

Writing About Celebrations: My Favorite Holiday

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, the student will be able to:

1. Write a 2–3 paragraph personal narrative describing a favorite holiday.
 2. Use celebration- and holiday-related vocabulary accurately and appropriately.
 3. Organize ideas into clear paragraphs with a topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding ideas.
 4. Use past tense and descriptive language to explain traditions, activities, and personal meaning.
 5. Revise writing for clarity, vocabulary use, and organization with guided support.
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Materials Needed

- Paper or notebook (or digital document)
 - Pen or keyboard
 - Vocabulary list (provided by volunteer)
 - Outline template (included)
 - Sample short paragraph (optional, instructor-created)
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Warm-Up Activity (10 minutes) – Conversation & Activation

Purpose: Activate background knowledge and lower affective filter.

1. Tutor asks open-ended questions:
 - What holidays do you celebrate?
 - Is there a holiday that is very important in your family or culture?
 - What usually happens on that day?
 2. Student answers orally.
 3. Tutor writes **key words or phrases** the student uses (e.g., food, family, music, traditions) to reuse later in writing.
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New Lesson: Vocabulary & Writing Structure (20 minutes)

1. Holiday & Celebration Vocabulary (10 minutes)

Introduce and briefly discuss vocabulary that applies to **many cultures**:

General Celebration Vocabulary

- celebration
- tradition
- custom
- gathering
- festival
- ceremony
- holiday
- special occasion

Food & Atmosphere

- traditional food
- meal
- feast
- sweets
- music
- dancing
- gifts
- decorations

People & Activities

- family
- friends
- community
- guests
- decorate
- prepare
- celebrate
- share
- visit
- honor

Feelings & Meaning

- meaningful
- joyful
- memorable
- important
- relaxing
- exciting
- emotional
- proud

Quick Practice:

Ask the student to choose **5–6 words** they want to try to use in their story.

2. Paragraph Structure for a Short Story (10 minutes)

Explain and model the structure for a **2–3 paragraph story**:

Paragraph 1: Introduction

- Name the holiday
- Say where it is celebrated
- Explain why it is your favorite

Paragraph 2: Description

- What usually happens
- Traditions, food, activities, people
- Use descriptive details

Paragraph 3 (Optional): Personal Meaning

- Why the holiday is important to you
- How it makes you feel
- A special memory or tradition

Volunteer may show a **short model paragraph** or outline (not a full essay).

Guided Practice: Planning the Story (10–15 minutes)

Activity: Outline

The student completes an outline with tutor support:

- Holiday name:
- Country or culture:
- Why it is your favorite:
- Traditions or activities:
- Food or special customs:
- Feelings or memories:

Tutor Notes:

- Encourage complete sentences
 - Help with vocabulary choices
 - Correct only **major clarity issues**, not every error
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Independent Writing & Assessment (20 minutes)

Writing Task

The student writes a **2–3 paragraph story** answering:
“What is your favorite holiday?”

Assessment Criteria (Informal):

- Clear paragraphs
- Relevant holiday vocabulary
- Logical organization
- Mostly accurate grammar and verb tense
- Ideas clearly communicated

Light Feedback & Revision

Tutor

- Highlights strong vocabulary use
 - Asks guiding questions to improve clarity
 - Suggests **1–2 small revisions** (add detail, clarify a sentence, improve a topic sentence)
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Closure Activity (5 minutes)

1. Student reads **one favorite sentence** from their story aloud.
2. Tutor asks:
 - What was easy about writing this?
 - What was difficult?
3. Tutor summarizes progress:
 - “Today you wrote a short story with clear paragraphs and strong celebration vocabulary.”

Graphic Organizer: *My Favorite Holiday*

Paragraph 1: Introduction

Name the holiday and explain why it is your favorite.

- Holiday name:

- Country / culture where it is celebrated:

- Why this holiday is your favorite:

Paragraph 2: Traditions & Activities

Describe what usually happens during this holiday.

- People involved (family, friends, community):

- Activities or traditions:

- Food, music, decorations, or special customs:

Paragraph 3 (Optional): Meaning & Feelings

Explain why this holiday is important to you.

- Feelings during this holiday (happy, proud, relaxed, excited):

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- Special memory or personal meaning:
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Vocabulary to Use

Circle or check the words you want to include in your story.

- ☐ tradition
- ☐ celebration
- ☐ family
- ☐ friends
- ☐ food
- ☐ music
- ☐ decorate
- ☐ special
- ☐ meaningful
- ☐ memorable
- ☐ community
- ☐ festival

Other words:

Final Check Before Writing

- ☐ I have ideas for each paragraph
- ☐ I will write 2–3 paragraphs
- ☐ I will use celebration vocabulary
- ☐ I will write in complete sentences