

May Day Traditions



What Is May Day?

May Day is on 1st May; however, there is also a May Day bank holiday on the first Monday in May each year.

It was traditionally a day off for workers to celebrate the beginning of summer in the northern hemisphere.

In Gaelic, Celtic and Pagan traditions, it is called 'Beltane'; in Wales, the festival is called 'Calan Mai'. Both 'Beltane' and 'Calan Mai' are celebrated by burning bonfires.



May Queens and Kings

May queens and kings are girls and boys chosen to lead the May Day processions. They are often dressed in very formal clothes.



In the past, when a carnival happened, a 'Lord and Lady' or 'King and Queen' would be chosen.



Most May queens and kings wear crowns made of flowers to show the arrival of summer. Some festivals and events even have a crowning ceremony for the queens and kings.



Maypoles

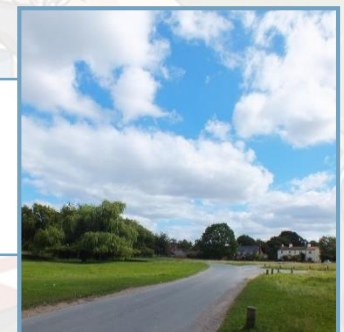
The tradition of dancing around the maypole is said to be linked to dancing around a real tree to celebrate the coming of summer. No one really knows exactly when this tradition began.



In modern times, maypoles are very tall, wooden poles with multicoloured ribbons attached to the top, which are woven by dancers.



The Yorkshire villages of Nun Monkton and Barwick-in-Elmet boast the two tallest maypoles in the UK.



Dancing up the Dawn

Morris dancers across the country 'dance up the dawn' on the morning of 1st May in order to welcome in the summer.



The dancing starts around 5:00 a.m. until the sun is up at around 5:30 a.m. Then, most Morris teams plan to go for a hearty breakfast.

Who Is the Green Man?

The 'Green Man' is a character symbolising the coming of summer. He is green and he is clothed in leaves (usually oak leaves).



People dress as the Green Man around May Day and there are even festivals held in his honour.

Although some think that the Green Man is only pagan, the symbol is found in a number of different traditions and religions.

Dancing up the Dawn

Festivals, fetes and events happen all over the country to celebrate May Day and the beginning of summer as they have done for hundreds of years.

All events tend to include dancing, music, maypoles and lots of greenery.



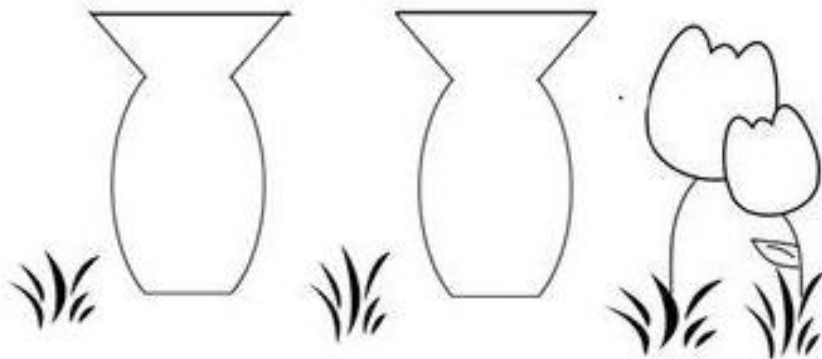
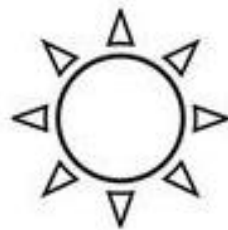
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpV9jXseF7s>

Have a go at going some Morris
Dancing!

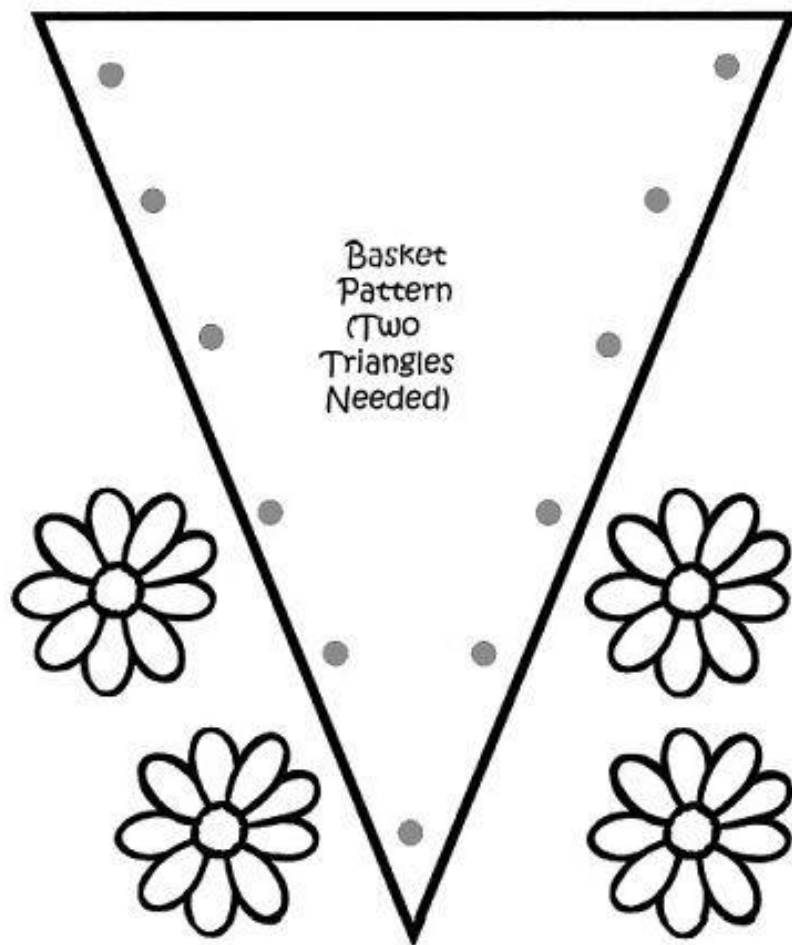
Film it and put it on Seesaw! I'd
love to see it 😊

Draw flowers for May Day.

May Day



Make a May Day Basket!



Head

DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Check mark the vocabulary words that are related to World Labor Day (rather than the traditional celebration of May Day).

May Day Word Search

NUFLVKEDLDIZBJDWYEX
OJBSIZGFDWVMRVNBKEL
IPMNCVRUUNHVI IAYGIV
TWBOPQEGXDA LAJGNRRRT
AFLBFRLAXELMYWAHTTU
RLOBCXOENATLEBPNTSZ
TOSICLPTGKF XWDAFISI
SWSRKJYEEEEZLFAIXRGD
NEOHCRAMSSSOAUDZNSSI
ORMHHFMTXFTRADITION
MSWOEDIMAYQUEENEFKI
ERNIPVININAFABNDXCVC
DAGBAIOMIUNDTEKSABN
PLKLLIWBTNCSASVGCCL
NLEGNKSINGINGNZXBLA
AYTUSBHREVELRYCLQAB
MGNIRPSOUYNTREPEEWO
OHMPFKQCUTTZYWORKER
RHBXVHHVLAJTDKJMH

MAYPOLE
PAGAN
PROTEST
RALLY
REVELRY
RIBBONS
RIGHTS
ROMAN
SINGING
SPRING
STRIKE
TRADITION
UNION
VILLAGE
WORKER

ANCIENT
BASKET
BELTANE
BLOSSOM
DANCE
DEMAND

DEMONSTRATION
FESTIVAL
FLOWERS
LABOR
MARCH
MAY QUEEN

