

LESSON PLAN

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WORKSHEET

PART ONE

Text A Read about the history of Spring and its festivals

Before Spring was called Spring, it was called Lent in old English. Starting in the 14th century it was called "Springtime" because it referred to the plants and flowers that were springing up from the ground, after the cold Winter. Finally in the 15th and 16 centuries the season was simply called Spring. The Spring equinox (one of the two days in the year when day and night are of the same length), can take place on either March 20 or 21, depending on the year. All through the centuries people have always wanted to celebrate the end of Winter and the beginning of a warmer season when Nature awakens from its deep sleep.

The ancient Celts celebrated Spring on the night before May 1, known as May Day. They called this festival Beltane, and sat around big fires and ate, sang songs and danced. Spring festivities and celebrations originated in the Roman Empire in about 258 BCE. At that time it was a great festival in honor of Flora, the goddess of flowers and spring.

During the Middle Ages May Day became a very happy festivity. People went into the forest after midnight to collect flowers and plants. They returned the next morning and put the leaves and flowers in their hair. Music, singing and dancing followed during the day. The dance around the Maypole was an important and entertaining event. A beautiful young woman of the village became the Queen of the May.

In Great Britain May Day is a public holiday, but it is not always on the first of May: it is on the first Monday in May. Children dance around the Maypole with its many colorful ribbons on it. The colored ribbons represent the rays of the sun and they form a design on the Maypole. The National Cherry Blossom Festival is America's biggest Spring celebration.

It takes place in Washington, D.C., the nation's capital. It starts on March 21 and goes on until mid-April. During this time there are a lot of wonderful parades, picnics, concerts and games to honor Spring and to conserve the environment. In San Francisco, California, April 19 is Earth Day, a special day with many exciting events to welcome Spring and to talk about saving planet Earth.

The famous American musician and composer, Aaron Copland, wrote an orchestral suite and ballet called *Appalachian Spring*. It celebrates the beauty of Spring in the Appalachian Mountains, in the eastern United States.



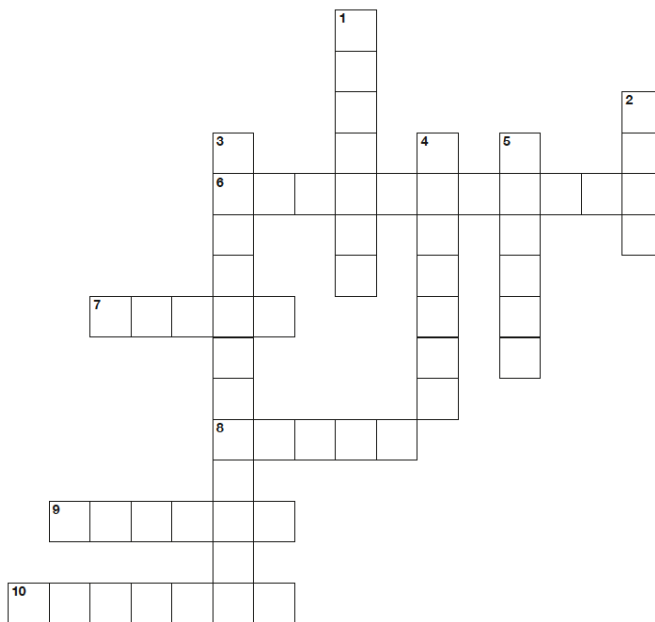
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Exercise 1 – Read the text in Exercise 1 again. Then do the crossword puzzle.



ACROSS

- 6 Aaron Copland wrote about these mountains.
- 7 she was the Roman goddess of Spring and flowers.
- 8 these ancient people celebrated Spring on the night before May 1.
- 9 in the Middle Ages people went here to collect flowers and plants.
- 10 one of the two days in the year when day and night are of the same length.

DOWN

- 1 an ancient festival to celebrate Spring.
- 2 the old English word for Spring.
- 3 Earth Day is celebrated here.
- 4 children dance around this.
- 5 this fruit is part of a festival in Washington D.C.



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PART TWO

Spring—a protagonist in literature

Spring has often become a protagonist in poems and stories, like *The Selfish Giant* (1888) by Oscar Wilde.

Background notes on the story.

The village children love playing in the Selfish Giant's beautiful garden while he is away. When he returns after seven years, the Selfish Giant builds a big wall around his garden to keep the children out! He puts up a sign that says: NO ONE MUST ENTER!

Text B Read this extract from *The Selfish Giant*.

Now the poor children have no place to play. They can't play on the road. There are big stones on the road and the children don't like them.

After school, the children walk near the high wall. They talk about the beautiful garden inside. It is Spring and there are little blossoms and little birds everywhere. But in the garden of the Selfish Giant it is still winter. The birds do not sing there because there are no children. There are no blossoms on the trees.

A beautiful flower puts its head out of the grass. It looks for the children. It sees the sign and goes back into the ground. It goes to sleep.

Only the Snow and Frost are happy. 'Spring doesn't come to this garden,' they say. 'We can live here all year!'

The snow covers the grass with her big white cloak. The Frost paints the trees silver. The Snow and the Frost invite the North Wind to stay with them. The North Wind comes and blows all day in the garden. He has a big warm coat and a hat.

'This is a wonderful place,' says the North Wind. 'We must invite the Hail.'

So the Hail comes. He is dressed in grey. For three days he runs around the garden. Then he dances on the roof. There is a lot of hail.

'Why doesn't the Spring come?' asks the Selfish Giant. He sits at the window and looks at his cold, white garden. The Spring never comes and the Summer never comes.



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Exercise 2 Read the text in Exercise 3 again. Then answer the questions.

1. Why can't the children play on the road?
 - a. because there are cars
 - b. because people are walking on the road
 - c. because there are big stones

2. Why don't the birds sing in the Selfish Giant's garden?
 - a. because there are no children
 - b. because they saw the sign
 - c. because they are afraid of the Selfish Giant

3. Who do the Snow and Frost invite to the garden?
 - a. They invite the Sun.
 - b. They invite the North Wind
 - c. They invite the rain.

4. What does the North Wind wear?
 - a. a grey shirt
 - b. a black scarf
 - c. a big warm coat and a hat.

Exercise 3 - Vocabulary

What words describe the Selfish Giant? Circle them.

kind angry generous unkind friendly bad understanding pleasant unfriendly
good helpful

Exercise 4 – Prediction

1. How does the Selfish Giant feel about his cold garden?.....
2. What do you think the Selfish Giant will do? Why?.....
3. How do you think this story will end?.....
4. Do you think this story teaches us a lesson, often called a moral? If so, what is that moral?
.....

