

Easter reading

Read the text quickly and match the headings to the paragraphs.

1. What it means
2. A matter of taste?
3. Modern Easter in the UK
4. Chocolate eggs

CHOCOLATE, EGGS, EASTER AND ... MORE CHOCOLATE: EASTER IN THE UK

For a lot of people in the UK the Christian festival of Easter means the opportunity to eat chocolate eggs.

A) _____

As soon as 2 January arrives, shops remove the Christmas product lines from their shelves and the Christmas decorations from their windows. What fills the empty spaces? Chocolate Easter eggs, Easter bunnies and Easter chicks, despite the fact that Easter itself doesn't come along until a few months later, usually in April. Easter also means we have public holidays: Good Friday and Easter Monday. It's the longest public holiday after Christmas and people sometimes take the opportunity to take a short break away from work by extending their leave. Cheryl from Liverpool said, 'I use the Easter break to visit relatives and socialise with friends – the chocolate giving and receiving is a good bonus!'

B) _____

Easter is a spring festival. In the Christian festival, it celebrates the resurrection of Christ. In the European pre-Christian tradition, it celebrates the return of nature and greenery after the cold, snowy winter. Both the Christian and pagan versions of Easter celebrate life and rebirth. The Easter chick symbolises new life, the rabbit represents fertility and the egg symbolises both. That is why painted eggs or chocolate eggs are given as gifts at Easter.

C) _____

Chocolate Easter eggs are sold in larger numbers every year in the UK. Confectionery companies make chocolate eggs for every type of chocolate bar available throughout the rest of the year. The British people consume more confectionery than any other country in the world! That's not even per head; that's per country! Of course, it depends on the number of givers, but the average child in the UK receives 6–10 large chocolate eggs and that's not including the small ones.

D) _____

Not only are the British eating more and more chocolate, but they are also demanding chocolate of better quality. European Union law means that British chocolate-making companies have to put more cocoa solids in their 'chocolate' than they used to. British companies that fail to do so are not allowed to say they make 'real' chocolate! New chocolate has come onto the market that is slowly educating the British palate and changing consumer patterns.

Read the text again and answer the questions.

1. How long before Easter do shops start selling Easter products?
2. How long is the Easter holiday?
3. What do the Christian and pagan versions of Easter have in common?
4. What do British people eat more of, compared to other countries?
5. How many large chocolate eggs does the average child in the UK get?
6. Why are there now more cocoa solids in British chocolate?