



Bealtaine

Bealtaine is the Irish word for May. May Day is on May 1st. Long ago in Ireland people celebrated the start of summer on this day. They were glad the winter was over and had a party with dancing outside and a big bonfire.

- A** Decorate the hawthorn bush for May Day.

The hawthorn bush was decorated for May Day. The bush was in the garden or a field close to the house. Ribbons and bits of cloth were tied to its branches. The bush brought luck to the house and its family for the year ahead.



- B** Finish these sentences.

1. On the 1st of May people celebrated _____.
2. Bealtaine is the Irish name for _____.
3. People were glad because _____.
4. Two things they did were dancing and _____.
5. People decorated a hawthorn bush with _____.
6. They thought the decorated bush would _____.

- C** Read about May wildflowers. Draw primroses and bluebells to fill the basket.

Children picked wildflowers the day before May Day. They picked primroses and bluebells because they were yellow and blue like the sun in the sky. They put the flowers on windowsills and doorsteps to bring luck and to keep away bad fairies. They also put flowers near farm animals to keep them safe and well for another year. The children made crowns from flowers and wore them on May Day. They carried baskets of flowers on May Day and had a parade. They dropped the flowers one by one in front of them as they walked.



Primrose



Bluebells



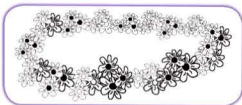
D Write a sentence under each picture.



1. Children picked flowers the day before May Day.



2. _____



3. _____



4. _____

E Read Joan's story. Write the questions for the answers below.



My name is Joan and I remember my mother getting up just before dawn every year on May Day. She went outside and rubbed her hands in the grass. It was wet from the morning dew. She rubbed this dew water on her face and let it dry by holding her head up to the sky. When her face was dry she came back inside. She said the dew was good for her skin and kept her looking young.



1. When _____

Joan's mother got up before dawn on May Day.

2. Where _____

She went outside.

3. What _____

There was dew on the grass.

4. Why _____

She rubbed the dew on her face because it was good for her skin.