

## Bank Holidays (B1)

### A – Before you start

*Answer the questions with a partner.*

1. What are the most important public holidays in your country?
2. Which ones are religious holidays and which are secular holidays?
3. Are there any local public holidays? If so, when are they? What do they celebrate?
4. Do you think there are too many holidays? Why (not)?

### B – Listen and answer

*Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and choose the correct answer.*

1. Bank holidays take place in  
a) the United Kingdom.      b) the Republic of Ireland.      c) both of these.
2. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century there were ... bank holidays.  
a) fewer      b) more      c) the same number of
3. The number of local public holidays increased  
a) after 1871.      b) in 1830.      c) as a result of the Industrial Revolution.
4. Under the 1871 Bank Holiday Act, ... had one more bank holiday than the rest of the UK.  
a) Scotland      b) Ireland      c) England
5. From the beginning, the Bank Holiday Act affected government institutions as well as banks.  
a) True.      b) False.      c) The article doesn't say.

### C – Read and answer

*Read the article and answer the questions.*

1. How many holidays did the Bank of England have before 1830?
2. What did they celebrate?
3. Which days were still bank holidays in 1834?
4. Why did all the factories in a town usually close on a local holiday?
5. Why did local holidays begin to disappear?
6. What happens to financial transactions when there is a bank holiday?
7. Why do the dates of most bank holidays vary from year to year?
8. Why was there an extra bank holiday in May 2023?

### D – Learn it! Use it!

*Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense.)*

1. Lots of people were singing and dancing in the square, so we \_\_\_\_\_ with them.
2. Easter Sunday is on 31<sup>st</sup> March next year, so \_\_\_\_\_ is on 29<sup>th</sup> March.
3. James took a day \_\_\_\_\_ so that he could watch his son play in the school football team.
4. In some countries it's \_\_\_\_\_ for a man to have more than one wife.
5. The discussion was badly organised because everyone was speaking \_\_\_\_\_.
6. We \_\_\_\_\_ our expenses drastically by selling our car and travelling to work by bike.

### **E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam? (Paper 1, Reading: Part 5)**

*Choose the correct word in brackets for each space.*

In many countries, the day after Christmas is a religious holiday called Saint Stephen's Day, but in the UK, it is a bank holiday called Boxing Day.

The name of the day has <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*everything/something/nothing/anything*) to do with the sport of boxing. <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*Instead/Also/Therefore/Although*) it probably comes from the wooden collection boxes placed in medieval churches. People who wanted to donate money put <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*them/it/there/away*) into the boxes as they entered or left the building. The boxes were opened on Saint Stephen's Day and the contents were distributed to <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*rich/riches/poor/the poor*).

Another tradition was the giving of "Christmas boxes" to servants. After <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*work/have worked/to work/working*) on Christmas Day, servants were allowed a day's holiday on 26<sup>th</sup> December to visit their families. Each <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (*were/had/was/have*) given a box containing a gift, money and often left-over food.

### **F – Write about it**

*Write about a recent public holiday in your country. Mention:*

- the date of the public holiday;
- what it celebrates;
- what people usually do on this day;
- where you were at the time;
- how you and your family/friends spent the day.

## **Answers**

### **B – Listen and answer**

1. c 2. b 3. c 4. a 5. b

### **C – Read and answer**

1. It had about forty. 2. They celebrated saints' days, Christian festivities or royal occasions.  
3. The only bank holidays in 1834 were Good Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1<sup>st</sup> November and Christmas Day.  
4. To save on running costs. 5. Because of the standardisation of paid holidays and school holidays, and the decline in the manufacturing industry. 6. They are postponed until the day after the bank holiday. 7. Because they fall on a Monday. 8. It was to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III.

### **D – Learn it! Use it!**

1. joined in 2. Good Friday 3. off 4. lawful 5. at once 6. slashed

### **E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam?**

1. nothing 2. Instead 3. it 4. the poor 5. working 6. was