

Memorial Day

Pre-reading

Questions:

- When is Memorial Day?
- What do you know about this holiday?

Definitions:

- Decorate – to make more beautiful
- Half-staff – a point halfway down a flagpole
- Reflect – to think about



Reading

17 The last Monday in May is Memorial Day. This is a national holiday to remember all U.S.
32 men and women killed at war. Many people visit cemeteries on Memorial Day. They decorate
32 graves with flowers in memory of the dead.

40 The first Memorial Day was in 1868. It was held after the Civil War. The Civil War was
58 fought from 1861 – 1865. During this war the northern states fought the southern states. The
74 South wanted slavery, but the North did not believe in owning people. Thousands of soldiers died
90 in this war.

93 After the war, people wanted to remember the dead. Graves of Civil War soldiers were
108 decorated with flowers. People called this day Decoration Day. It was celebrated on May 30 for
124 many years.

126 The name was changed from Decoration Day to Memorial Day. In 1971, Memorial Day
140 became a national holiday. It was officially set on the last Monday in May. Schools, banks and
158 post offices are closed on national holidays. Many businesses are closed too.

169 Memorial Day is a three-day weekend for most Americans. Some people do not think about
185 the dead on Memorial Day. They think about summer vacations. They play baseball with family
200 and friends. They go on picnics and enjoy the warm weather. They fish and have fun at the lakes.

219 There are many ways to celebrate Memorial Day. Many cities have parades and special
232 memorial services. Some people place flags or flowers on graves. Many U.S. Flags are flown at
249 half-staff. A flag is flown at half-staff as a sign of respect or sorrow when someone has died.

269 In May of 2000, President Bill Clinton declared the “National Moment of Remembrance” to
284 be held on Memorial Day. He said this time was a moment of pause “to remember and reflect on
303 the sacrifices made by so many to provide freedom for all”. This Moment of Remembrance is held
319 every Memorial Day at 3:00 p.m.

Understanding

1. What was Memorial Day originally called? _____

2. What is the Moment of Remembrance? _____

3. The first Memorial Day was held after which war? _____

4. Who started the Moment of Remembrance? _____

5. When is Memorial Day? _____
6. In what year did Memorial Day become an official national holiday? _____

7. Why was Memorial Day started? _____

Writing

Option A: Summarize what you learned about Memorial Day.

Option B: What do you do on Memorial Day? Do you think it's an important day to celebrate?
Why or Why not?
