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The smell of hamburgers on the grill made Abbie's stomach growl. "The first burgers of the summer" are what her father had called them. Abbie knew he was right; it was the first time they'd pulled out the grill since the weather had warmed up. She knew her father was happy to have a special three-day weekend, too, which would explain why he was smiling and whistling while he cooked their dinner. Abbie wasn't sure what was so special about a longer weekend since she and her brother Jake didn't have to go back to school. Abbie knew the Memorial Day weekend meant a lot of things to a lot of people, but for her, it meant the start of summer break.

Abbie was about to go help her father with the hamburgers when her mother called for her. Abbie opened the screen door on the back porch so she could slide inside. Her mother was busy getting everything ready to make homemade ice cream. Abbie's mouth watered as she thought about the delicious treat. They only had it twice a year. Her mother would make a batch on Memorial Day and then again on Labor Day. Abbie wished she would make it more, but then she knew it wouldn't be as special.

"What's up, Mom?" Abbie asked as she sat down on a nearby chair.

"Your Aunt Lindy called. She wants to know if you can go with her to the cemetery for a few minutes now instead of later today."

Abbie nodded her head. They had all planned to go with her aunt later today, but she didn't mind going now. Abbie watched as her mother sent her aunt a quick text confirming that Abbie would go with her while she finished preparing the meal. Abbie gave her mom a hug and then went outside to the flower garden. She picked a bouquet of flowers for her aunt to place in a vase at the gravesite. Then she waited for her aunt to arrive. She knew Memorial Day was important to Lindy. Her aunt's husband had died while he was deployed to another country. For her aunt, Abbie knew this day was about remembering. Abbie was too young to remember her uncle, but she had heard stories about his heroism and his love for his country. From her family, Abbie had learned that on Memorial Day, people everywhere should remember the sacrifices that had been made for their country.

There are many different holidays celebrated each year in America, but none are quite as special as Memorial Day. Memorial Day is observed on the last Monday of May. Originally, the holiday honored those who died serving in the military. Today, people continue this tradition; however, many use the day as a time to remember all of those special to them who have passed away.

Memorial Day was first known as Decoration Day. The origins of the holiday began in the years after the Civil War. People wanted a way to honor those who had died while fighting. On the first Decoration Day, nearly 5,000 people helped decorate the graves of the soldiers buried at Arlington National Cemetery. They honored both the Union and Confederate soldiers buried there. Eventually, Decoration Day would become known as Memorial Day. This day would later become a federal holiday recognized by the entire country.

Americans celebrate Memorial Day in different ways. For some, the holiday is seen as the start of the summer season. Others attend special ceremonies or parades in which veterans are recognized for their service to the country. Still, others visit cemeteries and continue with the

traditions that Decoration Day once promoted. Some Americans spend each Memorial Day at Arlington National Cemetery. The president of the United States gives a speech there each year. It is at Arlington that the president will place a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to honor all those who have served. The tomb holds the remains of several unidentified soldiers from multiple wars. Even when it is no longer Memorial Day, a soldier remains as a guard at the tomb.

In recent years, one more addition has been made to Memorial Day. At 3:00 p.m. on Memorial Day, each person is asked to take a moment and be still and silent. He or she is to think about and remember all those who have died so that America and its citizens can be free.

**UNIT 3
QUESTIONS****Name****Date**

The following pages have questions based on the texts from Unit 3. You may look at the stories to help answer any questions. Use the back of the page if you need extra space for writing your answers.

1 Why are Abbie and her family having a cookout?

- a** It is Labor Day weekend.
- b** It is Abbie's birthday.
- c** It is Memorial Day weekend.
- d** It is a homecoming party for Abbie's aunt.

2 Explain why Memorial Day has a special meaning for Abbie's family.

3 Which statement from the text is an opinion?

- a** There are many different holidays celebrated each year in America, but none are quite as special as Memorial Day.
- b** Memorial Day was first known as Decoration Day.
- c** Americans celebrate Memorial Day in different ways.
- d** At 3:00 p.m. on Memorial Day, each person is asked to take a moment and be still and silent.

4 Explain why the answer you chose for #3 is an opinion and not a fact.

5 Which statement best explains why Memorial Day was once known as Decoration Day?

- a** People would clean up and decorate the cemeteries where the soldiers were buried.
- b** People bought decorations for their summer cookouts.
- c** Young girls placed decorations in their hair to honor the deceased soldiers.
- d** No one knows why Memorial Day was once called Decoration Day.

6 Explain why the text is titled "Remembering."

7 Compare and contrast Memorial Day to one other holiday you know. List one way they are alike, and list one way they are different.

Holiday: _____

- a.** They are alike because _____

- b.** They are different because _____

8 Explain why the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is an important symbol.

9 What does the word *origins* mean as it is used in the following sentence?

The origins of the holiday began in the years after the Civil War.

- a** ending
- b** beginning
- c** middle
- d** after

10 What is significant about Memorial Day weekend to Abbie?

- a** It is the start of summer vacation.
- b** It is the start of a new school year.
- c** It is a three-day weekend.
- d** It is her favorite holiday.



Time to Write!

Part 1

Directions: Choose one holiday from the list of holidays below or think of one on your own. Circle your choice or write it on the line provided. With the help of your teacher, use books or the Internet to research facts about the holiday. On the lines below, write five facts you learn from your research.

Christmas

Kwanzaa

Thanksgiving

Hanukkah

Labor Day

Valentine's Day

Independence Day

Native-American Day

Veterans Day

Other: _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Part 2

Directions: Imagine the holiday you researched is about to be taken off the calendar and no longer celebrated! Write a letter to the president, explaining why the holiday is important and should remain an important day for everyone to celebrate.

Dear President _____,

Sincerely,
