

UNIT 9 Describing Festivals/Events/Celebrations

1 Read the table below, then listen to the cassette and tick (✓) the information mentioned. Finally, use your answers to describe the event.

Name of festival:	La Mercé festival <input type="checkbox"/>	Sardana festival <input type="checkbox"/>
Time:	at the end of the year <input type="checkbox"/>	at the end of September <input type="checkbox"/>
Reason:	to celebrate the patron saint of Barcelona <input type="checkbox"/>	to celebrate the end of summer <input type="checkbox"/>
Preparations:	costumes made <input type="checkbox"/>	Spanish food prepared <input type="checkbox"/>
	musicians practised <input type="checkbox"/>	streets decorated <input type="checkbox"/>
Actual event:	sports events <input type="checkbox"/>	people dress up <input type="checkbox"/>
	people dancing <input type="checkbox"/>	acrobats perform tricks <input type="checkbox"/>
	lots of parades <input type="checkbox"/>	firework display <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:	very disappointing <input type="checkbox"/>	spectacular <input type="checkbox"/>



A descriptive composition about a festival, an event or a celebration should consist of:

- an **introduction** in which you give the name, time, place and reason(s) for celebrating;
- a **main body** in which you describe the preparations and the actual event in separate paragraphs, using present tenses to describe annual festivals, or past tenses to describe a festival you attended at some time in the past;
- a **conclusion** which includes people's feelings, comments or final thoughts about the event.
 - You can use a variety of adjectives and adverbs to make your description more vivid. e.g. *Cheerful fans shouted enthusiastically as the rock star arrived.*
 - You can use *the passive* to describe events when the **activity** is more important than the **agent** (i.e. the person who did it) e.g. *After the parade, speeches are made and hymns are sung.*

Descriptions of festivals, events or celebrations can be found in magazines, newspapers or travel brochures, or as parts of letters, stories, etc. The style you use depends on the situation and the intended reader.

2 a) Read the rubric and underline the key words, then answer the questions.

A travel magazine has asked its readers to send in descriptions of annual events in their country. Write an **article** describing an annual event you have attended, including preparations and events on the actual day.

- Which of the following should you *not* write about? Give reasons.
 - an event held once a week in your local area
 - a festival held every year in your country
 - a ceremony that takes place every year in another country
- Which of the following *must* you include in your description? Tick (✓).

A detailed description of the town	C description of the actual event
B preparations before the event	D important monuments in the area
- Which tenses should you mainly use? Why?

Introduction

Paragraph 1

name, time/place of event, reason(s) for celebrating

Main Body

Paragraph 2

preparations (e.g. — food, decorations, etc)

Paragraph 3

description of the actual event (e.g. — costumes, music, dancing, other activities, etc)

Conclusion

Paragraph 4

feelings, comments, final thoughts

b) Look at the picture in the article below and answer the questions.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 What kind of event is it?
A a boat race B a carnival | C rows of deckchairs
D colourful tents |
| 2 Where do you think it takes place?
A in England B in Africa | E elegantly dressed spectators
F boats rushing towards the finishing line |
| 3 What time of year is it?
A winter B summer | G best costume competition
H vintage cars |
| 4 Which of the following match the picture?
A huge grandstands alongside the water
B exotically dressed dancers | 5 Have you ever attended an event similar to this? How did you feel? Would you like to attend such an event? Why? |

d) Read the article again and fill in the table with your notes. Then talk about the Royal Regatta.

Para 1:

Para 2:

Para 3:

Para 4:

c) Read the article below and put the verbs into the correct tense in the active or passive, as in the example, then match the headings below to the paragraphs.

- description of actual event
- feelings, comments, final thoughts
- preparations
- name, place/time, reason

The Royal Regatta by Thomas Brown

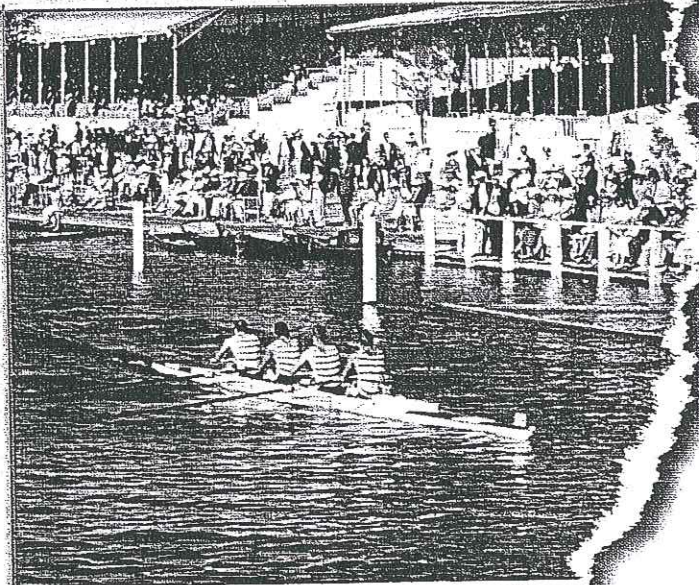
Introduction

1 The Royal Regatta is one of the most famous events in the world of rowing. The Regatta 1) ... *takes place*... (take place) every year in Henley, a small picturesque town in the south of England. The event 2) (usually/hold) at the end of June and 3) (continue) for five days. Teams of rowers from all over the globe compete for prizes, especially for the prestigious Grand Challenge Cup. Last year, I went to see what the excitement was all about.

2 When I 4) (arrive), I was amazed at the preparations involved. Huge grandstands 5) (put up) alongside the water and rows of colourful deckchairs 6) (place) along the edge of the river so that spectators could watch the boat race in comfort. In addition to this, tents 7) (set up), in which caterers 8) (serve) delicious food and refreshing drinks. Rowers from many countries 9) (practise) with their team-mates for days before the races began.

3 During the five days of the Regatta, many of the spectators 10) (dress) elegantly to watch the races. Others, like myself, 11) (decide) to have a picnic on the river bank. The final, which is the most important race of the Regatta, was the highlight of the event. As the finalists sped towards us, everyone 12) (stand up) and started shouting for their team. We cheered and 13) (wave) enthusiastically as the boats 14) (rush) past in their race to the finishing line. Soon afterwards, it was time for the firework display.

4 As the last rocket 15) (explode) in the evening summer sky, I felt sad that the event was over. I couldn't help thinking how much fun it would be to learn to row like the people in the race and be more than just a spectator!



Main Body

Conclusion

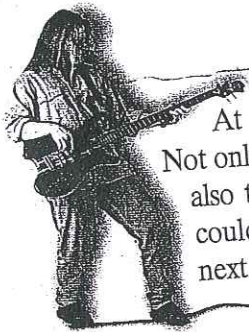
- 3 a) Fill in the gaps in the extracts with adjectives from each list. Which extract describes an annual event? Which one describes a past event?

well-known, fancy-dress, hand-carved, scary, colourful, creative

A Days before the 31st October, children go to 1) shops and decide which 2) costumes to buy. Others who are more 3) prefer to make their own costumes. These can be anything from 4) monsters to 5) characters from fairy tales. Children also go trick-or-treating and make 6) lanterns from pumpkins.



dim, disappointed, poor



B At the end of the concert, I felt very 1) Not only was the sound quality 2), but also the lighting was so 3) that we could hardly see the stage. I don't think I'll be attending next year's Rock Festival.

glamorous, glittering, lucky

C The Academy Awards, also known as the Oscars, take place once a year at the end of March in Los Angeles. This 1) event is eagerly awaited by millions of fans all over the world. 2) film stars, musicians and directors gather under one roof to see who will be the 3) ones to take home an Oscar.



- b) Which paragraph is an introduction, a conclusion or a main body paragraph?

- 4 Rewrite the following short paragraphs, putting the verbs in bold into the passive, as in the example.

A People **celebrate** Guy Fawkes' Day every 5th November. Children make an effigy of Guy and buy fireworks with their pocket money. People **build** big bonfires in gardens or at organised sites. In the evening, they **let off** spectacular fireworks. Everyone eats baked potatoes. At the end of the evening, they **burn** the effigy of Guy.

e.g. *Guy Fawkes' Day is celebrated every 5th November ...*

B They **display** the latest computers in a large hall and companies give away a lot of free software. They **show** full-length feature films in the auditorium. Everyone usually enjoys the event immensely.

- 5 Match the beginnings and endings below. Then, say which refer to annual events, and which refer to past events. How does/did each writer feel?

BEGINNINGS...

- 1 ... About three years ago, my parents organised a party in honour of my grandfather, who was retiring from work at the age of sixty-five ...
- 2 ... Every year, on 14th February, thousands of people in my country send each other flowers and cards to celebrate St Valentine's Day ...
- 3 ... Last October, for my fifteenth birthday, I invited a few of my friends to come over to my house for a party ...

...ENDINGS

A ... After I had cleared up the mess, I went to bed, exhausted but delighted that it had been such a success. I'm sure everyone will remember it for a long time.

B ... In the end, it was a great success. All the effort was worth it just to see the broad smile on his face when he was surrounded by all his family. I'll never forget it!

C ... It is usually a day full of surprises and, unavoidably, there are often disappointments. Most of all, however, it is a day for romantic people of all ages.