

Memorial Day

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Who does Memorial Day honour in the US?
2. Why do flags sometimes appear halfway down a flagpole?
3. Name some ways that people show respect in a cemetery.

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. originally | a) an outing in which people buy lots of items at stores and malls |
| _____ 2. decorate | b) to honour and remember |
| _____ 3. wreath | c) in the beginning |
| _____ 4. commemorate | d) an official or firm decision |
| _____ 5. shopping spree | e) what is left of a body after death |
| _____ 6. resolution | f) a circular plant used to honour a person or event |
| _____ 7. monument | g) to make something look beautiful or festive |
| _____ 8. remains | h) a structure that honours a person or event |



Reading

1. The last Monday of May is Memorial Day in the US. **Originally**, this was a day to honour American soldiers who had died in the Civil War. It was unofficially known as "Decoration Day" because women and school children **decorated** soldiers' graves with flowers and **wreaths**. In the early to mid-20th century, Memorial Day was viewed as a day to **commemorate** all lost loved ones, including American servicemen and women who had fallen in World War I and II.
2. While Americans continued to lose their lives abroad in the Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf Wars, back at home some civilians began to lose sight of Memorial Day. Rather than a national day of remembrance with flags at half-mast, many celebrated it as a long weekend full of parties and **shopping sprees**. In 2000, the US government introduced a **resolution** to re-educate Americans about this observance. The resolution asked Americans to take part in a moment of remembrance and respect at 3:00 pm each Memorial Day. Americans are reminded to honour those lost long ago, as well as those who have fallen more recently in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan.
3. Memorial Day ceremonies are held at national cemeteries throughout the US. At Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, the president traditionally lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This is a **monument** that honours all of the fallen soldiers whose **remains** have not been identified. Arlington National was established during the American Civil War due to a high number of casualties. On Memorial Day, volunteers and veterans decorate the cemetery with a sea of American flags.

Comprehension

1. When does Memorial Day take place?
2. How has Memorial Day changed since the 19th century?
3. Why did Americans begin to lose sight of Memorial Day?
4. What did the US government do in 2000?
5. What is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier?

Vocabulary Review

A. What Are the Differences?

What are the differences between these words?
 Discuss with a partner. Can you use each word in a sentence?

#	Words	Differences	Sentence
1	origin		
	original		
	originally		
2	memory		
	memorial		
	memorable		
3	decor		
	decorate		
	decoration		
4	remain		
	remains		
5	fall		
	fallen		
	falling		

Vocabulary Review cont.

B. Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences using words from the vocabulary list on page 1.

1. The _____ shows that the US government cares about its military.
2. We are going on a _____ at the mall on Memorial Day weekend.
3. The veteran laid a _____ at the monument.
4. The pilot's _____ have not been found.
5. Memorial Day _____ American soldiers who have fallen.

Pair Work

ORAL SUMMARY

Student A

Read paragraph 1 again. Turn your paper over. Summarize the main points to your partner. Then listen to your partner's summary of paragraph 2.

Student B

Read paragraph 2 again. Turn your paper over. Listen to your partner's summary of paragraph 1. Then summarize the main points of paragraph 2 for your partner.

Work together to summarize the last paragraph.

Class Opinion

1. Should Memorial Day be a school day or a federal holiday?
2. Why is it important for a nation's leader to honour servicemen and women?
3. Does your country do enough to show respect to those who have lost their lives in service?

Idiom

TO TAKE SOME HEAT

President Barack Obama "took some heat" in 2010 for not showing up at the Memorial Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery. Instead of following tradition, Obama honoured fallen soldiers with a speech at a different cemetery.

Lay or Lie?

LAY (past tense: laid)

to place something down

- The veteran *laid* the wreath at the monument.

LIE (past tense: lay)

to recline or be at rest

- The fallen pilot *lay* beside his plane.

Listening

🎧 <http://blog.esllibrary.com/2012/05/23/podcast-memorial-day/>

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

1. The last Monday of May is Memorial Day in the US.
_____, this was a day to honour American soldiers who had died in the Civil War. It was unofficially known as "Decoration Day" because women and school children decorated soldiers' graves with flowers and _____.
In the early to mid-20th century, Memorial Day was viewed as a day to commemorate all lost loved ones, including American servicemen and women who had fallen in World War I and II.
2. While Americans continued to lose their lives abroad in the Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf Wars, back at home some _____ began to lose sight of Memorial Day. Rather than a national day of remembrance with flags at half-mast, many celebrated it as a long weekend full of parties and _____. In 2000, the US government introduced a resolution to re-educate Americans about this observance. The resolution asked Americans to take part in a moment of _____ and respect at 3:00 pm each Memorial Day. Americans are reminded to honour those lost long ago, as well as those who have fallen more recently in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan.
3. Memorial Day ceremonies are held at national cemeteries throughout the US. At Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, the president traditionally lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This is a _____ that honours all of the fallen soldiers whose remains have not been identified. Arlington National was established during the American Civil War due to a high number of casualties. On Memorial Day, volunteers and _____ decorate the cemetery with a sea of American flags.