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**Halloween**

**Halloween (also referred to as All Hollows' Eve)**is a holiday that's celebrated in America on 31 October of each year, regardless of what day of the week this date falls on. Although it is rooted in religion, Halloween today is enjoyed mainly because of its decorations, costumes, candy, treats, and general excitement, and furthermore, it is enjoyed by most everyone.

Before Halloween, many individuals carve a design into an orange-colored **pumpkin,**or a solid, durable vegetable. Once a personally satisfying design is carved, a lit candle is typically put inside a pumpkin, thereby making it a **Jack-O-Lantern.**At night, this design lights up against the darkness.

Besides carving pumpkins, some celebrate Halloween by putting decorations up. **Supernatural**(referring in this case to non-natural creatures that're typically based in fiction) figures, including **vampires, ghosts, werewolves, zombies, and more,**generally account for most of these decorations. **Bugs, spiders, cobwebs, gravestones, and**anything else that can be considered **creepy**(or unusual and possibly scary) can also be found on Halloween, in decoration form.

Only some adults celebrate Halloween, and they generally do so by attending parties. Inversely, the vast majority of children dress in costume (Halloween costumes can be based upon anything, from the mentioned supernatural creatures to the stars of today's films) and walk from door to door in search of candy—a practice known as **trick or treat—**on Halloween. After knocking on a door (houses that participate in Halloween usually leave a light on), one says, "Trick or Treat" and a piece (or pieces!) of candy is given to him or her.

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**The Grand Canyon**

The Grand Canyon, one of the Seven Wonders of the Natural World, is located in the state of Arizona. It is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Formed by over 70 million years of erosion from the Colorado River, the Grand Canyon offers a spectacular view. The canyon spans 277 miles in length, up to 18 miles in width, and it measures over a mile in depth at its deepest points. Carlos always wanted to visit the Grand Canyon, and recently he received the chance to hike some of the trails and take several panoramic photographs during his visit.

When Carlos arrived at the visitor center, he watched a brief movie that taught tourists about the Grand Canyon National Park and the geological history of the canyon’s formation. Later, Carlos followed a hiking trail to become even further acquainted with the canyon. While walking through the trails, Carlos saw some tourists riding donkeys to traverse the canyon’s ridges. Throughout his hiking expedition, Carlos used a map to find some of the best hot spots for photographs within the canyon. He revisited some areas at different points in the day because sun angles and lighting can make a big difference in the quality of a photo.

Carlos was very pleased that he got to travel to the Grand Canyon. He loves hiking and photography, so this was the perfect outdoor experience for him. He posted all of his best pictures on social media, and his friends were amazed by his breathtaking, panoramic shots.

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**The Golden Gate Bridge**

Some of the most important landmarks in the United States include feats of architecture and modern engineering. San Francisco, California, is a beautiful city on its own, but it is also home to The Golden Gate Bridge, a 1.7 mile suspension bridge connecting the San Francisco Peninsula to the Marin Headlands. The bridge holds the title of one of the Wonders of the Modern World according to the American Society of Civil Engineers.

One of the most popular ways to appreciate the bridge is to take an excursion to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area just outside of San Francisco. The park contains hiking trails, great spots for picnicking, and offers some of the best vantage points for panoramic photographs of the bridge leading into the city.

David recently had some friends visit him in San Francisco, and he made sure to include a visit to the recreation area as part of their tour. They enjoyed walking through the trails, observing some of the native wildlife, and even having a casual picnic in the park. David’s friends were thankful that he guided them through this impressive area of California. They made sure to take a group photograph with the Golden Gate Bridge in the background. David’s friends had the picture framed, and they later presented it to David in order to thank him for his hospitality during their stay.

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# The Empire State Building

When exploring New York City, there are several different options for activities during a day trip. Some visitors come to see a show, visit art museums, or simply to shop in many of the city’s high-end retailers. However, many tourists simply come to New York City for the sightseeing. One of the most visited landmarks in New York City is the Empire State Building.

The Empire State Building, constructed in 1931, is a 102-story skyscraper, the ninth highest building in the world, and the fourth tallest structure in the United States. It is located in Midtown, Manhattan. This skyscraper is an iconic symbol of the city, having been featured in over 90 popular movies (as of 2018) throughout film history. Tourists come from all over the world to visit this building and view the city from its famous observation decks.

Matthew, an enthusiast of historic buildings, was excited for this trip to New York City because he has always appreciated architectural design. Matthew purchased a ticket that granted him access to beautiful 360-degree views of the city. The ticket included an elevator ride that stopped at two different vantage points, one at the 86th floor and the other at the rooftop observatory on the 102nd floor. From these observation decks, Matthew took incredible photographs of the entire New York City skyline. The rooftop views granted Matthew perfect aerial perspectives of Central Park, the Brooklyn Bridge, Times Square, the Statue of Liberty, and many other important city landmarks.

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# The Statue of Liberty

The Statue of Liberty, arguably one of New York City’s most iconic symbols, is a popular tourist attraction for first-time visitors to the city. This 150-foot monument was gifted to the United States from France in order to celebrate 100 years of America’s independence. The statue is located on Liberty Island, and it is accessible by taking a ferry from either Battery Park in New York City or Liberty State Park in Jersey City.

When Claire visited the Statue of Liberty for the first time, she instantly admired it as a symbol of freedom. Claire made sure to make reservations before her visit because only 240 people are permitted to climb the staircase to the top of the statue every day. After climbing almost 400 stairs, Claire received spectacular views of the city from the statue’s crown.

During her visit, Claire learned that the Statue of Liberty was not always the color that it is now. She found out that because the statue’s exterior is made of copper, the statue oxidized over time, giving it the greenish appearance it has in present day. When it was first constructed, the statue was the same color as a shiny penny!

After touring the Statue of Liberty, Claire spent the rest of the day in New York City visiting other important monuments and historic landmarks. Claire left New York hoping to have had the time to explore more sites, but she can’t wait to return to the city in the future.

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# Jobs and Professions

As has been the case for many years, **jobs,**or forms of employment wherein employees perform a service or duty in exchange for financial compensation, play a prominent role in society. Furthermore, all jobs—even those of seemingly little significance—are important, as they simply wouldn't exist if their specific responsibilities weren't of value to **employers**(companies or persons that pay others for their work), **customers**(individuals who pay money for a product or service), and the economy generally.

**Teachers,**or educational professionals tasked with helping **students** understand certain subjects and topics, are especially crucial today. In short, teachers help their students to become qualified for their future careers.

**Doctors,**or medical professionals who specialize in providing health-related assistance to patients, are some of the most respected individuals in America and the world. It's the responsibility of doctors to help those who feel less-than-stellar to determine the underlying health issue(s) and recommend an effective **treatment**(or remedy to a disease, disorder, or condition).

There are quite a few types of specialty doctors in America (besides MD, which simply means "medical doctor"), all of whom can be referred to simply as "Doctor (Name)." Dentists (mouth/teeth doctors), dermatologists (skin doctors), and psychiatrists (mental-health doctors) are just a few examples of the many different types of doctors.

Additionally, **nurses**are medical professionals who help to administer doctor-ordered treatments to patients.

**Police officers**are law enforcement professionals whose job it is to protect citizens, solve crimes, and assure that rules and regulations are followed. Similarly, **firefighters**serve the public by responding to fires (and other emergency situations) and using high-tech equipment to extinguish these fires, while bringing any individuals who're in danger to safety.

**Farmers**maintain fields of crops (or vegetable/fruit plants) and/or collections of animals with the intention of selling these products as food.

**Chefs/cooks**prepare meals in professional settings, including restaurants, cafeterias, and other venues wherein food and drink are sold, for customers. Chefs are generally experienced in cooking and managing kitchens.

**Waiters**bring menus, beverages, meals, and ultimately, the **check**(or a bill of the foods and drinks purchased in a transaction) to tables in restaurants and other establishments that serve food.

**Artists**produce art, or works of creative significance, including music, paintings, drawings, poetry, writing, and more.

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# Washington, D.C.

Yesterday, Stephen returned from a trip to Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States. His visit took place during the week prior to the Fourth of July. Logically, there were many activities and celebrations in town in preparation for Independence Day. During his stay in the city, Stephen visited a lot of important historical sites and monuments, and he left with a deeper understanding of the political history of the United States.

Stephen spent a lot of time outdoors exploring the important monuments surrounding Capitol Hill. Of course, he saw the White House from its outside gate at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Stephen also visited the Washington Monument, the Jefferson Memorial, and the Lincoln Memorial. These statues and pavilions are dedicated to former U.S. presidents. They commemorate the contributions that these leaders made throughout American history. Washington, D.C. also has several war memorials dedicated to fallen soldiers during the major wars of the 20th century.

Away from the Capitol Hill area, Washington, D.C. has many museums and art galleries worth visiting. Stephen enjoyed his visit to Washington, D.C. because he learned a lot more about American history after touring each important landmark.

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**Valentine's Day**

Valentine's Day (or Saint Valentine's Day) is a holiday that, in the United States, takes place on February 14, and technically signifies the accomplishments of St. Valentine, a third-century Roman saint.

With that said, most Americans, instead of honoring St. Valentine through religious ceremony, enjoy the holiday by engaging in "romantic" behavior with their significant other or someone who they wish to be their significant other; gifts, special dinners, and other acknowledgements of affection comprise most individuals' Valentine's Day celebrations.

Chocolates and flowers are commonly given as gifts during Valentine's Day, as are accompanying greeting cards (greeting card companies release new Valentine's Day designs annually). Red and pink are generally understood to be "the colors" of Valentine's Day, and many individuals, instead of celebrating romantically, spend the holiday with their friends and/or family members.

Variations of Valentine's Day are celebrated across the globe throughout the year. In America, the holiday, although acknowledged by the vast majority of the population, isn't federally recognized; no time off work is granted for Valentine's Day.

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# Yellowstone National Park

Yellowstone National Park, located in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, was established as the first national park in the United States. The park is a popular destination for visitors who enjoy ecological tourism as it offers forests, mountains, and abundant ecosystems to explore. Some of Yellowstone’s most well-known landmarks are its geothermal hot springs and geysers, the most famous of which is named Old Faithful.

Last fall, Lisa and her friends decided to take a camping trip to Yellowstone National Park. They arranged to stay at one of the park’s many convenient campsites. For their camping trip, they brought their backpacks, sleeping bags, and a cooler of food and drinks. They pitched their tents immediately upon arriving to their campsite.

During their trip, Lisa and her friends hiked the many trails of the park, exploring its natural surroundings. In the forest, they saw a lot of local wildlife. Lisa was surprised to see a family of grizzly bears, some gray wolves, and even bald eagles flying overhead. Outside of the woods, they admired the beauty of some of Yellowstone’s natural cascades.

Since Yellowstone contains many hot springs and the world’s largest area of active geysers, Lisa and her friends visited many different geyser sites. They even spent an afternoon swimming in Yellowstone’s Boiling River. Of all of the sites, Lisa and her friends agreed that Old Faithful was the most impressive. Lisa and her friends waited patiently for the geyser to erupt. After about 40 minutes, a stream of boiling water over 100 feet tall sprayed from the ground and up into the air. Fortunately, no one got wet!

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# Thanksgiving

**Thanksgiving**is a holiday celebrated predominantly in North America, and it possesses a different meaning in each of the countries where it's acknowledged.

In the United States, Thanksgiving is a federal holiday (meaning all government employees and most private employees are given a day off of work), and always takes places on the **Fourth Thursday in November,**regardless of the date.

The holiday signifies the immense progress made by **pilgrims, or some of the first travelers to North America,**at Plymouth Plantation circa 1621. It was at this time that the hungry and weary Pilgrims were taught (by Native Americans) how to grow and produce food on North America's unique terrain. Once they'd grown (and caught) an abundance of food, the Pilgrims were expectedly thankful, and they celebrated alongside the Native Americans who provided them with such valuable assistance. President Abraham Lincoln initiated the contemporary practice of Thanksgiving by calling for a "day of Thanksgiving" during one of his Civil War addresses.

In America today, Thanksgiving remains firmly engrained in its historical roots, and is widely considered to be a day for giving thanks for good food, good times, and family. **Thanksgiving dinner**generally consists of turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, gravy, and ample desserts. To be sure, indulging in abundance is a cornerstone of the holiday, as doing so could only be possible if one *possesses*abundance.

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# San Francisco

In June, Diane visited her friends who live in San Francisco, California. This was Diane’s first time in the city, and she enjoyed her opportunities to walk around and explore.

On the first day of her trip, Diane visited the Golden Gate Bridge. This red suspension bridge measures 1.7 miles in length. Diane and her friends did not walk across the bridge. However, they viewed it from the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, which offers hiking trails, picnicking areas, and presents spectacular views of the bridge and city. Diane and her friends made sure to take a group photograph here, featuring the bridge in the background.

The next day, Diane and her friends visited Alcatraz Island. This island is located 1.25 miles offshore in the San Francisco Bay. It used to serve as a lighthouse, military fort, and prison. Diane and her friends took a small tour boat across bay to reach the island. Their visit included a guided tour through the old military base and prison. They also took a walk around the island to appreciate some of the native wildlife in addition to the views of the city.

Diane and her friends spent the final day of her vist in San Francisco’s downtown area. Diane’s favorite part of her entire trip was taking a trolley to transport her up and down the hilly streets of San Francisco. Diane did a lot of shopping downtown on her last day. She and her friends celebrated the end of her visit by having dinner at one of San Francisco’s best restaurants.

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# Christmas

A Christian holiday signifying the birth of Jesus, Christmas is widely celebrated and enjoyed across the United States and the world. The holiday always falls on 25 December (regardless of the day of the week), and is typically accompanied by decorations, presents, and special meals.

Specifically, the legend behind Christmas (and the one that most children are told) is that **Santa Claus,**a bearded, hefty, jolly, and red-jacket-wearing old man who lives in the **North Pole**, spends the year crafting presents with his **elves,**or small, festive, excited Santa-assistants. All the children who behave throughout the year are admitted to the **Good List,**and will presumably receive their desired gifts on Christmas, while those who don't behave are placed on the **Naughty List,**and will presumably (although the matter is determined by parents) receive a lump of coal.

Santa Claus is said to fly around the Christmas sky in a sled powered by his **magical reindeer,**or cold-resistant, mythically powered, individually named animals, delivering presents to each child's house in the process. Santa is also expected to slide through chimneys to deliver these presents (homes not equipped with chimneys might "leave the front door cracked open"), and children sometimes arrange cookies or other treats on a plate for him to enjoy.

Gifts are placed underneath a **Christmas tree,**or a pine tree that's decorated with ornaments and/or lights and is symbolic of the holiday. Additionally, smaller gifts may be placed inside a **stocking,**or a sock-shaped, holiday-specific piece of fabric that's generally hung on the mantle of a fireplace (homes without fireplaces might use the wall). A Christmas tree's **ornaments,**or hanging, typically spherical decorations, in addition to the mentioned lights, may be accompanied by a **star,**or a representation of the Star of Jerusalem that the Three Apostles followed while bringing Baby Jesus gifts and honoring him, in the Bible.

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# Human body parts and organs

It goes without saying that **humans**(mammals identifiable as those that stand upright and are comparatively advanced and capable of detailed thought) have pretty remarkable bodies, given all that they've accomplished. (Furthermore, an especially intelligent human brain produced this text!) To be sure, humans have overcome predators, disease, and all sorts of other obstacles over thousands of years.

To fully understand and appreciate these accomplishments, let's take at some of the most well-known parts of the human body!

The **head,**or the spherical body part that contains the brain and rests at the top of the human body, has quite a few *individual*organs and body parts on it. (It should quickly be mentioned that **hair**occupies the space on top of the head, and the **ears,** the organs responsible for hearing, are located on either side of the head.) From top to bottom, the **eyebrows,**or horizontal strips of hair that can be found above the eye, are the first components of the head. The **eyes**are below them, and are round, orb-like organs that allow humans to see.

The eyes make way for the **nose,**or an external (sticking-out) organ that plays an important part in the breathing and bacteria-elimination processes. Below that is the **mouth,**or a wide, cavernous organ that chews food, removes bacteria, helps with breathing, and more. The mouth contains **teeth,**or small, white-colored, pointed body parts used to chew food, and the **tongue,**or a red-colored, boneless organ used to chew food and speak.

The **neck**is the long body part that connects the head to the **chest** (the muscular body part that protects the **heart and lungs**), and the **stomach,**or the part of the body that contains food and liquid-processing organs, comes below that.

The **legs**are the long, muscular body parts that allow humans to move from one spot to another and perform a variety of actions. Each leg contains a **thigh**(a thick, especially muscular body part used to perform strenuous motions; the upper part of the leg) and a **calf**(thinner, more flexible body part that absorbs the shock associated with movement; the lower part of the leg). **Feet**can be found at the bottom of legs, and each foot is comprised of five **toes,**or small appendages that help balance.

**Arms**are long, powerful body parts that are located on either side of chest, below the **shoulders**;arms are comprised of **biceps**(the thicker, more powerful upper portion), and **forearms**(the thinner, more flexible lower portion). **Hands,**or small, gripping body parts used for a tremendous number of actions, are at the end of arms. Each hand contains five **fingers,**or small appendages used to grip objects.

The aforementioned **shoulders**are rounded body parts that aid arms' flexibility. One's **back**is found on the opposite side of the stomach, and is a flat section of the body that contains important muscles that're intended to protect the lungs and other internal organs, in addition to helping humans perform certain motions and actions.

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# Las Vegas

Last April, John took a trip to Las Vegas, Nevada. Las Vegas is a popular destination in the western portion of the United States. The town is most popular for its casinos, hotels, and exciting nightlife.

In downtown Las Vegas, John spent a lot of time on The Strip, which is a 2.5 mile stretch of shopping, entertainment venues, luxury hotels, and fine dining experiences. This is probably the most commonly visited tourist area in the city. The Strip at night looks especially beautiful. All of the buildings light up with bright, neon, eye-catching signs to attract visitor attention.

A stay in Las Vegas can feel similar to a visit to many popular cities worldwide. Many of the hotels have miniature versions of important international sites and monuments. These famous landmarks include the Eiffel Tower, Venice, and even ancient Rome.

One day, John took a side trip outside of the city to visit the Grand Canyon, one of the Seven Wonders of the Natural World. The canyon offers a breathtaking view of Nevada’s ridges and natural landscape. John especially liked the canyon because it was removed from all of the noise and movement in downtown Las Vegas.

John had a great time during his trip to Las Vegas. He did not win a lot of money in the casinos. However, he managed to see a lot of amazing sites during his visit to this city that never sleeps.

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# The Environment

In our modern world, there are many factors that place the wellbeing of the planet in jeopardy. While some people have the opinion that environmental problems are just a natural occurrence, others believe that human beings have a huge impact on the environment. Regardless of your viewpoint, take into consideration the following factors that place our environment as well as the planet Earth in danger.

Global warming or climate change is a major contributing factor to environmental damage. Because of global warming, we have seen an increase in melting ice caps, a rise in sea levels, and the formation of new weather patterns. These weather patterns have caused stronger storms, droughts, and flooding in places that they formerly did not occur.

Air pollution is primarily caused as a result of excessive and unregulated emissions of carbon dioxide into the air. Pollutants mostly emerge from the burning of fossil fuels in addition to chemicals, toxic substances, and improper waste disposal. Air pollutants are absorbed into the atmosphere, and they can cause smog, a combination of smoke and fog, in valleys as well as produce acidic precipitation in areas far away from the pollution source.

In many areas, people and local governments do not sustainably use their natural resources. Mining for natural gases, deforestation, and even improper use of water resources can have tremendous effects on the environment. While these strategies often attempt to boost local economies, their effects can lead to oil spills, interrupted animal habitats, and droughts.

Ultimately, the effects of the modern world on the environment can lead to many problems. Human beings need to consider the repercussions of their actions, trying to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials while establishing environmentally sustainable habits. If measures are not taken to protect the environment, we can potentially witness the extinction of more endangered species, worldwide pollution, and a completely uninhabitable planet.

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