

Learning Activity



Name: _____

Extra - Hogmanay

Hogmanay is a very old celebration that goes back hundreds of years. While the name "Hogmanay" first appeared in writing in the 1600s, the traditions are much older. Historians believe Hogmanay has roots in Norse traditions from Viking times and Celtic celebrations marking the winter solstice. Over time, it became Scotland's way of welcoming the New Year.

Hogmanay is full of special traditions. People start by cleaning their homes to sweep away bad luck from the old year. On December 31st, families and friends gather for parties with music, dancing, and tasty food like shortbread and haggis. At midnight, everyone counts down and sings "Auld Lang Syne" together. One famous tradition is first-footing. The first person to enter a home after midnight should bring gifts like coal, bread, or whisky to bring warmth, food, and good luck for the year. In some towns, there are torchlight processions, where people walk through the streets carrying fire torches. Another fun custom is fireball swinging, where people swing balls of fire to chase away evil spirits. Many places have huge street parties and fireworks. Hogmanay is all about saying goodbye to the old year and starting the new one with joy, light, and hope.

1. What is the main topic of the paragraphs above? _____

2. What are some of the traditions of Hogmanay? _____

3. Scots people who emigrated to America brought many of these traditions with them. Some of these traditions are now a part of many American New Year's Eve traditions. What are your family's New Year's Eve traditions? Do any of them have roots in Hogmanay?
