

Sommersonnenwende

Summer Solstice

Background information

The 21st of June is the longest day of the year. In Germany this day is celebrated with bonfires and fireworks. People drink *Bier* and eat *Bratwurst* and traditionally the Mayor gives a short speech. The bonfire is lit by local children using torches, usually at about 7pm and fires are left burning throughout the night. These fires are also often associated with the day of Saint Johannes (Saint John the Baptist) on 24th of June, so they are called *Johannisfeuer*.

In the United Kingdom it is a time associated with magic, fairies and witches. Bonfires are also lit, traditionally in an attempt to strengthen the Sun. Many people travel to Stonehenge in Dorset, a ring of huge stones dating back almost 5000 years. On Midsummer Day, at sunrise, the sun shines directly in the middle of the circle of stones.



Teaching activities

- ◆ Draw a picture of a bonfire party.
- ◆ Design a German invite to a bonfire party. Use the invitation template on page 17.
- ◆ What type of food and drink would be on offer at a British bonfire party? How does it compare to German party food?
- ◆ Research Stonehenge on the Internet.
- ◆ Plan your own party with a sunshine theme. Think of costumes, invites, food and so on.
- ◆ Illustrate the following words associated with *Sommersonnenwende*:

die Sonne	sun
das Feuer	bonfire
das Feuerwerk	fireworks
die Fee	fairy
die Hexe	witch
die Zauberei	magic

Schlüsselwörter

die Sonne	sun
das Feuer	fire
das Feuerwerk	fireworks
die Fee	fairy
die Hexe	witch
die Zauberei	magic

- ◆ Children could use the photocopiable guided sheet on page 47 to record their understanding of when and how *Sommersonnenwende* is celebrated in Germany.

Sommersonnenwende



Name:

Datum:

I have learned about how German people celebrate *Sommersonnenwende*.

What does the *Sommersonnenwende* celebrate? When is it?

How is the *Sommersonnenwende* celebrated?

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Extension activity

Imagine that you have been to a *Sommersonnenwende* bonfire party. Write a postcard to a friend describing how you celebrated. Include what you did and what you ate and drank.