

Important events

1 Talk about the infographic with your partner. Answer the questions.

- 1 What does the infographic tell us about the UK and Argentina?
- 2 Which European country benefits from the most public holidays?
- 3 Why do we have public holidays?
- 4 Which public holidays are celebrated in your country and why?

2a Read the texts about public holidays around the world. Which country commemorates an individual?

NUMBER OF PUBLIC HOLIDAYS BY COUNTRY PER YEAR



	UK	8 days
	CANADA	8 days
	SPAIN	14 days
	JAPAN	15 days
	ARGENTINA	15 days
	HONG KONG	17 days
	GLOBAL AVERAGE	13 days

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

Many countries around the world celebrate important events or people in history that have helped shape their country. These are often observed as public holidays to pay tribute to the event or the person. Let's find out how Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and the US honour their important days.

ANZAC DAY *Hamish, Auckland, New Zealand*

Both Australia and New Zealand observe a national day of remembrance on 25th April each year in commemoration of the soldiers who served and lost their lives in all the wars that the two countries have fought in. On 25th April 1915, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) arrived in Gallipoli, Turkey during the First World War and the terrible battle that followed resulted in thousands of casualties. This day also commemorates all Australians and New Zealanders who served in peacekeeping operations. In many countries, around 11th November (Armistice Day), people wear a poppy as a symbol of respect for those who fought in First World War and to commemorate the end of the War. This tradition has its origins in New Zealand where the first Poppy Day was held in 1922. Nowadays, volunteers start selling poppies the Friday before Anzac Day.



INDEPENDENCE DAY *Anisha, Colombo, Sri Lanka*

My country celebrates its independence on 4th February every year. It was on this day in 1948 that we became independent from the UK after 133 years of rule as a British colony. There's no school, so we stay at home and watch the president's speech on TV. He talks about the achievements of our government during the past year and raises the national flag. This is the first celebration of the day and it takes place in Colombo, the capital city of Sri Lanka. He also honours Sri Lanka's national heroes with a two-minute silence. Then we go and watch the parade, and there are lots of cultural events, too, that

unite our nation, such as dances, singing and performances where the participants wear our traditional clothes which are very colourful and lively.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JUNIOR DAY *Corey, Philadelphia, the US*

Every third Monday in January, we have a public holiday in honour of Martin Luther King Junior. He was one of the great people in the history of our country and he spoke out for the freedom and equality of all races, demonstrating for civil rights in the US through non-violence. He made significant progress with his campaigns for justice during the 1950s and 1960s and he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Sadly, in 1968 he was assassinated. In the 1980s, a law was passed to honour his achievements with a national holiday, and Americans of all cultural backgrounds now celebrate his life and legacy each January with events, tributes and marches across the country. Most of these marches are peace walks that are celebrated in most cities around America and try to emulate the big March on Washington that gathered over 200,000 people and where Martin Luther King Junior gave his famous 'I have a Dream' speech.



2b Read the texts again and circle the best alternative.

- 1 A battle in Australia/Turkey has become a significant date in commemoration of ANZAC Day.
- 2 People wear a hat/poppy in remembrance of soldiers on this public holiday.
- 3 Sri Lanka was a British colony from 1915/1815 to 1948.
- 4 Cultural events/National heroes in Sri Lanka are commemorated on Independence Day.
- 5 Martin Luther King Junior Day has been celebrated since the 1960s/1980s in the US.
- 6 It's a public holiday that honours the legacy/freedom of a great individual.

2c Read the sentences and decide if they are reasons for the public holidays, or ways of commemorating the public holidays in each country. Write the sentence numbers in the correct place in the table.

- 1 We were reigned by another country for more than a century.
- 2 This is a day mainly to remember.
- 3 In memory of many significant achievements, we pay tribute with lots of special events.
- 4 It's important to remember those who helped our country in times of conflict.
- 5 There are plenty of cultural events, with dances and performances in the streets.
- 6 Our country made some historic steps towards the freedom of its citizens thanks to the actions of one individual.

	Reason for the holidays	Way of commemorating
Australia & New Zealand
Sri Lanka
the US

Speaking**3a Work with a partner and discuss the questions.**

- 1 Which important events and/or people are celebrated in your country with a public holiday? Why?
- 2 Do you think it is important to remember these events and people with a national day?

PROJECT**3b Think about some important events or people in your country or another country that are currently not honoured with a public holiday. If a particular country could have a new public holiday, which event or person do you think would deserve it? You are going to prepare a survey to find out what the new public holiday might be. Read the questions and prepare your project research.**

- 1 Work in groups. Your teacher will ask you to research your own country or a country of your choice. Do your research on the Internet to find out more about important events or people that have made a significant impact on the country. Make notes on the following points:
 - what the event or who the person is
 - why the event or person should be commemorated
 - when the event happened or when the person made his or her mark on the country

- how the event or person should be remembered or celebrated
- any other information you think is important.

- 2 In your groups, prepare a survey. List as many events or people as you think relevant on your survey for other groups to choose between.
- 3 Prepare some questions to ask other groups about your events or people, e.g. *Why do you think we should remember X in this country? How do you think people should celebrate X Day?* etc., to find out why a particular event or person deserves to be chosen.

3c Move around the classroom asking other groups what or who they would choose on your survey to be commemorated for a new public holiday. Ask your questions to find out why a particular event or person deserves to be chosen. When you have a winning event or person, discuss with your classmates to see if they agree with who or what has been chosen for the new public holiday in each country.