

# Around Europe on the Midsummer night



**Image caption:** Certain cultures have their own traditions to await, celebrate and catch the magic of the shortest night of the year, the sun's victory against night and darkness, the high peak of the summer – the Midsummer fest, but most of them are illustrated by bonfire in a frame of the brightest night of the year.

Photo source: <https://unsplash.com/>

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## General overview

This exercise aims to survey one of the most known summer holidays in Europe and all around the world – The Midsummer, St. John’s Day, Ligo, festival of the Dew – the roots of this festival traditions in different countries, its transformation during the years and festival practices in our days.

This celebration is one of the oldest in human history, and practiced in nations throughout the world. The origins of the fest reaches stone age, when people worshiped natural phenomena, influencing their lives, also called in pagan times – sun, thunder, plants and ect. The people noticed that on the second part of June the sun changes its direction of movement and the days begin to shorten. Depending on location, the summer solstice refers to the time of the year when the day is longest in the northern hemisphere. During this time, the axis of the Earth is tilted to its maximum towards the sun.

It was believed that during the summer solstice, plants had great powers of healing. On the eve of this day, herbs were picked and bonfires were lit to ward off the evil spirits, which were believed to roam around freely when the sun was turning towards the southern hemisphere. Some also celebrated the festival with the hope of getting a good harvest in autumn.

During the years also the similar winter holiday – Christmas, has been incorporated into the Christian religious calendar as “St. John’s Day” and reached current times. While the actual date of the summer solstice falls on June 20 or 21, the fest is commonly held on June 24. The reason for the difference likely resides in the fact that the old [Julian calendar](#) marked the summer solstice on June 24.

Nowadays this celebration is an official public holiday in the countries of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Sweden as well as the province of Quebec in Canada. However, many strong traditions exist across the world for the June Midsummer’s Day, regardless of holiday status.

The most common tradition across most parts of the world is the tradition of bonfire. Typical customs may include the gathering of the perennial herb St. John’s Wort for medicinal, religious, or spiritual use. The collection of flowers for floral wreaths is popular. The wreaths are dried and hung in the house all year until the next St. John’s Day. Nowadays, some of the traditions of this fest are kept only by enthusiasts of the ancient history, some of them today got modern forms.

In Estonia, for example, the lighting of the bonfire and jumping over it is still an important tradition, done to bring prosperity and luck as well as protect the home. In Turin, Italy, people from surrounding areas come to dance around a bonfire placed by the Cult of St. John in the city square for two days. In Denmark, a special Midsummer hymn called “We Love Our Country” is traditionally sung around the bonfire. In the town of Kuldīga (Latvia), crowd people participate in a naked jog through the town at 3 a.m., taking them over the Venta River. In Norway and Sweden, the practice of having both fake and real marriages occurs.

# Get ready for the Midsummer festival.

## Activity overview

The activities planned in this exercise invite students to reveal their talent by expressing themselves by images and scenes. During this exercise, students will have a chance to get acquainted with the [UNESCO intangible cultural heritage list](#) and find the importance of the individual role to ensure its continuity from the past to the future. To encourage students to take over the values of these cultural practices by using various forms of self-expression during this exercise, they will be involved in the activities, which offer to combine and deepen knowledge and also develop skills of the different areas – marketing, client service, and ICT. The 3 activities of this exercise are presented as a consistent story, which, according to the training needs of class and content of the subject can be implemented separately.

By understanding how each of us sees intangible heritage, what common points can be found when talking about intangible heritage, they will be able to present intangible heritage more appropriately and qualitatively to guests from abroad and at the same time learn to be proud of it, learn the ways to ensure its continuity. Creation of a promotional video company – teaser campaign that they believe could encourage tourists to come and get acquainted deeper about one of these intangible cultural practices in their country will demand creativity, smart use of the ICT, video and audio resources, effective management of the human resources of the group. During the task inviting students to present their region and its intangible heritage treasures in a letter to potential tourists, they will be able to develop their skills of written communication and at the same time deepen their knowledge about the purposive and effective social media use.

What can be attractive for the foreign tourists to choose your country as a destination? What makes us unique and at the same time attractive for citizens of other countries who do not understand the language but can understand something by watching the video? The questions should be raised and discussed during this exercise implementation, within this exercise.

The last activity of the exercise invites the class to discuss the safety of the festivals - how to ensure a breathtaking spectacle and at the same ensure the safety of its participants? By completing the tasks in the third part of the exercise, students will improve their knowledge of the organization of safety and health measures.

### **General objectives:**

- To promote the awareness of the traditions of the festivals
- To foster get to know cultural traditions of European countries
- To find the connections between different cultures
- To identify historical transformation of the old traditions
- To foster concern for the security of the others and the environment



Erasmus+

The activity can be applied for the VET students of various programmes during the subject related to [#\(inter\)national traditions](#), [#foreign languages](#), [#marketing](#), [#ICT](#), [#safety at work](#).

# Descriptive activity sheet

## 1st activity “Country to celebrate Midsummer”

**Resources for the activity implementation.** Internet, computer, projector, white board

Activity starts by introducing the situation, the students have to empathize with:

*“You are a team member of the hotel staff. You all together got a task to create an add inviting the international tourists to visit your country for this festival (if the exercise will be implemented in the country, which does not have a special traditions of this celebration it is recommended to “transfer” to one of the countries that celebrates it).”*

To reach higher students' engagement with the situation described above, we recommend to start with analysis of the current situation - what are the country's competitors, what are their differences and similarities. Divide the class into the groups and invite them to surf in the internet to find this info:

- the main countries of Europe (5 at least) that celebrates Midsummer festival;
- the name of the fest;
- the keywords (at least 10) that represent the festival in the country;
- the main traditions of the fest.

### **Result of the activity.**

Each group of the students have to discuss, agree and present their findings by each point of this task orally.

### **Recommendations for the teacher:**

- The learners, working in the group, have to find required info, check the reliability of the digital source (for example, visit few similar sources), summarize it and present to classmates orally. In order to verify the reliability of the information presented, you can give an additional task to provide information about the sources used in the search.
- Define the length appointed for the information search according to the students pre-entry level.
- Decide on the language of the presentation in line with the learning subject and lesson goals defined.
- According to the available time it is also reasonable to decide how the students will illustrate their findings - (e-)poster, PowerPoint presentation or other available tool.
- Lead the group work to involve as many different countries as possible to ensure that the students will share different available information during the presentation stage.

To summarize the research of the students we recommend to organize group discussion and find answers to these questions:

- What are the differences between the countries;
- What are the similarities between the countries;
- What are the traditions, that came from the past and still are the part of the present festival;
- What is the uniqueness of celebrating this festival in Your country?

To increase the focus on developing students' marketing knowledge or foreign language listening / speaking skills, the following activity can be added:

Teacher should present the below proposed 4 video records, representing different celebration traditions (and its presentation manners) of the Midsummer festival. After it, the teacher should encourage the class discussion "Presentation of the country in the light of the fest it". Discussion should also include the possible [target audience](#) of the video.

- Festival of Saint John in Porto (Portugal)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWipmq63uFQ>
- Midsummer festival in Sweden: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7E6WcpwSPQ>
- Festival of the Dew in Kernavė (Lithuania)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLtKc7ihA\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLtKc7ihA_o)
- Summer solstice at Stonehenge (UK)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kAL5WjvRiQ>

This activity 1 should help students to broaden their knowledge of local, national, regional, European and global cultures expression through traditional celebrations also develop these [key competences](#):

**Literacy competence/ Multilingual competence, by developing their skills:**

- to identify, understand, interpret facts and opinions in written and oral form;
- to use visual and digital materials across disciplines and contexts, in a national and foreign language, by integrating a historical dimension and existing intercultural competences;
- to formulate and express findings and arguments in a convincing way appropriate to the context. It encompasses critical thinking and ability to assess and work with information;
- to understand and use language in a positive and socially responsible manner.

**Digital competence, by developing their skills:**

- to take a critical approach to the validity, reliability and impact of information and data made available by digital means;
- to use digital technologies to support them towards goals set.

**Personal, social and learning to learn competence by developing their skills:**

- to work with others in a constructive way;

- to focus, deal with complexity, critically reflect and make decisions.

**Cultural awareness and expression competence by developing their skills:**

- to understand the different ways of communicating ideas to the audience within video form;
- to understanding identity and cultural heritage within a world of cultural diversity;
- to explore different cultures and participate in different cultural experiences.

**The evaluation of the activities of this stage:**

Based on the tasks of this activity, we suggest a number of assessment criteria that may be applicable during this stage.

1. Assessment in relation to the requirements of the particular subject (Marketing subject: proper application of the marketing knowledge available (required) during the assignment. Foreign language subject: ability to present the results using the available (required) foreign language knowledge).

2. The whole task can be evaluated in the frame of group workflow – are the students involved in the activity, do they understand the task and can present their findings during it.

The main criteria of such task evaluation should be presented to the class:

- scope of the analysis;
- identification of required info;
- quality of structured presentation;
- ability to work in group, organize and present the group work findings;
- creativity in the presentation of findings;
- ability to express their opinion, knowledge and perceptions in a respective way.

3. Use / refinement of skills attributed to specific key competences areas during this exercise also ability to apply the pre- and gained knowledge of different subjects.

**Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the literacy competence/ multilingual competence:**

- the presented findings are in line with the provided task;
- different sources used to collect information in the mother tongue and in foreign languages;
- the all required info is presented/ students are able to motivate reasonably why some info is missing in the presentation;
- the provided info is essential, clear, valid and systemized;
- the path of the narrative is clear, catching the attention of the audience.

**Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the digital competence:**

- ability to use search engines;
- critical approach to the validity and reliability of information;
- creativity to use the digital technologies to present the findings.

**Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the personal, social and learning to learn competence:**

- individual involvement in group work;
- ability to communicate constructively, collaborate and negotiate (groups and class debates stage);
- tolerance, expressing and understanding different viewpoints.

**Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the cultural awareness and expression competence**

- ability to reflect constructively about the provided video;
- ability to compare forms and ideas expressed in the video clips;
- ability to use information obtained in previous stages of the activity during the debates.

## 2nd activity “Interesting ad”

**Resources for the activity implementation.** Computer, projector, notebook, programs (Canva, MS Publisher, MS Power Point or similar), big sheets (A3 and bigger) of paper and markers of different colours.

To follow the task teacher introduces the class the second stage of the exercise:

Based on the information summarized above and the situation presented below, prepare a targeted advertising which would represent the midsummer festival in your country. Use available resources listed above, also provided in the resources section.

*John, 25 years ICT specialist, lives in the UK together with his girlfriend Sue. They love to spend time with their friends, read the historical books, travel and meet new cultures. They are also beginners of the travel blog. This year John got a short vacation for June and decided to travel abroad and celebrate his name-day. What would catch his eye?*

### Recommendations for the teacher:

- Depending on the group pre-knowledge (also on available time) necessary for this task You can leave the free choice to the students to decide the portrait of the target customer they are addressing the ad.
- To understand the task better, offer the students to visualize in detail the customer (age, family and/or marital status, status, interests, life style, habits, buying habits, and ect.) by creating the collage of his profile (use the magazine clippings, glue stick and white paper).
- Ask the students to prepare a short motivation explanation on their choice (colors, symbols, key words).
- Agree on the form of the add (visual ad, video ad, ppt. presentation and ect.)

This activity should help students to develop their marketing knowledge in the light of local, national, regional, European and global cultures and expressions related to Midsummer festival also develop these [key competences](#):

### Literacy competence/ Multilingual competence, by developing their skills:

- to identify, understand, express, create, and interpret concepts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written forms, using visual, sound/audio and digital materials across disciplines and contexts;
- to communicate and connect effectively with others, in an appropriate and creative way;
- use native and foreign languages appropriately and effectively for communication.

### Digital competence, by developing their skills:

- to create digital content;
- to use digital tools for commercial goals;

- to identify and solve intellectual property related questions.

**Personal, social and learning to learn competence, by developing their skills:**

- to manage time and information effectively;
- to identify individual/group capacities, focus, deal with complexity, critically reflect and make decisions;
- to collaborate in a team and negotiate (showing tolerance, expressing and understanding different viewpoints).

**Entrepreneurship competence, by developing their skills**

- to turn the ideas into action for professional activities;
- to work both as an individual and collaboratively in teams, to mobilize resources (people and things) and to sustain activity;
- sense of initiative and agency, pro-activity, being forward-looking, courage and perseverance in achieving objectives.

**Cultural awareness and expression competence, by developing their:**

- knowledge of local, national, regional, European and global cultures and expressions, including their languages, heritage and traditions, and cultural products, and an understanding of how these expressions can influence each other as well as the ideas of the individual;
- ability to identify and realise opportunities for commercial value through the different cultural forms.

**The evaluation of the activities of this stage:**

Based on the tasks of this activity, we suggest a number of assessment criteria that may be applicable during this stage.

1. Assessment in relation to the requirements of the particular subject (Marketing subject: delivery of formulate ad message. Literacy: clear and consistent presentation of the result.)

2. The whole task could be evaluated in the frame of group workflow – are the students involved in the activity, do they understand the task and can express themselves during it.

The main criteria of such task evaluation should be presented to the class:

- incorporation of the information gained during the Activity 1;
- creativity to visualize/present the idea;
- engaging content of the created product;
- ability to reflect on the situation (link and use the knowledge of different subjects with the task).

3. Use / refinement of skills attributed to specific key competences areas during this exercise also ability to apply the pre- and gained knowledge of different subjects:

**Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the literacy competence/  
multilingual competence:**

- knowledge of vocabulary, functional grammar and the functions of language (native and foreign language due to the agreed task);
- formulation and expression of oral and written arguments in a convincing way appropriate to the context.

**Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the digital competence:**

- in order to evaluate this competence properly teacher should be aware about the entry level of the students to identify if they used all potential knowledge to create a qualitative digital content due to their capacities and required task;
- the product is created and presented in a creative and proficient way.

**Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the personal, social and learning to learn competence:**

- task implementation in time frames;
- effective use of the technical and human resources for the implementation of the task.

**Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the entrepreneurship competence:**

- fulfillment of the idea according to its commercial goals.

**Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the cultural awareness and expression competence:**

- expressed in integrated knowledge of local, national, regional, European and global cultures and expressions, including their languages, heritage and traditions, and cultural products, and an understanding of how these expressions can influence each other as well as the ideas of the individual.

## 3rd activity “Safety measures during the festivals”

**Resources for the activity implementation.** Computer, projector, notebook

The third part of the exercise is designated to deepen the student's knowledge about the Midsummer festival in the light of safety in the work area.

To start the activity the teacher has to present the video to the class:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WifXhVqJvyg>

Video reportage presents the festival related event: the Midsummer bonfire in Slinningsbålet, Ålesund, Norway in 2016 with the height of 47.39 metres. This bonfire was an official Guinness world record until 2019 03 16 (Present record is 60.64 metres), and was achieved by Hofstadler Funkenzunft Lustenau (Austria).

After the video review the following questions should be answered during the class discussion:

- What risks are eliminated by choosing the place of the bonfire?
- Why was this specific construction of the bonfire chosen?
- What knowledge of safety at work must have the builders/ lighters of the bonfire?
- What is the role of the spray of the water on the ground of the bonfire?
- What other traditions of the Midsummer festival requires following the safety requirements?

### **Recommendations for the teacher:**

Additional individual task for the learners related to the presented video:

*“You need to present this info to John from the UK. Help him/her to understand/ solve the issues.”*

This activity should help students to develop the knowledge of local, national, regional, European and global cultures and expressions related to Midsummer festival in line with the safety at work requirement also develop these [key competence](#):

### **Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, engineering, by developing their skills**

- for both safety and environmental sustainability, in particular as regards scientific and technological progress in relation to oneself, family, community, and global issues;
- in safety management using appropriate technological processes, machines, tools and human efforts.

### **Personal, social and learning to learn competence, by developing**

- problem-solving attitude to support both the learning process and the individual's ability to handle obstacles and change.
- the desire to apply prior learning and life experiences and the curiosity to look for opportunities to learn and develop in a variety of life contexts.

**The evaluation of the activities of this stage:**

Based on the tasks of this activity, we suggest 2 possible assessment criteria that may be applicable during this stage.

1. Application of the knowledge on the safety at work area within the subject – Safety at work.
2. Use / refinement of skills attributed to specific key competences areas during this exercise also ability to apply the pre- and gained knowledge of different subjects:

**Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, engineering:**

- understanding of general safety at work principles;

**Recommended evaluation of the skills related to the personal, social and learning to learn competence**

- ability to apply knowledge of the technological processes, machines, tools and human efforts to solve the concrete problem.

## Resources

Midsummer festivals:

<https://theculturetrip.com/europe/articles/top-10-summer-solstice-traditions-from-around-the-world/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-XPm3n-udc>

<https://www.learnreligions.com/history-of-summer-solstice-holiday-litha-2562244>

Ad creation:

<https://www.singlegrain.com/buyer-personas/complete-guide-developing-using-buyer-personas/>

<https://targetpublic.com/11-simple-tips-creating-effective-ad/>

<https://www.eventmanagerblog.com/event-advertising>

Safety at work:

<https://www.napofilm.net/en/learning-with-napo/napo-for-teachers>

<https://www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/bonfires/>

<https://op.europa.eu/lt/publication-detail/-/publication/cc6a1e5c-023c-4747-9a06-e9f155c5101c/language-en>