

Name _____

Date _____

Día de los Muertos/Day of the Dead - Answer Key

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Día de los Muertos dates back thousands of years and is rooted in Aztec traditions. The Aztecs emphasized that death is a necessary part of life and that it should be celebrated, not mourned. According to Aztec mythology, when someone dies, they have to journey through nine levels to reach Mictlán, the final resting place. The main objective was to be with Mictlantecuhtli and Mictecacihuatl, the gods of the dead. The journey is said to be a challenging one, taking up to four years with obstacles along the way. Families of the deceased would offer food and water to help their loved ones on their long journey.

Which of the following statements would the Aztecs disagree with?



- A.** The families of the deceased should mourn the death of their loved ones.
- The text states that the Aztecs “emphasized that death is a necessary part of life and that it should be celebrated, not mourned.” From this we can infer that the Aztecs would disagree with the idea of mourning the death of loved ones.*
- B.** Death is a natural part of life and should be celebrated.
- C.** The families of the deceased should support their loved ones on their journey to Mictlán.
- D.** The journey to Mictlán is not an easy one and can take a long time.

2. Día de los Muertos festivities unfold over two days on the first and second of November. Each day holds a different meaning for people who celebrate this holiday. It is said that on November 1st, sometimes called Día de los Angelitos, children who have passed come back to be reunited with their families. They are referred to as angelitos, or little angels. Some families write the names of their deceased children on sugar skulls. The following day, November 2nd, is designated for the souls of deceased adults to return and visit their families.

The first day of Día de los Muertos is designated for _____ who have passed.

A. adults

B. pets



C.

children

D. grandparents

The text states that “on November 1st, sometimes called Día de los Angelitos, children who have passed come back to be reunited with their families.”

3. Ofrendas, or altars, are a significant part of Día de los Muertos and can be seen in homes and cemeteries. Ofrendas honor the dead and are often decorated with marigolds and calaveras, or skulls. The skulls are made out of sugar and designed with colorful paint. They are usually seen with big smiles. Because marigolds have a strong scent and brightly colored petals, people believe that they will help attract the spirits and guide them to their ofrendas. Families also place photos of their loved ones on the ofrendas along with water, food, candles, and other items that celebrate them.

What can we infer about this holiday from the way that the ofrendas are decorated?

A. It is a somber event, and people stay home to remember their loved ones.



B.

It is a joyous celebration filled with bright colors.

According to the text, the items used to decorate the ofrendas are bright like the marigolds and sugar skulls. It also states that the skulls “are usually seen with big smiles,” which points to a happy celebration rather than a solemn one.

C. People prefer to celebrate this holiday quietly.

D. This holiday isn’t considered a big celebration.

4. Pan de muerto, or bread of the dead, is a popular pastry prepared for Día de los Muertos. It's placed on ofrendas, or altars, along with other foods, like tamales and mole, as a way to nourish the dead when they return to the land of the living. Pan de muerto is a sweet bread with a hint of citrus and is sprinkled with powdered sugar. It's enjoyed with a cup of hot chocolate or atole, a corn-based drink. The top of the loaf is often designed to look like bones and a skull.

Why do families place food on the ofrendas?

- A. For decorative purposes only
- B. So friends and family who visit can learn new recipes
- C. To feed the dead as they return to their families for Día de los Muertos
- D. To drive away negative energy

According to the text, families place food on the ofrendas "as a way to nourish the dead when they return to the land of the living."

5. Mexico isn't the only country that celebrates or honors the dead. In Japan, the Bon festival, or Obon, takes place every year to commemorate ancestors. It is believed that spirits come back to visit their families during Obon, which takes place during the seventh lunar month. In the Philippines, All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, or Undas, are considered major holidays. Many Filipinos go back to their hometowns to celebrate Undas with their families. People attend mass and gather at cemeteries to be close to their loved ones. Many other countries also have holidays designated to remember family and friends who have passed, each with their own distinct traditions.

Which of the following statements is true about holidays that celebrate the dead?

- A. They bring families together to remember loved ones who have passed.
- B. These holidays are all celebrated around the same time of the year.
- C. Most of these holidays are casual celebrations that are not taken too seriously.
- D. These holidays are all celebrated the same way throughout the world.

The text explains how different cultures celebrate and honor the dead. It states how people go back to their hometowns to celebrate with their families and is a time that "spirits come back to visit their families."