

All About

# May Day



twinkl

Click on the words in **bold** to find out more.

# When Is May Day?

May Day is celebrated on the first day of the month of May.

TRY THIS

In your blue books, can you put the months of the year in order spelling each one correctly – no peeping!

May

January

March

August

June

October

April

November

February

December

September

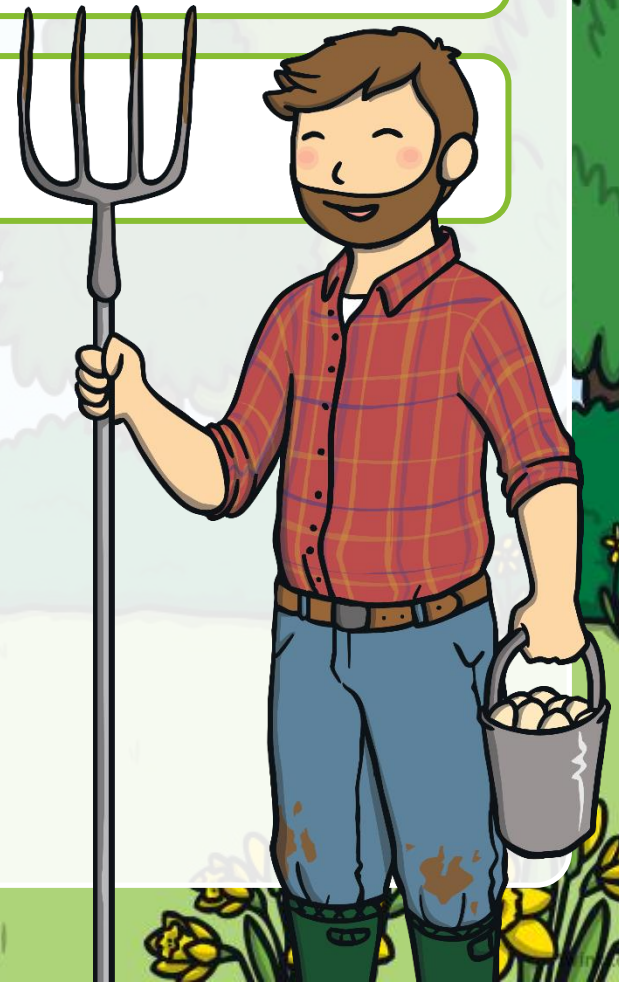
July



# What Is May Day?

It is the time when people look forward to the coming of summer and the warmer weather.

In the past, it was the only day of the year that farmers had off from work.



# When Did May Day Begin?

May Day started in Roman times.

It was a Roman **festival** worshipping Flora, the **goddess** of fruit, flowers, nature and spring.

A festival is a time of celebration

A goddess is a female god who is worshipped and admired

The month of May is important to Catholics because they believe it is the special month of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary is known as the 'Queen of May'.



Did you know?

# May Day History

Answer these questions about the origins of May Day in your blue book

1. What did people look forward to after May Day?
2. What was special about the day for farm workers?
3. When did celebrating May Day start?
4. Who is Flora?

The background of the slide is a colorful illustration of a spring landscape. It features green trees with yellow flowers, a blue sky with white clouds, and a green field with yellow daffodils. The text is centered on a white rectangular background.

## **May Day Traditions – How do people celebrate May Day?**

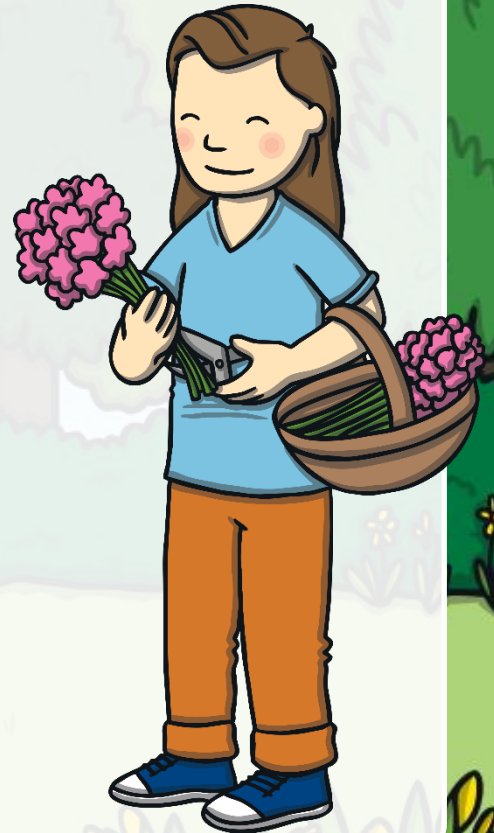
Read this information and watch the videos to learn more, then answer the next set of questions at the end.



# May Day Traditions

In the past, people would get up very early in the morning on May Day.

They would gather flowers to decorate their homes because they believed it would bring them good fortune for the rest of the year.



# Maypole Dancing

Maypole dancing is a traditional May Day dance.

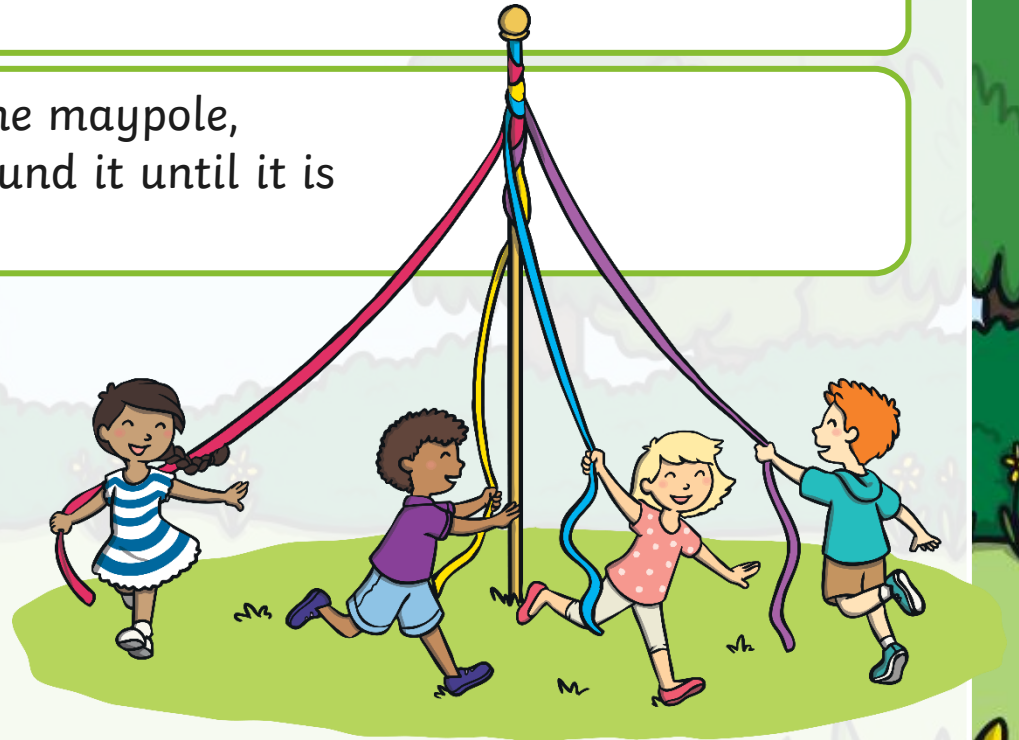
The dance celebrates the good weather and also brings good luck for the planting of the crops.

Girls and boys dance around the maypole, threading coloured ribbons around it until it is beautifully braided.



Watch It!

CLICK on the hand to watch some Maypole dancing





# Morris Dancing

Morris dancing was first done by groups of men.

The dancers traditionally wear white shirts and a coloured **baldric** (a belt worn over one shoulder and across the body)

Nowadays, men and women dance together.

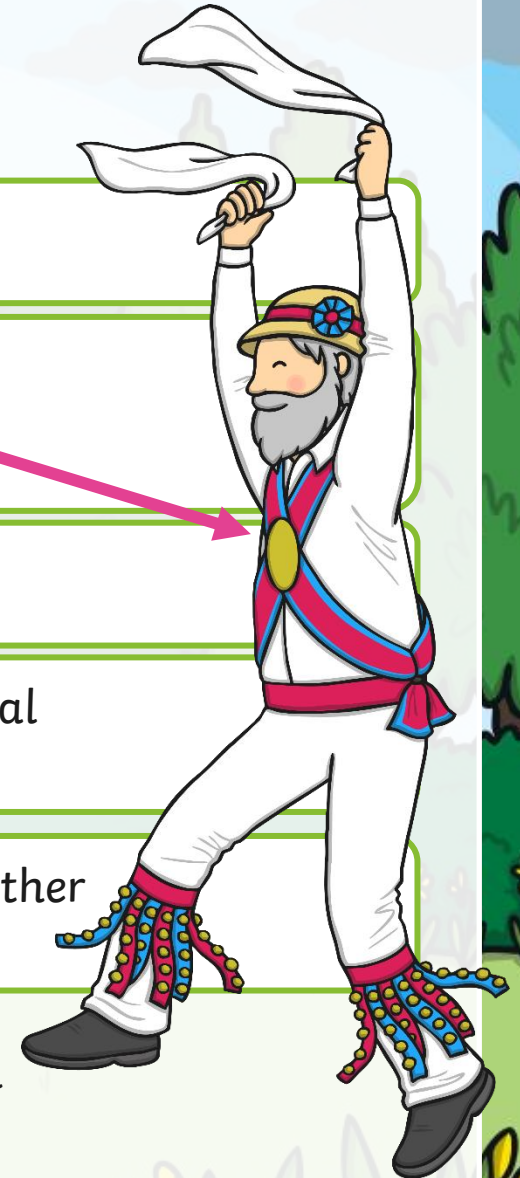
Morris dancing is lively and accompanied by traditional instruments, such as a fiddle or accordion.

Dancers might wave handkerchiefs or bang sticks together in time to the music whilst they are dancing.



**Watch It!**

CLICK on the hand to watch some Morris dancing



# The May Queen

Traditionally, a girl from the village was chosen to be the May Queen.

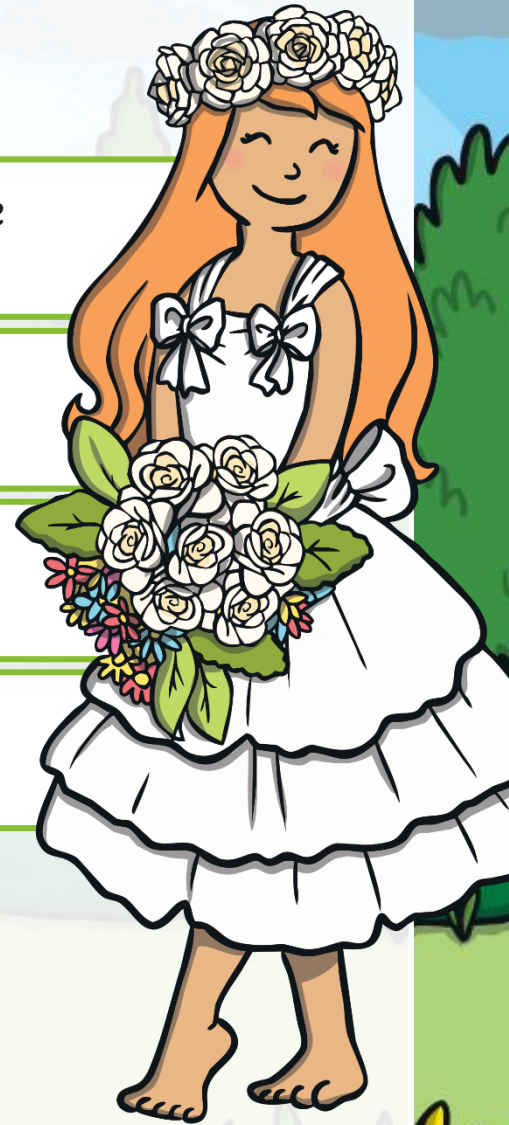
The May Queen would sit on a decorated throne in the middle of the village.

She would wear a floral crown to represent the Roman goddess Flora.

Some villages still have a May Queen and a special parade.

Have you ever been to a parade like this?

Have you ever been to any other parades to celebrate a different event or festival?



# Glossary

- accordion** - a traditional musical instrument played by stretching and squeezing - it has keys like a piano
- baldric** - a belt worn over one shoulder and across the body
- celebrate** - to commemorate a special day or event with ceremonies and parties
- festival** - a time of celebration
- goddess** - a female deity who is admired and worshipped
- traditions** - the handing down of a culture's beliefs and customs from parents to children over many years



# May Day Traditions

Answer these questions about the origins of May Day in your blue book

5. Why did people get up early on May Day?
6. What did people believe the flowers would bring them?
7. What does the May pole dance celebrate and hope for.
8. What is a **baldric**?
9. Which instruments traditionally accompany Morris dancing?
10. What do they wave and bang when Morris dancing?
11. What does the floral crown of the May Queen represent?
12. **Where** would the May Queen traditionally sit?

