.</i> 供品；祭品 | |

Idioms and Phrases ▶

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. make your hair stand on end
令人毛骨悚然 | 4. tidy up 打掃；清理 |
| 2. come across 無意間發現；偶然遇到 | 5. by contrast 相反地；對照之下 |
| 3. be meant (to V)
應該(做.....)；被期望(要.....) | 6. so long as 只要 |
| | 7. regardless of
不管；無論 |



Activity ▶

Compare & Contrast Different Festivals

The Day of the Dead, Tomb Sweeping Festival, and Halloween are the festivals about death and returning spirits. However, there are quite a few differences between these three festivals.

Compare their similarities and differences by filling in the blanks of the graphic organizer.

Put down your answers on the lines:

- ① _____ ② _____ ③ _____ ④ _____
- ⑤ _____ ⑥ _____ ⑦ _____ ⑧ _____
- ⑨ _____ ⑩ _____

Sentence Pattern ▶

1. It's the souls of loved ones that return to visit during Day of the Dead celebrations.

解析

此為「分裂句」(cleft sentences)句型。

句構為：It is / was + 要強調的人、事、物 + that ...

Example: I met Emily this morning. → It was Emily that I met this morning.
(強調遇到的是 Emily, 不是其他人)

2. Death may be a gloomy concept, but it is worthy of celebration.

解析

(1) be worthy of + N 表示「值得~」。

Example: The rising unemployment rate is worthy of our attention.

(2) 表示「值得~」還可以使用 worth 這個形容詞, 其用法為: be worth + V-ing / N

Example: Taroko Gorge is amazing and worth visiting (a visit).

