ESL LAB

Easter Reading Comprehension Pack

Four original Easter reading texts for adult students, from A2 to B2. Each text has its own page of tasks, and every answer is on page 10, so students can work in class, online or alone at home.

LEVEL	STUDENTS	TEXTS	TIME
A2 to B2	Adults and older teens	4, from 169 to 381 words	25 to 40 minutes each

What's inside, in the order of the blog post

1	**Two Easters in one year**	**A2**	An email from a Ukrainian who lives in Spain	**Pages 2-3**
2	**The first chocolate egg**	**A2-B1**	A short history, from colored eggs to Fry's and Cadbury	**Pages 4-5**
3	**Who gets Easter Monday off?**	**B1**	A work email about holidays in six countries	**Pages 6-7**
4	**Why Easter never sits still**	**B2**	An explainer on how the date of Easter is set	**Pages 8-9**
	Answers		Every answer, plus two model answers for the writing tasks	**Page 10**

How to use the pack

IN CLASS

Give the reading page first. Students answer *Before you read*, read once for the main idea, then turn to the tasks.

ONLINE

Share the reading page on screen. Students write their answers in the chat or in a shared document.

HOMEWORK

Print both pages of one text. Students do the tasks alone and check them on page 10.

The texts are about Easter dates, food and holidays, not belief, so they work for students who celebrate and for students who don't. The dates are for 2027: Easter Sunday is on March 28 and Orthodox Easter is on May 2.

TEXT 1 · A2

Two Easters in one year

An email · 169 words · About 25 minutes with the tasks

BEFORE YOU READ

When is Easter in your country this year? Write the date: _____

FROM Olena Kovalenko
TO Mark Ellis
SUBJECT Easter, twice!

Hi Mark,

Thanks for your email. You asked about my Easter plans. Well, this year I have two Easters!

I'm from Ukraine, but I live and work in Valencia, in Spain. Here, Easter Sunday is on March 28. My office is closed on Good Friday, and in Valencia, Easter Monday is a holiday too. So I have a long weekend. My colleagues are going to the beach, and I'm going with them.

But my family celebrates Orthodox Easter. This year it is on May 2, five weeks later. My mom always bakes paska, a tall sweet bread, and my dad paints eggs with my little nephew. On Sunday morning, they take a basket of food to church.

I can't fly home this year, so we're going to have a video call. Mom says she will cook for me too, and I can eat it on the screen. Ha ha!

Next year is easier. In 2028, both Easters are on the same day, April 16.

How do you celebrate Easter in Canada?

Love,
Olena

TEXT 1 · TASKS

Two Easters in one year

1 True or false? Tick one box. If a sentence is false, correct it on the line.

1. Olena is from Ukraine. ☐ True ☐ False
2. Olena's office is closed on Good Friday. ☐ True ☐ False
3. This year, Orthodox Easter is two weeks after Easter in Spain. ☐ True ☐ False
4. Olena's mom paints eggs. ☐ True ☐ False
5. Olena is going to fly home for Easter. ☐ True ☐ False
6. In 2028, the two Easters are on the same day. ☐ True ☐ False

2 Match the words from the email to their meanings. Write the letter in the box.

1. **a long weekend** ☐
2. **colleagues** ☐
3. **bake** ☐
4. **nephew** ☐
5. **a video call** ☐
6. **celebrate** ☐

a the son of your brother or sister
b to do something special on an important day
c three or four days off in a row
d talking to people on a screen
e the people you work with
f to cook bread or cake in an oven

3 Find the dates in the email.

Easter in Spain this year	Olena's family's Easter this year	Both Easters next year

4 Answer Olena's last question. Write three sentences about Easter in your country.

In my country, Easter is … On Sunday, we … My … always …

Check your answers on page 10.

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TEXT 2 · A2-B1

The first chocolate egg

A short history · 189 words · About 30 minutes with the tasks

BEFORE YOU READ

Look at the title. Which country do you think made the first hollow chocolate egg? Write your guess, then read and check: _____

Eggs were part of Easter long before chocolate. For centuries, many Christians did not eat eggs during Lent, the six weeks before Easter. The hens did not stop laying them, so by Easter Sunday, families had a lot of eggs. They boiled them, colored them and gave them to friends and neighbors as gifts.

Chocolate eggs came much later. In the early 1800s, chocolate makers in France and Germany made the first ones. These eggs were solid, and the chocolate was bitter and grainy. Not many people liked them.

Then new machines made chocolate smoother, and makers could pour it into molds. In 1873, J. S. Fry & Sons, a chocolate company in Bristol, England, made the first hollow chocolate egg. It was dark chocolate on the outside and empty on the inside. Two years later, in 1875, the Cadbury company in Birmingham started selling Easter eggs too.

For many years, the two companies were rivals. In 1919, they joined together.

Today, chocolate eggs are everywhere at Easter. In many countries, shops start selling them weeks before the holiday, and some shoppers complain that the eggs arrive right after Christmas.

WORDS TO KNOW

hen a female chicken

pour to make a liquid go from one container into another

lay (an egg) to push an egg out of the body

mold a container with a shape; you fill it with a liquid that then goes hard

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TEXT 2 · TASKS

The first chocolate egg

1 Put the events in order. Write 1 (first) to 6 (last) in the boxes.

- ☐ Fry's and Cadbury joined together.
- ☐ Makers in France and Germany made solid chocolate eggs.
- ☐ Cadbury started selling Easter eggs.
- ☐ Families gave colored eggs as gifts after Lent.
- ☐ Fry's made the first hollow chocolate egg.
- ☐ New machines made chocolate smoother.

2 Complete the fact file with words and numbers from the text.

The first hollow chocolate egg: year	The company that made it	The city where it was made
Cadbury's first Easter eggs: year	Fry's and Cadbury joined: year	How long Lent is

3 Find the past simple of these verbs in the text.

give	come	make	can	have	do

4 Circle the right word.

1. A ___ egg is empty on the inside. **solid / hollow**
2. The first chocolate eggs from France and Germany tasted ___. **bitter / sweet**
3. Before 1919, Fry's and Cadbury were ___. **partners / rivals**
4. New machines made chocolate ___. **smoother / grainier**
5. Today, some shoppers think Easter eggs appear in shops too ___. **early / late**

Check your answers on page 10.

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TEXT 3 · B1

Who gets Easter Monday off?

A work email · 266 words · About 35 minutes with the tasks

BEFORE YOU READ

Which of these days are holidays where you live? Circle them: **Holy Thursday** · **Good Friday** · **Easter Monday**

FROM Hannah Price, People Team
TO All staff
SUBJECT Easter 2027: who is off when?

Hi everyone,

Easter is early this year. Easter Sunday is on March 28, and because we have offices in six cities, the days off around it are not the same for everyone. Please check your office below before you plan meetings or deadlines for that week.

LONDON Good Friday (March 26) and Easter Monday (March 29) are both bank holidays in England, so the office is closed for four days in a row.

EDINBURGH Good Friday is a bank holiday in Scotland, but Easter Monday is not. The Edinburgh office is open on Monday.

BERLIN Good Friday and Easter Monday are public holidays in every German state. Good Friday is also a "quiet day": in many states, dance parties and other loud public events are not allowed, so please don't plan the team party for that evening.

MADRID In Spain, Good Friday is a national holiday. Holy Thursday (March 25) is a holiday in most regions, and Madrid is one of them. Easter Monday is a holiday only in some regions, such as Catalonia and Valencia, so the Madrid office is open on Monday.

SÃO PAULO Good Friday is a national holiday in Brazil. Easter Monday is a normal working day.

CHICAGO Neither day is a federal holiday in the United States. Some schools and businesses close on Good Friday, but our Chicago office is open as usual.

One more thing: if you work with colleagues in other offices, add their holidays to your calendar. Last year, we booked a client call for Easter Monday, and half the team was missing.

Happy Easter to those who celebrate, and enjoy your days off!
Hannah

TEXT 3 · TASKS

Who gets Easter Monday off?

1 Is it a day off? Write ✓ for a holiday and ✕ for a working day.

	HOLY THURSDAY	GOOD FRIDAY	EASTER MONDAY
London	☐	☐	☐
Edinburgh	☐	☐	☐
Berlin	☐	☐	☐
Madrid	☐	☐	☐
São Paulo	☐	☐	☐
Chicago	☐	☐	☐

2 Use your table to answer the questions.

1. Rafael in São Paulo wants an online meeting on Easter Monday. Which offices are open?

2. Which office is the only one open on Good Friday?

3. Lucía in Madrid wants to send a report on Holy Thursday. Is she at work that day?

4. Jonas in Berlin goes back to work after Easter. Which day is that?

3 True, false or not given? Tick one box.

1	In 2027, Easter Sunday is in March.	☐ True	☐ False	☐ Not given
2	In Germany, Good Friday is a holiday in only some states.	☐ True	☐ False	☐ Not given
3	The Berlin team has a party every Easter.	☐ True	☐ False	☐ Not given
4	Easter Monday is a holiday everywhere in Spain.	☐ True	☐ False	☐ Not given
5	Most people in the Chicago office take Good Friday off.	☐ True	☐ False	☐ Not given
6	Last year, a holiday caused a problem with a client call.	☐ True	☐ False	☐ Not given

4 Find a word or phrase in the email that means …

1 a public holiday in the UK (2 words)

2 a day when people go to work (2 words)

3 for the whole of a country

4 parts of a country

5 for all of the US, from the central government

6 the days when work must be finished

Check your answers on page 10.

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TEXT 4 · B2

Why Easter never sits still

An explainer · 381 words · About 40 minutes with the tasks

BEFORE YOU READ

Christmas is always on December 25. Why do you think Easter is on a different date every year? Write one idea: _____

1 Christmas is always on December 25, so why does Easter jump around? In 2027, it falls on March 28. In 2028, it will be on April 16. In Western churches, Easter Sunday can land on any date between March 22 and April 25, a window of 35 days.

2 The reason goes back to the first Easter. According to the Gospels, Jesus died and rose again around the time of Passover, a Jewish festival that follows a calendar based on the moon. So Easter has always been tied to the moon rather than to a fixed date. In 325, church leaders meeting at Nicaea, in what is now Turkey, agreed that Christians everywhere should celebrate on the same Sunday. The detailed rule that most churches follow today took shape over the following centuries.

3 The rule itself sounds simple: Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after March 21. There are two catches. First, the church always treats March 21 as the spring equinox, even though the real equinox can come a day or two earlier. Second, the full moon in the rule comes from church tables, not from the sky, and it can be a day or two away from the real one. So looking at the moon will not always give you the right answer.

4 Then there is a second Easter. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII introduced a new calendar to correct the old Julian calendar, which had slowly drifted away from the seasons. Most of Europe switched over time, but most Orthodox churches kept the Julian calendar for working out Easter. The two calendars are now 13 days apart, so Orthodox Easter usually comes later, between April 4 and May 8. In some years, such as 2025 and 2028, both churches celebrate on the same day. In 2027, they are five weeks apart.

5 Plenty of people have tried to pin the date down. In 1928, the British Parliament passed the Easter Act, which would have placed Easter on the Sunday after the second Saturday in April. The law still exists, but it has never come into force, because the churches never agreed. Church leaders still talk about a common date. Until they agree, schools, airlines and chocolate makers will keep checking the calendar every year.

WORDS TO KNOW

the Gospels the four books of the Bible about the life of Jesus

drift to move slowly away from where something should be

equinox one of two days a year when day and night are about the same length

come into force (of a law) to start to be used

TEXT 4 · TASKS

Why Easter never sits still

1 Match a heading to each paragraph. There is one extra heading.

a Two calendars, two Easters

b A holiday that moves

c The most popular Easter food

d A law that never started

e Why the moon matters

f One rule, two catches

Paragraph 1 ☐ Paragraph 2 ☐

Paragraph 3 ☐ Paragraph 4 ☐

Paragraph 5 ☐

2 Choose the best ending.

1 **Easter is linked to the moon because …**

- ◯ **a** early Christians used the stars to plan holidays
- ◯ **b** Passover follows a calendar based on the moon
- ◯ **c** the equinox is always on March 21

2 **You can't always find the date of Easter by looking at the moon because …**

- ◯ **a** the church uses its own full moon dates
- ◯ **b** the moon is often hidden by clouds
- ◯ **c** the full moon comes later in the Julian calendar

3 **The Easter Act of 1928 …**

- ◯ **a** moved Easter to April in the UK
- ◯ **b** was cancelled by the churches
- ◯ **c** is a law that has never been used

3 Work it out. Use the rule in paragraph 3 to find Easter Sunday in four imaginary years.

YEAR A

The church full moon is on **Wednesday, April 7**.

Easter Sunday: _____

YEAR B

The church full moon is on **Sunday, April 18**.

Easter Sunday: _____

YEAR C

The church full moon is on **Friday, March 19**. The next one is on **Saturday, April 17**.

Easter Sunday: _____

YEAR D

The church full moon is on **Saturday, March 21**.

Easter Sunday: _____

4 Should Easter have a fixed date? Write 40 to 60 words.

Check your answers on page 10.

ANSWERS

Answers

Answers for all four texts. Writing tasks have a model answer: yours can be different and still be right.

Text 1 · Two Easters in one year

Task 1 **1** True **2** True **3** False. It is five weeks later. **4** False. Her dad paints eggs. Her mom bakes paska. **5** False. She can't fly home, so they are going to have a video call. **6** True

Task 2 **1** c **2** e **3** f **4** a **5** d **6** b

Task 3 Easter in Spain this year: **March 28** Olena's family's Easter this year: **May 2** Both Easters next year: **April 16**

Task 4 Model answer: *In my country, Easter is a family holiday. On Sunday, we have a big lunch at my grandmother's house. My aunt always brings a chocolate cake.*

Text 2 · The first chocolate egg

Task 1 **1** Families gave colored eggs as gifts after Lent. **2** Makers in France and Germany made solid chocolate eggs. **3** New machines made chocolate smoother. **4** Fry's made the first hollow chocolate egg. **5** Cadbury started selling Easter eggs. **6** Fry's and Cadbury joined together.

Task 2 The first hollow chocolate egg: year: **1873** The company that made it: **J. S. Fry & Sons** The city where it was made: **Bristol** Cadbury's first Easter eggs: year: **1875** Fry's and Cadbury joined: year: **1919** How long Lent is: **six weeks**

Task 3 give: **gave** come: **came** make: **made** can: **could** have: **had** do: **did**

Task 4 **1** hollow **2** bitter **3** rivals **4** smoother **5** early

Text 3 · Who gets Easter Monday off?

Task 1 Days off: London: **Good Friday, Easter Monday** Edinburgh: **Good Friday** Berlin: **Good Friday, Easter Monday** Madrid: **Holy Thursday, Good Friday** São Paulo: **Good Friday** Chicago: **no days off**

Task 2 **1** Edinburgh, Madrid, São Paulo and Chicago **2** Chicago **3** No. Holy Thursday is a holiday in Madrid. **4** Tuesday, March 30

Task 3 **1** True **2** False **3** Not given **4** False **5** Not given **6** True

Task 4 **1** bank holiday **2** working day **3** national **4** regions **5** federal **6** deadlines

Text 4 · Why Easter never sits still

Task 1 Paragraph 1: **b** Paragraph 2: **e** Paragraph 3: **f** Paragraph 4: **a** Paragraph 5: **d**. Heading c is extra.

Task 2 **1** b **2** a **3** c

Task 3 Year A: **Sunday, April 11** Year B: **Sunday, April 25 (Easter is the Sunday *after* the full moon)** Year C: **Sunday, April 18 (March 19 is before March 21, so it doesn't count)** Year D: **Sunday, March 22, the earliest possible date**

Task 4 Model answer: *I think Easter should have a fixed date. Schools, companies and families could plan holidays years ahead, and colleagues in different countries would know when the others are away. On the other hand, the moving date is a very old tradition, and for many people it matters more than convenience. A fixed date only makes sense if all the churches agree to it.*