

Hats off to mothers!



The British and the Irish always like to be different from the rest of Europe – and it's the same with Mother's Day ...

The British Isles celebrates Mothering Sunday on the fourth Sunday of Lent, which this year falls on 6 March, leaving most mainland European mothers to wait until the beginning of May.

However, even the rest of Europe can't agree on a date. Norway celebrates on the second Sunday in February (this year it will be Valentine's Day), Bulgaria and Serbia celebrate on 8 March (International Women's Day), Slovenia on 25 March and Hungary, Portugal and Spain all have this special day on the first Sunday in May (this year it coincides with International Labour Day). France waits until the end of May – and poor Luxembourg until the beginning of June.

Why did the British choose to celebrate in the middle of Lent, traditionally a period of abstinence? It is thought that the origin came from a 16th-century practice of visiting the 'mother' church (the main church in a region) on the Sunday known as *Laetere*. This day was a holiday given to domestic servants to visit their families. So the connection between 'mother' church and going to visit mothers (and fathers) became established.

This tradition slowly died out and Mother's Day almost disappeared. It was the work of Constance Smith who revived it, having been inspired by the campaign led by Anna Jarvis in America. Smith published a leaflet just after the First World War entitled *The Revival of Mothering Sunday*. It took almost twenty years before Mother's Day was finally re-established in the UK. And now it is a frenzy of card-sending and gift-buying; the most popular gift is a bunch of flowers: particularly roses, carnations and chrysanthemums.

If you'd like to read about Mother's Day around the world, then click [here](#).

And if you'd like to watch a short film about Mother's Day in Oxford made by Oxford Brookes University and about the history of Mother's Day, then click [here](#).

If you would like to use Mother's Day as a topic in your lesson, then we have provided you with four short activities at A1 level and above. You'll find them in the following **Teacher's notes** and on the **Worksheet**.

Teacher's notes

Mother (level A1 upwards, 10+ mins)

- On the board write *6 March*. Ask students what day of the week it is this year. (Sunday) Explain that in the UK and Ireland something special happens on this day. Another clue: *In Germany this special day is on the second Sunday in May*. Elicit *Mother's Day*.
- Explain that Mother's Day in the UK and Ireland falls on the fourth Sunday of Lent ('Fastenzeit').
- On the board write *mother*. Tell students they have one minute to think of eight words from the letters in the word *mother*.
- Check answers together. Possible answers: he, me, or, to, her, hot, met, the, home, moth, them, other.

A mother can ... (level A1 upwards, 10+ mins)

- Tell students they are going to write some sentences about mothers.
- On the board write: *A mother can ...* and ask students to complete the sentence in whichever way they like, for example *A mother can help her child*.
- Tell students you are going to dictate the start of four more sentences:
1 *A mother likes ...* 2 *A mother hates ...* 3 *A mother is never ...*
4 *A mother is always ...* 5 *A mother sometimes ...*
- Check everyone has the start of the sentences correctly written.
- Ask students to complete the sentences.
- When everyone has finished, either encourage everyone to read out his/her completed sentences, or share the answers with his/her partner.

Relations (level A1 upwards, 5+ mins)

- Read out the following sentence slowly and clearly: *My mother's brother is my ...* and ask students to call out the correct word to complete the sentence. (uncle)
- Read out the following sentences:
My mother's sister is my ... (aunt)
My mother's mother is my ... (grandmother)
My mother's nephew is my ... (cousin)
My mother's niece is my ... (cousin)
My mother's father is my ... (grandfather)
My mother's son is my ... (brother or me)
My mother's daughter is my ... (sister or me)

You're the best mum! (level A2 upwards, 15+ mins)

- Make a copy of **You're the best mum!** (see Worksheet on the next page), one for each student.
- Ask students to think of the ideal way to spend Mother's Day. Encourage indoor and outdoor activities, and activities you can do alone or with other people.
- Hand out the Worksheet **You're the best mum!** and ask students to read the letter in **1**. Help with any unknown vocabulary.
- Then tell students to read **2**. Ask them for other ideas and write their ideas on the board.
- Now tell students to complete **3** with their own ideas for their friend.
- Allow five to ten minutes for the writing and help where necessary.
- Tell students to share their 'perfect Mother's Day' with their partner.
- If there is time, ask volunteers to share their day with the rest of the class.

Worksheet

You're the best mum!

1 A friend of yours receives the following letter:

*Congratulations! This Mother's Day you've won the **Best Mum** prize. Please describe your perfect Mother's Day and we will organize it for you! You can plan the day and spend £100. You can also choose a special gift: flowers, chocolates, a necklace or wine.*

Your friend is very busy and so she asks you to plan her perfect day ...

2 Think about the morning, the afternoon and the evening:

- Does your friend want to be alone or with other people?
- Does she want to do some sport or something more relaxing?
- Perhaps she would like to go to the cinema, an art gallery or a museum.
- Maybe she would like to go to a football match or have a day at the beauty spa.
- Or perhaps she would like to have a full-body massage and then eat fish and chips.

Anything is possible!

3 Now complete the following information:

My friend's name is _____.

She is the best mum because _____.

She would like _____ for her special gift.

In the morning on her perfect day she's going to _____.

In the afternoon on her perfect day she's going to _____.

In the evening on her perfect day she's going to _____.