



My season of Oz festivals

International cultural knowledge – Art festivals

1 Answer these questions about festivals.

1 Have you ever been to a festival in your country or abroad?

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2 What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of working at a festival?

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

2 Read the text. Four paragraphs have been removed. Choose from paragraphs A–D the one which fits each gap 1–4.



Working as a lighting technician amongst other things, Laura Ratling decided to follow the festival trail around Australia ('Oz').

It was 11:57 pm on 31st December, and I found myself standing in a field. In silence. Holding a candle. Surrounded by 90,000 people doing the same. I was at *Woodford Folk Festival*, 70km north of Brisbane, and the atmosphere was intense. **1**

I'd visited the country before, so this time I was eager to avoid the traditional tourist traps in favour of the 'real Australia'. Step one was research: what, when and where? I madly emailed festival organisers to find work, with the intention of attending as an ordinary festival goer if no positions were available. And then I was on my way ... **2**

My next destination was Adelaide. March seemed to be one long festival. The *Adelaide Festival of Arts* and the *Adelaide Fringe*, both in the same week in March, are modelled on the *Edinburgh International Festival* and *Edinburgh Festival Fringe*. They may be smaller and not yet as famous as Edinburgh, but Adelaide is a lot hotter in March than Edinburgh ever is! I worked at the *Festival of Arts* spending my afternoons looking after the artworks. But the *Fringe* was the one for me. Street performers transform the centre with music and laughter, stand-up comedians come from far and wide and the festival's Garden of Unearthly Delights offers puppet shows, bands, and a silent disco where everyone wears wireless headphones which provide you with a choice of music.

3 Match Laura's experiences with the festivals she visited. Which festival from the text is not mentioned?

- 1 She was not keen on the place where this took place.
 - 2 She made a plan whilst listening to music at this festival.
 - 3 She learnt a new skill whilst working at this festival.
 - 4 She enjoyed this festival so much that she didn't mind the hot conditions.
 - 5 She liked this festival less than the other festival which happened at the same time.
- a Woodford Folk Festival, Brisbane
 - b The NOW Now Festival of Spontaneous Music and Experimental Film
 - c The Adelaide Festival of Arts
 - d The Adelaide Fringe
 - e Womadelaide
 - f East Coast Blues and Roots Festival

I worked at *Womadelaide Festival* in Adelaide too, and, in spite of the 40-degree heat, it was for me festival perfection. Musicians from every genre displayed their talents in the dusty heat of the Botanical Gardens, supported by theatrical groups, eco-workshops and fire-displays. **3**

I then found myself in Melbourne in May, in time for *St Kilda Film Festival* and the *Next Wave Festival* which celebrates new and emerging artists and at which I worked as a production assistant. House parties were held at properties transformed by experimental artists, and the closing night was a clever combination of experimental music and effects. **4**

A However, as winter approached, festival season came to an end. I didn't earn a lot and I had to work crazy hours. But I don't regret it for a second – and I'd do it again without a shadow of a doubt. The only thing I'd change would be squeezing in more festivals if I could. I recommend the Aussie festival trail to anyone.

B First up was *NOW Now Festival of Spontaneous Music and Experimental Film* in the Blue Mountains. I arrived as a general volunteer, but was swiftly promoted to something more challenging. I was put in charge of the lighting for this fantastic little festival. As I hadn't done that before, it was quite a challenge!

C And then the peace was shattered. The Red Eyes burst onto stage and brought the New Year in with a bang. And then I decided to stay in Australia and work the festivals.

D From Adelaide to Byron, and the very popular *East Coast Blues and Roots Music Festival*, which only disappointed me in its venue. Byron just isn't my sort of town. However, the band list couldn't have been better: The Cat Empire, Rodrigo y Gabriela, Jools Holland and many more played. It was a truly fantastic weekend.

4 Answer the questions.

Would you like to work at a festival? Why?/Why not?

Write a paragraph about which Australian festival you would like to go to and why.

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