# The Book of Days

A resource book of activities for special days in the year

# Adrian Wallwork





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# Map of The Book of Days

**Exercise** T = especially suited for teenagers, but generally suitable for adults too

**Level** lower = low intermediate and above

mid = intermediate

upper = upper intermediate and above

Skills L = listening R = short text reading Q = quiz S = discussion W = writing

Day	Date	Exercise	Level	Time	Skills
1 New Year's Day	Jan 1 (most countries)	<ul><li>1 New Year celebrations</li><li>2 Resolutions (T)</li><li>3 Which New Year?</li></ul>	mid mid mid	20 mins 15 mins 15 mins	S, R, L L, S L
2 Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday	Jan 15 (US)	Martin Luther King     Jr's life (T)     I have a dream (T)	mid mid	15 mins	L R, L
3 Valentine's Day	Feb 14 (US, UK, some others)	<ol> <li>Who was St Valentine? (T)</li> <li>How do you celebrate? (T)</li> <li>Valentine's messages</li> <li>How romantic are you? (T)</li> <li>Friends' Day (T)</li> </ol>	lower lower mid mid mid	10 mins 10 mins 10 mins 10 mins 20 mins	L R, S R, W Q, S Q, L, S
<b>4</b> Carnival	varies	Carnival quiz (T)     Carnival in Brazil	mid mid	20 mins 10 mins	Q, S, L R
<b>5</b> Fasting	varies	<ul><li>1 Lent</li><li>2 Yom Kippur</li><li>3 Ramadan</li></ul>	upper upper	10 mins 10 mins 15 mins	R, S R, S R, L
<b>6</b> Women's Day	March 8	<ul><li>1 Women, work and politics</li><li>2 Whose liberation?</li><li>3 F, N or M?</li></ul>	mid upper lower	20 mins 25 mins 15 mins	S, Q Q, L, S dictation, S
7 Mother's Day	varies	1 Mummy, mom, mama 2 Fact file (T)	lower/upper upper	15 mins 15 mins	L, L R, S
8 Easter	March/April	<ul><li>1 Easter traditions</li><li>2 Easter quiz</li><li>3 The Crucifixion</li><li>4 The Holy Bible</li></ul>	mid lower upper mid	15 mins 5 mins 15 mins 10 mins	R, S, L Q L, S R, S
<b>9</b> April Fools' Day	April 1	1 All Fools' Day (T) 2 You can't fool me (T)	mid mid	20 mins 20 mins	R, L R, L, S
<b>10</b> May 1	May 1	International Labour Day     May Day (T)	mid mid	15 mins 10 mins	R, L, S R, S
<b>11</b> Buddha's Birthday	varies	Elements of Buddhism	upper	25 mins	R, L, S
<b>12</b> Children's Day	varies	Boys and girls (T)	mid	25 mins	R, L, S
<b>13</b> Father's Day	varies	1 Father and son (T) 2 Father's Day quiz (T)	mid mid	15 mins 25 mins	R, L, S Q, L, S
<b>14</b> Summer Solstice	June 21 (Dec 21)	1 Sun poems 2 Sun quiz	mid mid	20 mins 20 mins	W, R S, Q, L



<b>15</b> Indepen	ndence	July 4 (US)	1 When and who from? (T) 2 July 4 (T)	mid mid	15 mins 15 mins	L, S S, R, L
			3 India (T)	mid	10 mins	R, L
<b>16</b> Diwali		Oct/Nov (India)	1 Diwali 2 Hinduism	mid upper	5 mins 30 mins	R R, L, S
<b>17</b> Reunific	ation Day	Oct 3 (Germany)	1 The Berlin Wall (T) 2 The good old days? (T)	upper upper	15 mins 25 mins	R, L R, S
<b>18</b> Teachers	Teachers' Day	varies, Oct 5 World Teachers' Day	1 Great teachers (T) 2 My (ideal) English teacher is (T)	lower lower	10 mins 15 mins	R L, Q
			<ul><li>We don't need no education (T)</li><li>Students' days</li></ul>	lower	15 mins	Q, L, S R, S
19 Columbi	us Day	Oct 12	1 History quiz (T) 2 Americans	lower mid	20 mins 15 mins	L, S S
<b>20</b> United N	Nations'	Oct 24	United Nations – facts     and figures	mid	20 mins	R, L, S
/			2 Budget allocation	mid	15 mins	S
<b>21</b> Hallowe	een	Oct 31	<ul><li>1 Past and present (T)</li><li>2 Halloween celebrations (T)</li><li>3 The supernatural (T)</li></ul>	mid mid mid	20 mins 15 mins 10 mins	R Q, L S
<b>22</b> Day of t	he Dead	varies	<ul><li>1 Remembering the dead</li><li>2 Songs for our ancestors</li></ul>	upper upper	15 mins 15 mins	R, S L
23 Guy Fav	vkes' Night	Nov 5 (UK)	The Gunpowder Plot (T)	upper	20 mins	R, L
<b>24</b> Remem Day	brance	Nov 11	<ul><li>1 'Greater love' (T)</li><li>2 War</li><li>3 Why join the army?</li><li>4 Conscious</li></ul>	mid mid upper upper	15 mins 15 mins 15 mins 20 mins	L, S, R R, S L, S R, S, L
<b>25</b> Thanksg	jiving	4th Thursday in Nov (US)	<ul><li>1 The Mayflower (T)</li><li>2 Rewriting history?</li><li>3 A generation later</li></ul>	mid upper upper	15 mins 10 mins 15 mins	R, L L R, S
<b>26</b> Winter S	Solstice	Dec 21 (June 21)	<ul><li>1 The shortest day</li><li>2 Mithras and Yuletide</li></ul>	lower upper	10 mins 15 mins	S R, L
27 Christma	as	Dec 25	<ol> <li>Christmas origins</li> <li>Christmas scene (T)</li> <li>Christmas quiz (T)</li> <li>Santa Claus (T)</li> <li>Christmas games (T)</li> </ol>	upper mid mid mid mid	5 mins 15 mins 10 mins 15 mins 30 mins	R S, L Q, L R, L, S games
<b>28</b> Birthday	ys	varies	<ol> <li>Your birth and the zodiac</li> <li>Birthday parties (T)</li> <li>Stages of life (T)</li> <li>Names</li> <li>Rites of passage (T)</li> </ol>	mid mid mid upper upper	15 mins 15 mins 20 mins 10 mins 15 mins	S, L L, S Q, L, S R, S R, L, S
<b>29</b> Weddin	g Day	varies	<ul><li>1 Ancient and modern</li><li>2 Wedding customs</li><li>3 Words of wisdom?</li><li>4 Some statistics</li><li>5 For better or for worse?</li></ul>	upper mid upper upper upper	25 mins 10 mins 10 mins 20 mins 15 mins	R, L, S L R L, S S
<b>30</b> Days of	the Week	varies	<ul><li>1 Markets, gods and planets</li><li>2 The Sabbath</li><li>3 Thank God it's Friday</li></ul>	upper upper	10 mins 15 mins 20 mins	R L S

# Teacher's Introduction

### Rationale

The philosophy of this book is to get students curious about particular traditions and religious events. It is designed to draw on learners' own experiences, knowledge, opinions and feelings, and thus provoke lively discussion on how, where and why these days are celebrated.

These are one-off supplementary skills lessons, whose prime aim is to inform and entertain, in a language which just happens to be English.

### Level and age

The book is aimed at teenagers and young adults. Most exercises are pitched at a mid to upper intermediate level.

### When to use

The order in which the Days appear in the Contents generally coincides with a typical calendar from the UK. Most activities don't have to be used on the Day in question, e.g. discussion on Buddhism ostensibly should be on Buddha's Birthday (Day 11), but it doesn't have to be. In any case, most lessons move from an initial look at the festival in question to a broader discussion of its implications. You can also link topics together, i.e. a discussion on Buddhism might lead into one on Hinduism (Day 16). The lesson on Valentine's Day (Day 3) could lead to talk of Weddings (Day 29). Teachers' Day has been fixed on October 5, simply because this is World Teachers' Day, but that was a very arbitrary choice and you may find, for example, that in the country where you are teaching there is a local Teachers' Day.

### Students' Pages

The Students' Pages are designed to get away from the typical ELT Students' Page, i.e. there are very few rubrics. Because the book is multi-level, it is up to you, the teacher, to exploit the passages and pictures as you wish. They can be legally photocopied.

### Teacher's Notes

On the Teacher's Pages each unit is introduced with a panel containing the following items:

**Date:** suggests when to use the unit. However, many units are not tied to one particular day and can be used whenever seems suitable.

Level and age: tells you approximately what level and age of students the exercises are suitable for. The level indicated is the minimum level, which means that any exercise indicated as suitable for intermediate will generally also be suitable for upper intermediate, advanced and proficiency students too, since the majority of exercises are discussions, which are really level independent.

Time: tells you how long each exercise will last. This is the minimum time for doing the exercise on the Students' Page plus the related listening. It does not include time taken for pre-teaching vocabulary nor for any extra activities (follow-ups, songs, etc.). Exercise length really depends on how interested you and your students are in the subject in question.

**Grammar:** indicates any grammatical structures that occur frequently in an exercise. However there are no grammar exercises as such.

**Advice:** warns of possible problems due to cultural differences, and political, religious and sexual ideas. Be sensitive to your students' beliefs. Also, remember that some exercises will only work if students have an informed opinion on the subject.

**Vocabulary:** indicates some of the vocabulary items your students may have difficulty with.

The Teacher's Notes then continue as follows:

### Background information **1**

This information is not essential in your preparation of the lesson. I hope you find it interesting, and you may wish to pass some of it on to your students so that you yourself can become a resource for your students. However, if you are in a hurry to prepare your lesson, skip it.

### Instructions

These contain ideas on how to exploit the information on the Students' Pages. They are only ideas, not constrictions, and are generally flexible enough for you to play around with as you wish. This book is intended primarily to promote discussion, as students compare their festivals, faiths and opinions.

Even in monolingual groups you will find that each region, village, family has its own traditions. At the beginning of each lesson, find out from students what they know about the festival in question, then they will be more motivated to listen or read to find out the details. Use the illustrations and the texts on the Students' Pages as a stimulus for getting students to write down related questions, which they can then try to answer together.

### Listening 🖳

All the listening exercises are outlined on the Teacher's Page, very few on the Students' Page. This means you are free to do the ones you want. The question of level is critical here. Many of the listenings are authentic, with all the pros and cons which go with such recordings. But just because the listening may seem difficult, it doesn't mean the task has to be. Many listening exercises have comprehension questions. You can either write these on the board or OHP, or simply dictate them. The questions are suggestions only, you can make up your own questions to suit the level and knowledge of your students.

Cover illustration by Elaine Cox



### Teacher's Introduction

Some of the recordings are authentic (i.e. ones I recorded myself), or improvised (i.e. actors in a studio talking about their own personal experiences or opinions). These are generally harder to follow than the scripted recordings but are obviously useful exercises in listening to authentic speech. The scripted recordings were all made in a professional recording studio. The simulated radio talk shows are based on recordings I made with people from all parts of the world. Please note that in the studio recordings none of the actors used false accents – this means that all the Indian, Scottish, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, English, Irish and American accents you hear are the real thing! Honestly!

### Key 🖭

Keys are given for all exercises, where appropriate.

### Follow-up

These are ideas for follow-up activities. You should also encourage students to use encyclopaedias, CD ROMs and the World Wide Web.

### Songs and Films

These are very subjective suggestions for songs and films that tie in with the subject in hand. Students may have their own ideas for songs they might like to bring in.

### Reading and vocabulary

The book contains a lot of useful thematic vocabulary, e.g. on religion, politics and customs, but unavoidably there is also some rather specialist vocabulary, which, where possible, we have tried to illustrate, but which will in any case need to be pre-taught. The reading passages have been kept short and should be used as a springboard to discussion rather than as comprehension exercises. The passages themselves are either direct quotations from people I interviewed (i.e. those followed by names in parentheses) or amalgamations of what I read in my source books (see Bibliography on page 9).

### Discussions A-Z

For any of you who happen to have Discussions A–Z (also part of the Cambridge Copy Collection) here are some useful links to exercises which you can use as follow-ups.

- Day 2: Colour (Discussions A-Z Intermediate)
- Day 3: Love (Discussions A-Z Intermediate)
- Day 6: Gender, Revolution (Discussions A-Z Advanced)
- Day 8: Origins (Discussions A-Z Intermediate)
- Day 12: Kids (Discussions A-Z Advanced)
- Day 13: Family (Discussions A-Z Intermediate)
- Day 16: Class (Discussions A-Z Advanced)
- Day 18: Schools (Discussions A-Z Intermediate)
- Day 19: Xenophobia (Discussions A-Z Intermediate)
- Day 20: X-certificate (Discussions A-Z Advanced)
- Day 21: Beliefs (Discussions A-Z Intermediate)
- Day 24: War (Discussions A-Z Advanced)
- Day 25: Xenophobia (Discussions A–Z Intermediate)
  Utopia (Discussions A–Z Advanced)
- Day 28: You (Discussions A–Z Advanced)

  Zodiac (Discussions A–Z Advanced)
- Day 29: Family (Discussions A-Z Intermediate)

### Mail me

Please send comments and notes of any inaccuracies or suggestions for future editions of this book to: adrian @list.it



## Bibliography

I am indebted to the authors of the books all of which I delved into to research The Book of Days. The dates refer to editions I used.

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