



# Mother's Day

Reading Comprehension – Informational Passages



*Directions: Read the passage. Then answer questions about the passage below.*

The idea of Mother's Day is a very old idea. This idea dates back to the ancient Egyptians, who celebrated a day to honor Isis, the mother of the pharaohs. The Egyptians were not the only ones who felt the need to honor their mothers. The ancient Greeks celebrated a day to honor Rhea, the mother of the gods. The Romans built a temple to the mother of the gods, named *Magna Mater*. They also held a celebration every March in her honor. The early Christians celebrated a day to honor Mary, the mother of Jesus. Later, English Christians **expanded** the celebration to honor all mothers. This English holiday was called "Mothering Sunday." When the English colonists came to America, they did not have time for Mothering Sunday, so the holiday was not celebrated in America.

During the U.S. Civil War, mothers on both sides of the war lost sons. The country was very sad. Grieving mothers from both sides had meetings. Sometimes families had been torn apart by the war. In 1868, Ann Reeves Jarvis started a committee to help families get back together after the war. This committee tried to establish a "Mothers' Friendship Day" for mothers who had lost sons in the war. Unfortunately, Ann Reeves Jarvis died in 1905, so she did not see that the day eventually became popular.

Another woman, Julia Ward Howe was also against the war. She was also against slavery. She declared the first official Mother's Day in 1870, and held an anti-war Mother's Day observance. She **funded** this observance with her own money every year for several years, but an annual Mother's Day celebration still did not catch on in the U.S. However, the idea stayed alive.

Meanwhile, Anna M. Jarvis, The daughter of Ann Reeves Jarvis, wanted to honor her mother. She requested that her mother's West Virginia church be allowed to celebrate a Mother's Day in 1908 in honor of her mother. Every mother at church that day received two carnations — Ann Reeves Jarvis' favorite flower. Now, carnations and other flowers are associated with Mother's Day because they were handed out at the first celebration of Mother's Day.

In 1914, the U.S. Congress passed a law which **designated** the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. In the same year, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the first Mother's Day. He called for the flying of the flag to honor the mothers who had lost sons in war.

Mother's Day is celebrated in many other countries. In Mexico, *Dia de las Madres* is celebrated on May 10. It is a popular holiday celebrated by schools, churches, and civic groups. Children give their mothers flowers and handmade cards. Schools present performances in honor of mothers as part of the national observance of *Dia de las Madres*.

In China, ten distinguished mothers are chosen to receive government recognition. National drives for mothers living in poverty are also held. The holiday is a demonstration of the respect the Chinese have for the elderly, and the love they have for their parents.

In India, children send their mothers cards and flowers and cook a meal for their mothers. Companies launch women's products on Mother's Day, and restaurants advertise heavily for Mother's Day; the day has become **commercialized**.

In Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Ireland, Mother's Day is celebrated on the same day as in the United States — the second Sunday in May. People mark the day in the same way that they do in the United States. Children give their mothers cards, gifts, and flowers. Churches and schools give special Mother's Day presentations, and civic groups observe the day.

The first President of the U.S., George Washington, said of his own mother, "My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. All I am I owe to my mother. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her."



## Questions:

1) Who built a temple to Magna Mater?

- A. The Greeks
- B. The Romans
- C. The early Christians
- D. The American colonists
- E. None of the above

2) Why did Ann Reeves Jarvis want a special day?

- A. To help Civil War mothers
- B. To honor her own mother
- C. To honor mothers of soldiers
- D. Both A and C are correct.
- E. All of the above

3) What did mothers receive at the first Mother's Day in West Virginia?

- A. flowers
- B. presents
- C. handmade cards
- D. Both A and B are correct.
- E. Both B and C are correct.

4) Which U.S. President first proclaimed Mother's Day?

- A. Harry Truman
- B. John Kennedy
- C. Woodrow Wilson
- D. Abraham Lincoln
- E. George Washington

5) In what year did the U.S. Congress designate the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day?

- A. 1862
- B. 1868
- C. 1908
- D. 1914
- E. 1962

## Vocabulary:

1) The best synonym for **honor** is...

- A. respect.
- B. explain.
- C. perform.
- D. describe.
- E. decrease.

2) **Expanded** means...

- A. made larger.
- B. made famous.
- C. dressed up.
- D. made up.
- E. gave in.

3) What does **funded** mean?

- A. Looked at
- B. Celebrated
- C. Watched
- D. Paid for
- E. Both A and C are correct.

4) The best synonym for **designated** is...

- A. required.
- B. named.
- C. wished.
- D. hired.
- E. left.

5) If something is **commercialized** it is...

- A. used to make a profit.
- B. celebrated for mothers.
- C. proclaimed a holiday.
- D. made into a new law.
- E. used to fund military expansion.