



Intermediate Level
Valentine's Day
Lesson Plan

Valentine's Day (Student / Group A - Legend #1)

1. Valentine's Day is February 14th. It is not a holiday, but it is a special day for many people in different countries around the world. Each year on Valentine's Day, friends and lovers exchange valentine cards, chocolates, candy, flowers, and other gifts. In elementary schools in Canada, children make valentines for their classmates and put them in a large decorated mailbox. On February 14th, the teacher opens the box and distributes the cards to the students. Many schools also celebrate Valentine's Day with parties. Some people like to go to a romantic restaurant on Valentine's Day to celebrate. People of all ages love to send and receive valentines. According to the Canada Post Office, Canadians send approximately 90 million cards on Valentine's Day each year.
2. There are many symbols of Valentine's Day, such as hearts, roses, and cupids. The symbol of cupid comes from ancient Roman times. Cupid was the son of the love goddess, Venus. Cupid was a playful child who flew around shooting love arrows into people's hearts, making them fall in love.
3. There are many different stories about the origins of Valentine's Day. According to one legend, the custom of sending a card to a loved one goes back to the days of the Roman Empire. In the third century, there was a priest named Valentinus. Valentinus was put in jail and sentenced to die by the Emperor Claudius because of his Christian beliefs. When Valentinus was in jail, he fell in love with the jailer's daughter. According to the story, the jailer's daughter was blind, but Valentinus had special abilities and was able to cure her. When he was in jail, she brought him food and delivered messages. The night before Valentinus was executed, he wrote a good-bye note to the jailer's daughter and signed it "Your Valentine."



Valentine's Day (Student / Group B - Legend #2)

1. Valentine's Day is February 14th. It is not a holiday, but it is a special day for many people in different countries around the world. Each year on Valentine's Day, friends and lovers exchange valentine cards, chocolates, candy, flowers, and other gifts. In elementary schools in Canada, children make valentines for their classmates and put them in a large decorated mailbox. On February 14th, the teacher opens the box and distributes the cards to the students. Many schools also celebrate Valentine's Day with parties. Some people like to go to a romantic restaurant on Valentine's Day to celebrate. People of all ages love to send and receive valentines. According to the Canada Post Office, Canadians send approximately 90 million cards on Valentine's Day each year.
2. There are many symbols of Valentine's Day, such as hearts, roses, and cupids. The symbol of cupid comes from ancient Roman times. Cupid was the son of the love goddess, Venus. Cupid was a playful child who flew around shooting love arrows into people's hearts, making them fall in love.
3. There are many different stories about the origins of Valentine's Day. According to one legend, the tradition of Valentine's Day goes back to the days of the Roman Empire. In the third century, the Emperor Claudius wanted a strong army. Many married soldiers did not want to leave their families to fight the Emperor's wars, so Claudius ordered young men not to marry. A priest named Valentinus lived in Rome at that time, and he felt sorry for the young men and their sweethearts. He decided to marry them secretly, but the Emperor found out and put him in prison. He was executed on February 14th. Since that time, Valentine's Day has been celebrated as a special day for sweethearts and romance.



Valentine's Day (Student / Group C - Legend #3)

1. Valentine's Day is February 14th. It is not a holiday, but it is a special day for many people in different countries around the world. Each year on Valentine's Day, friends and lovers exchange valentine cards, chocolates, candy, flowers, and other gifts. In elementary schools in Canada, children make valentines for their classmates and put them in a large decorated mailbox. On February 14th, the teacher opens the box and distributes the cards to the students. Many schools also celebrate Valentine's Day with parties. Some people like to go to a romantic restaurant on Valentine's Day to celebrate. People of all ages love to send and receive valentines. According to the Canada Post Office, Canadians send approximately 90 million cards on Valentine's Day each year.
2. There are many symbols of Valentine's Day, such as hearts, roses, and cupids. The symbol of cupid comes from ancient Roman times. Cupid was the son of the love goddess, Venus. Cupid was a playful child who flew around shooting love arrows into people's hearts, making them fall in love.
3. There are many different stories about the origins of Valentine's Day. One legend goes back to the days of the Roman Empire. At that time, the Romans celebrated the festival of Lupercalia in the middle of February. This festival honored the god Lupercus, keeper of the crops and farm animals. As time passed, the Romans began to honor another goddess during this festival. Her name was Juno, guardian of women and marriage. During this festival, all of the young women in a village would write their names on a piece of paper and drop them into a box. Every young man would pick a paper from the box and the woman whose name he had chosen would become his sweetheart. Since those early days, mid-February has been remembered as a special time for love.



Discussion Questions

Share your legend of Valentine's Day with the other students in your group. Then discuss the questions below.

1. Do you celebrate Valentine's Day in your country? If so, what are the customs? If not, do you have any similar celebrations?

2. Do you think Valentine's Day was created for commercial purposes?

3. How do most couples meet in your country?

4. Are arranged marriages common in your country?

5. Is there a formal engagement before marriage in your country?

6. What is the average age for marriage in your country?

7. Do most couples go on a honeymoon in your country?

8. In your country, is it acceptable for couples to live together before marriage?

9. Are there any dates that are considered lucky (or unlucky) for a wedding?

10. Do parents have a big influence on the choice of one's spouse in your country?

11. On which occasions do you send greeting cards in your country?

12. Are you planning to do anything special this Valentine's Day?

Comprehension Questions

Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write the correct answers in the spaces below.

1. What are some of the symbols of Valentine's Day?

2. What do people exchange on Valentine's Day?

3. What do elementary school children do to celebrate Valentine's Day?

4. Who was Valentinus?

5. There are two legends about Valentinus. Tell why Valentinus was put in jail, according to each legend.

6. Why did the Emperor Claudius not want young men to marry?

7. How did Valentinus help the jailer's daughter?

8. How did Valentinus sign his good-bye note to the jailer's daughter?

9. What festival did the Romans celebrate in mid-February?

10. Who was Cupid?

Vocabulary Review

A. Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

- | | | |
|-------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| _____ | 1. legend | a. cannot see |
| _____ | 2. origins | b. a religious man of the church |
| _____ | 3. approximately | c. one hundred years |
| _____ | 4. elementary | d. respect |
| _____ | 5. honor | e. make an illness better |
| _____ | 6. custom | f. an old story |
| _____ | 7. blind | g. given a punishment |
| _____ | 8. cure | h. tradition |
| _____ | 9. priest | i. about, nearly |
| _____ | 10. century | j. put to death |
| _____ | 11. executed | k. primary |
| _____ | 12. sentenced | l. beginnings |

B. Fill in the blanks with the correct words from the left column above.

1. Television was invented in the 20th _____.
2. Many scientists are trying to discover a _____ for cancer.
3. The population of Canada is _____ 32 million.
4. He helped the _____ man cross the street.
5. He is retiring next week. The company is going to have a party to _____ him.
6. Is it a _____ in your country to shake hands when you first meet someone?
7. The judge _____ the robber to two years in jail.
8. The young couple wanted to be married by a _____.
9. Children learn to read and write in _____ school.
10. There are many different _____ about the origins of Valentine's Day.
11. He was _____ for killing the policeman.
12. There are different beliefs about the _____ of our planet.

Idioms and Expressions

1. **love at first sight** - falling in love the first time you meet someone
2. **blind date** - a social meeting or date with someone you have never met before (the date has been arranged by a friend or family member)
3. **to fall (or be) head over heels in love** - to love someone very much
4. **to be madly in love** - to love someone very much
5. **to be crazy about someone** - to like someone very much
6. **to be heartbroken** - to be very sad, usually because of a romantic loss
7. **puppy love** - young love between children or teenagers
8. **pop the question** - ask someone to marry you
9. **love is blind** - people do not see the faults in their lovers
10. **a bed of roses** - a very easy or pleasant situation
11. **love conquers all** - love is strong enough to overcome all problems
12. **to go out with someone** - to have a steady, romantic relationship with someone

Choose the correct idiom or expression from above to fill in the blanks.

1. _____ is very sweet. It is the first kind of romantic love a young person experiences.
2. John and Mary have been going out together for two years. Last week, he bought a ring and now he is going to _____.
3. Susan doesn't like to go out on a _____. She prefers to meet the boy first and then decide if she wants to have a date with him.
4. Robert's girlfriend left him. He still loves her very much. He is _____.
5. Marriage is not always a _____. There are lots of difficult times.
6. The first time Ken met Ann, he knew he wanted to marry her. It was _____.

Find Someone...

1. who is planning to buy flowers for someone today. _____

2. who doesn't like chocolate. _____

3. who has been on a blind date. _____

4. whose favorite flower is a rose. _____

5. who has fallen in love at first sight. _____

6. who likes the idea of arranged marriages. _____

7. who celebrated Valentine's Day in his/her country. _____

8. who sent someone a valentine. _____

9. who went on a honeymoon. _____

10. who can explain the festival of Lupercalia. _____

11. who has been head over heels in love. _____

12. who is planning something special for Valentine's Day. _____

Teachers' Notes / Answer Key

These activities are designed for intermediate level adult ESL learners, but they may also be suitable for junior and senior high school ESL students.

Activity One – Warm-Up, Introduction to Valentine's Day

You can begin by bringing hearts, chocolates, cards, flowers, or pictures and symbols of Valentine's Day to class. Ask the students to share any information they may already have about this celebration.

Activity Two – Small Group Work – Sharing Information Based on Individual Readings; Group Discussion

Break the class into groups of three. The students are each given a short reading describing the meaning, symbols, and customs associated with Valentine's Day, as well as one of the legends regarding the origins of Valentine's Day. Each student in the group has a different legend. You may choose a few students to read the first two paragraphs of the handout aloud to the class. Have the students read the legends silently. Then each student will relate his/her legend to the others in the group. The students will then follow up with the discussion questions at the bottom of the page. (At the end of the sharing session, distribute the different legends to all of the students to read.)

Activity Three – Comprehension Questions from the Readings (oral and written)

Have the students practice asking and answering the questions and then write the answers.

1. Some Valentine's Day symbols include hearts, roses, and cupids.
2. People exchange valentine cards, chocolates, candy, flowers, and other gifts.
3. In elementary schools, children make valentines for their classmates and put them in a large decorated mailbox.
4. Valentinus was a priest during the Roman Empire.
5. According to one legend, Valentinus was put in jail and sentenced to die by the Emperor Claudius because of his Christian beliefs. According to another legend, Valentinus was put in prison because he was secretly marrying young men who would otherwise have to go fight in wars.
6. The Emperor Claudius wanted a strong army and since many married soldiers did not want to leave their families to fight the Emperor's wars, Claudius ordered young men not to marry.
7. Valentinus was able to help the jailer's daughter by curing her of her blindness with his special powers.
8. He signed it "Your Valentine."
9. The Romans celebrated the festival of Lupercalia in the middle of February.
10. Cupid was the son of the love goddess, Venus.

Activity Four – Vocabulary Review

Ask the students to match the words with the correct meaning and then choose the correct word to complete the sentences.

- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. f | 2. l | 3. i | 4. k | 5. d | 6. h | 7. a | 8. e | 9. b | 10. c | 11. j | 12. g |
| 1. century | 2. cure | 3. approximately | 4. blind | 5. honor | 6. custom | | | | | | |
| 7. sentenced | 8. priest | 9. elementary | 10. legends | 11. executed | 12. origins | | | | | | |

Activity Five – Idiom Work

Teach expressions related to love or symbols of Valentine's Day. Explain the meanings, use them in context, have the students complete the sentences, and then write their own sentences using the idioms.

1. Puppy love
2. pop the question
3. blind date
4. heartbroken
5. bed of roses
6. love at first sight

Activity Six – Group Interaction – "Find Someone Who..."

Distribute the worksheet. Have the students circulate around the class asking the questions on the sheet. When the student finds a classmate who can answer the question, he/she will then write the student's name on the line and follow up with one more question of his/her own. Ex. Have you ever been on a blind date? If the student answers "yes," the second question might be: Who introduced you? Try to encourage the students to engage in real conversation during this activity. Follow up by sharing the information as a class. You can also use this activity as a review of question formation.

Did You Know? When we write the holiday, we must use capital letters (Valentine's Day). When we're referring to a gift, greeting, or a person, we don't use capital letters (valentine [with or without the word "card"], valentines [usually refers to cards], valentine gift, be my valentine, etc.).

Spelling Note: This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Honor* and *Favorite*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Honour* and *Favourite*. Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.

Need Flashcards?

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