

Virtual Discovery Kit.

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Holiday Traditions.



Explore the artifacts and specimens in the GRPM digital Collections at <https://www.grpmcollections.org/Detail/occurrences/354> then have fun with these activities.

Why do we celebrate holidays?

Thousands of holidays are celebrated around the world each year. There are many types of holidays, such as:

- **National holidays** like Presidents Day, a celebration of past and present presidents in the United States.
- **Religious holidays** like Vesak, the celebration of Buddha's birthday in Buddhist tradition.
- **Ethnic holidays** like Nowrooz, the Persian New Year.
- **Just-for-fun holidays** like April Fools' Day, a day of practical jokes.

Holidays are a way for people to celebrate important events in their lives. They can also be a great way to learn more about other cultures and their histories. Below is a short list of celebrations from around the world.

Discuss with a friend or family member:

- Which holidays on this list do you celebrate?
- Which holidays would you like to learn more about?

January	February	March	April	May	June
New Year's Day Three Kings' Day Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holocaust Remembrance Day	Black History Month Groundhog Day Lunar New Year Valentine's Day Mardi Gras Vasant Panchami World Day of Social Justice International Mother Language Day Leap Day	Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Women's History Month World Wildlife Day St. Patrick's Day Passover Holi	Celebrate Diversity Month World Autism Awareness Day April Fools' Day Easter Ramadan Songkran Earth Day Day of Silence	Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month May Day Eid al-Fitr International Day of Families Mother's Day Memorial Day	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month Juneteenth Father's Day Midsummer Day
July	August	September	October	November	December
Independence Day (United States) Nelson Mandela Day International Day of Friendship	National Book Lovers Day International Youth Day Obon World Humanitarian Day	Hispanic Heritage Month Labor Day Rosh Hashanah Yom Kippur International Day of Peace	Indigenous Peoples' Day United Nations Day Halloween Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos)	Native American Heritage Month Diwali Thanksgiving	International Human Rights Day Hanukkah St. Lucia's Day Winter Solstice Christmas Kwanzaa Junkanoo

References:

<https://www.emerson.edu/departments/intercultural-student-affairs/resources/cultural-holidays-heritage-celebrations>
<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/holidays-sampler-around-world/.html>
<https://www.travelchannel.com/interests/holidays/photos/fun-holiday-traditions-around-the-world>

<https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/un/>
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/vesak-day>

How do you celebrate holidays?

Traditions are passed down from generation to generation. They typically include special customs such as certain meals, music or other festivities. Holiday celebrations can be part of family, cultural, regional and religious traditions.

Here are some fun traditions from around the world:



In Spain, New Year's Eve celebrations include eating twelve green grapes as a bell chimes twelve times at midnight. According to tradition, good luck will be yours in the new year if you consume all of the grapes by the end of the last chime.



Red roses are associated with Valentine's Day in the United States, but other countries prefer different flowers. Orchids are the flower of choice in Peru, and snowdrop flowers are exchanged in Denmark.



Obon is a major Japanese Buddhist festival that celebrates the souls of a family's deceased ancestors. Red lanterns light the streets and a center plaza in town to guide spirits home. Special drum music, dances, and fireworks are part of a large community celebration.



The origin of this tradition is disputed, but it is thought to have originated in Germany. A pickle ornament is hung in a Christmas tree and the first child to find the ornament may win a special prize, get to open the first gift, or simply earn bragging rights.

Draw or describe what one of your favorite holiday traditions looks like!

References:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2012/12/26/168092673/green-grapes-and-red-underwear-a-spanish-new-years-eve>
<https://www.rd.com/list/valentines-day-around-the-world/>
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/allthemoms/2018/12/20/whats-christmas-pickle-tradition-youll-want-start-now/2341958002/>
<https://www.buddhistchurch.org/post/obon>

Museum Artifact Study

Artifacts are all around us; they are the objects humans make and use. They frame our understanding of our world and the people in it. Everyday objects hold many stories and pieces of information that we can uncover! Take a shoe for instance. It can become the spark for a study of fashion or advertising; it can generate comparisons of human and animal feet; it could even spark questions about gender, sports and culture.¹

'Reading' an Object

Museums tell the story of the past through objects or artifacts made by or used by people in those times. Learning to 'read' an artifact is a skill to be acquired through practice, just like reading a book. Artifact observation helps teach us how to really look at an object and make inferences. Some questions you can ask of any artifact are:

What is it?

- Describe or draw the object.
- What does it look like, feel like, sound like?
- How big is it?
- What materials is it made from?

What Was it Used For?

- What can you infer based on your observations?

Who Made the Object?

- Who used it? Owned it? 182569

How Has it Changed Over Time?

- Do we use the same or similar object today? If yes, explain.
- If we no longer use the object, what has taken its place?

What is the Object's Social Significance?

- Why was it chosen for this collection?
- What story does it tell us? What can we learn from it?

Where Was This Object Created?

- Where was it used?
- What can we learn about this object based on where it came from?

When Was This Object Created/Used?

- What does this tell us about the time period in which the object was created?
- What can we learn about the world through this piece? How has the world changed?

Practice your artifact observations with the Artifact Observations guide!

You can make a detailed observation of each item in the [Holiday Traditions Discovery Kit Collection](#).



[Identifier: 2017.1.467](#)



[Identifier: 2019.9.66](#)



[Identifier: 182569](#)



[Identifier: 138735](#)

¹ A Teacher's Guide to Learning from Objects, Gail Durbin, Susan Morris, Sue Wilkinson, 1990, English Heritage.

Artifact Observations

Object Name:_____ Accession Number: _____

Describe and/or sketch your detailed observations of the object.

Consider its texture, appearance, shape, and size. Record labels, patterns, markings, and anything else you think is interesting.

Record Measurements:

Don't forget the units!

Length: _____

Width:_____

Height: _____

Record Materials.

What is the object made from?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Other thoughts and wonderings.

What did you learn about this object?

What are you curious about?

Plan a celebration.

Connecting with loved ones is a special way to celebrate the holidays. Below are some tips to help you plan for a festive party. These ideas can be used to celebrate in-person or virtually, bringing family and friends together from near and far!



Interested in adding new traditions to your holiday celebration? Here are some ideas:

- Try something new... a recipe, drink, or a craft!
- Read children’s books about the holiday you’re celebrating.
- Share memories from past celebrations.
- Make a playlist with your favorite holiday songs.
- Learn more about traditions from around the world.
- Use and add to the checklist below to plan your gathering:

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Before the party:	Day of the party:	After the party:
<div><input type="checkbox"/> Choose a date for your party.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Decide who will be invited and send invitations.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Plan the activities and buy any necessary food or supplies.</div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> Tidy and clean up.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Decorate!</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare food.</div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> Clean up.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Share a thank you message or photos with guests who attended.</div>

Send a holiday greeting card.

Sending Christmas cards through the mail is a yearly tradition for many. It is a way to stay in touch with people we may not see or speak with often. The tradition of sending Christmas cards can be traced back to England in the 1840s when Sir Henry Cole found himself overwhelmed trying to keep up with letters he received from his friends. Sir Cole asked a local artist to design a card that included a holiday message that Sir Cole could send to each of his friends. This was the first Christmas card!

In a fast-paced world with instant technology, receiving a card or letter can be a welcome surprise in someone's mailbox. Take a few moments to write somebody a note, then pop it in the mail! You can use the template below or create your own.

[illegible]

References:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/history-christmas-card-180957487/>

Celebrate Your Family Recipes and Traditions

In a family, food becomes a part of who we are and where we come from. In fact, the dishes passed from generation to generation help us connect with our older relatives and honor the culture and traditions of our predecessors. Family recipes and meals can bring people together across distance and time, as each tradition invites memories and stories to the table.

Family recipes often become part of holiday celebrations or other life milestones such as birthday parties or weddings. The meals on our tables do a lot more than just fill our stomachs; they come to represent togetherness and tradition.

Discover the stories behind your family's recipes. Write down the recipe for your favorite family meal on the card below.

- You may need to reach out to family members for help.
- Take it even further and create an entire family cookbook to record and save the memories and traditions for future generations!

A Family Favorite Recipe

Name of Favorite Family Recipe:

Ingredients:

Directions:

Where did the recipe come from?

Why is this recipe important to you?

Is this recipe part of any family traditions or holiday celebrations?

We'd love to hear about your family's recipes and traditions! You can share yours with the GRPM by sending it to info@grpm.org.

References:

https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/foodways_when_food_meets_culture_and_history

Be curious.

Play a game.

In addition to a special meal, many holiday celebrations include games. Games can be a wonderful way for families and friends to bond and create fun memories. Have you played any of these games before? Perhaps you'll find a new tradition to incorporate into your holiday celebrations.



[Identifier: 201045](#)



[Identifier: 2019.9.68.D](#)



[Identifier: 2019.35.66](#)

White Elephant Gift Exchange

Typically associated with Christmas, a White Elephant gift exchange can be part of any celebration.

1. Each player brings one wrapped gift to contribute to a common pool.
2. Players draw numbers to determine what order they will go in.
3. Players sit in a circle or line where they can see the gift pile.
4. The first player selects a gift from the pool and opens it.
5. The following players can choose to either pick an unwrapped gift from the pool or steal a previous player's gift.
6. After all players have had a turn, the first player gets a chance to swap the gift they are holding for any other opened gift.

Oven Mitts Game

Have you ever tried opening a gift with oven mitts on? Grab a pair of mitts and a well-wrapped gift for this tricky task. Players take turns attempting to unwrap a gift for 30 seconds, then pass it on. The player who successfully unwraps the gift gets to keep it!

Dreidel

Dreidel, a Jewish game associated with Hanukkah, has been played for centuries. To play, each player starts with the same amount of pennies, chocolate chips, raisins, matchsticks, or some other small playing piece. At the beginning of each round, every player puts one piece into the "pot." The first person in the circle spins the top, watching which side the dreidel falls on, because each letter has instructions to follow:

- Nun means "nisht" or "nothing." The player does nothing.
- Gimel means "gantz" or "everything." The player takes everything in the pot.
- Hey means "halb" or "half." The player takes half of the pot.
- Shin means "shtetl" or "put in." Peh also means "put in." The player adds one piece to the pot.

Players take turns spinning the dreidel until one person has won everything, including the game!

Piñata

The piñata game traces its roots to China, but has become associated with Mexican religious tradition. Today it is played all around the world. Piñatas are containers crafted from paper-mâché that hold candy and other treats. Players take turns hitting the piñata with a stick until it breaks, releasing the goodies for players to gather.

References:

<https://www.whiteelephantrules.com/>
<https://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/primary-sources/411>

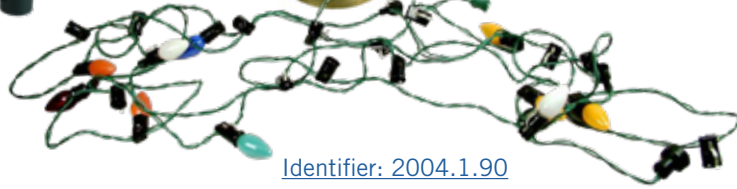
Make a craft.



[Identifier: 2019.9.66](#)



[Identifier: 1999.69.1](#)



[Identifier: 2004.1.90](#)



[Identifier: 205740](#)

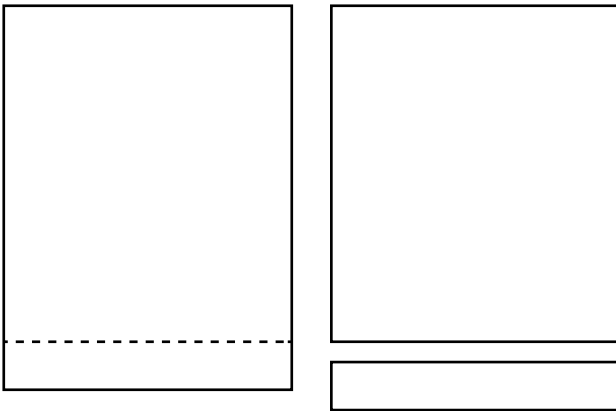
Many of the artifacts in the Holiday Traditions Discovery Kit involve light, including candles, lanterns, and even crowns. Below are instructions to create your own paper lantern. Decorate it with special drawings, poetry, riddles and other embellishments!

Supplies:

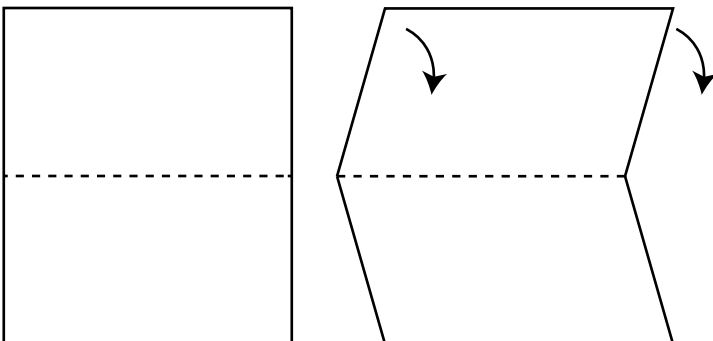
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Tape or glue or stapler
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.
- Embellishments like stickers, stencils, etc.

Instructions:

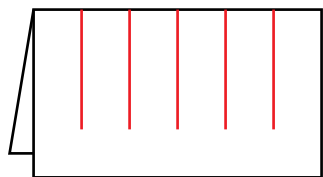
1. Trim a half-inch to one-inch strip from the short end of your construction paper. Set this strip aside.



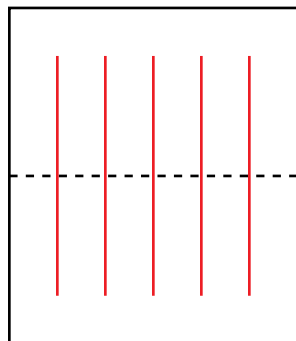
2. Fold the remaining large piece of construction paper in half, hamburger style.



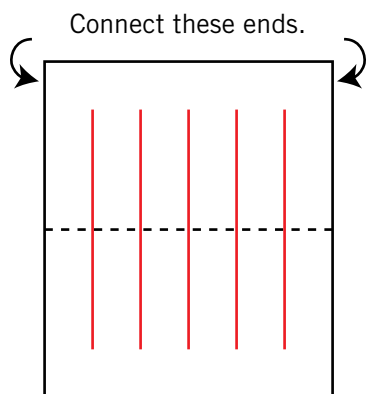
3. Make cuts in your construction paper from the folded end. Avoid cutting all the way up the paper; you'll want your paper to stay in one piece.



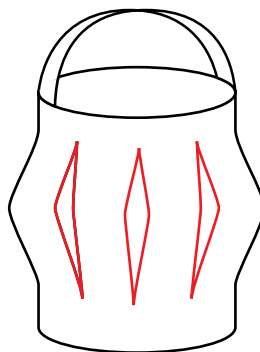
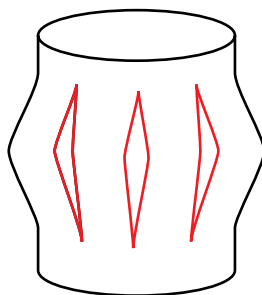
4. Unfold your paper. It should look like this:



5. Add special drawings, poetry, riddles and other embellishments to your lantern.
6. Using tape, glue or a stapler, connect the edges of your construction paper so that you have a cylinder. Then, add the strip you cut off in step one to create a handle.



It should look like this.



What Do You Think?

- What do you think is the coolest object in this kit? Why?

- What is the most interesting thing you learned in this discovery kit?

- What is your favorite holiday to celebrate? What makes it special?

- What is one question you still have?

- What ways is our community stronger because of the diversity of traditions people celebrate?

Learn more!

- **PBS Learning Media offers a variety of resources including videos and articles about holidays around the world.**
<https://wgvu.pbsllearningmedia.org/collection/holidays/>
- **Check out these cool holiday quizzes, games, and articles from National Geographic Kids.**
<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/search-results/?q=holidays>
- **Get some inspiration for your own holiday cards by browsing the hundreds of historical handmade cards from the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art**
<https://www.si.edu/spotlight/holiday-cards>
- **The Kennedy Center has a large collection of digital resources for educators focusing on how the arts connect with holidays and traditions. Check it out!**
<https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/collections/collections/holidays-and-traditions/>
- **Extend your learning with Scholastic's Celebrate Winter Holidays Teaching Guide**
<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/celebrate-winter-holidays-teaching-guide/>
- **Looking for a new recipe to try? Check out these websites:**
<https://www.foodnetwork.com/holidays-and-parties/packages/holidays>
<https://www.delish.com/entertaining/g363/holiday-food-traditions/>
- **Common Sense Media offers reviews for entertainment media. Here you can find recommendations for books, movies, and TV shows related to specific holidays.**
<https://www.common Sense Media.org/>