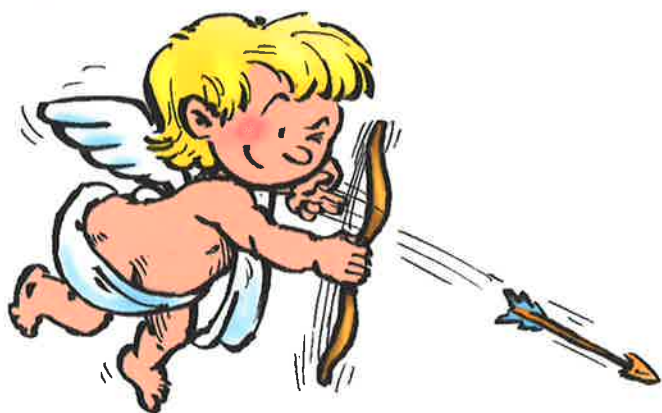


Saint Valentine's Day



Saint Valentine's Day is the festival of love and lovers. It is celebrated throughout the western world and people express their love and affection by sending Valentine cards, known simply as **Valentines**, and giving romantic presents such as chocolates and flowers. The imagery associated with Saint Valentine's Day reflects the myths and legends which give origin to this festival. Commonly used symbols are hearts, signifying love, birds reminding us of spring and Cupids shooting arrows into unsuspecting hearts. The colour red dominates.

In the past Valentines were solely exchanged by young lovers but now grandparents, relatives and friends send them to the people they care about. Traditional messages written in the Valentines are: "*To the one I love*", "*Valentine greetings*", "*Will you be my Valentine?*", "*Be my Valentine*", "*From your Valentine*". You can also send Valentines to someone you find attractive signing the card with a cryptic phrase which gives a clue to your identity rather than your name. Queen Victoria, not famed for being fun-loving, sent a total of 2,500 anonymous Valentines throughout her life.

American universities, high schools and community clubs usually hold a Sweethearts' Ball. Elementary school children post their Valentine's greetings in a **Valentine Box**. Each child writes a Valentine to one of his or her classmates and puts it into a specially decorated box. The teacher then takes the greetings out of the box and reads them aloud giving the names of both the senders and receivers.

In Wales lovers give each other lovespoons on Saint Valentine's Day. The tradition started in the sixteenth century when boys made wooden spoons for the girls they liked. The symbols they carved on the spoons had different meanings which remain today. A heart means '*I love you*' or '*You are my friend*', two hearts mean '*I love you, too*', bells mean marriage or engagement, balls in a cage the number of children you would like to have and a chain, love forever.

The historical origins of Saint Valentine's Day are rooted in ancient pagan myths and rites of Spring. The Roman festival of **Lupercalia** was celebrated on February the 15th in honour of Juno, the Goddess of women and marriage. In this period young girls wrote messages of love and put them into an **urn**. The young men who drew the messages out of the urn could court the girls for the following year. It is also the time when birds first begin to look for a mate thereby heralding the start of Spring.



The Pagan origins of the festival were later absorbed in the Christian tradition thanks to the story of Saint Valentine. Most historians agree that Saint Valentine dates back to **Valentinus**, a Christian martyr of the third century who was imprisoned and executed for his beliefs under Claudius II. While in prison he became a close friend of his jailer's daughter. The poor girl was blind but through Valentinus' faith a miracle occurred and her sight was restored. Valentinus was executed on 14th February 270 AD and on the day before he died he sent the girl a note signed "*from your Valentine*". These words have become an everlasting symbol of friendship, affection and love. In 496 the Pope set aside February 14th as the feast of Saint Valentine and Saint Valentine's Day, as we know it, was born.

Nowadays modern lovers can send each other virtual Valentines via the Internet and Cupid, the Roman infant god of love, can shoot his arrows all over the world.

Learn by doing

Use the Saint Valentine's Day celebrations to introduce adjectives, physical descriptions and feelings. The activities we suggest aim to induce a positive state of mind in your class and encourage tolerance and acceptance therefore we have chosen to use only positive qualities and adjectives.

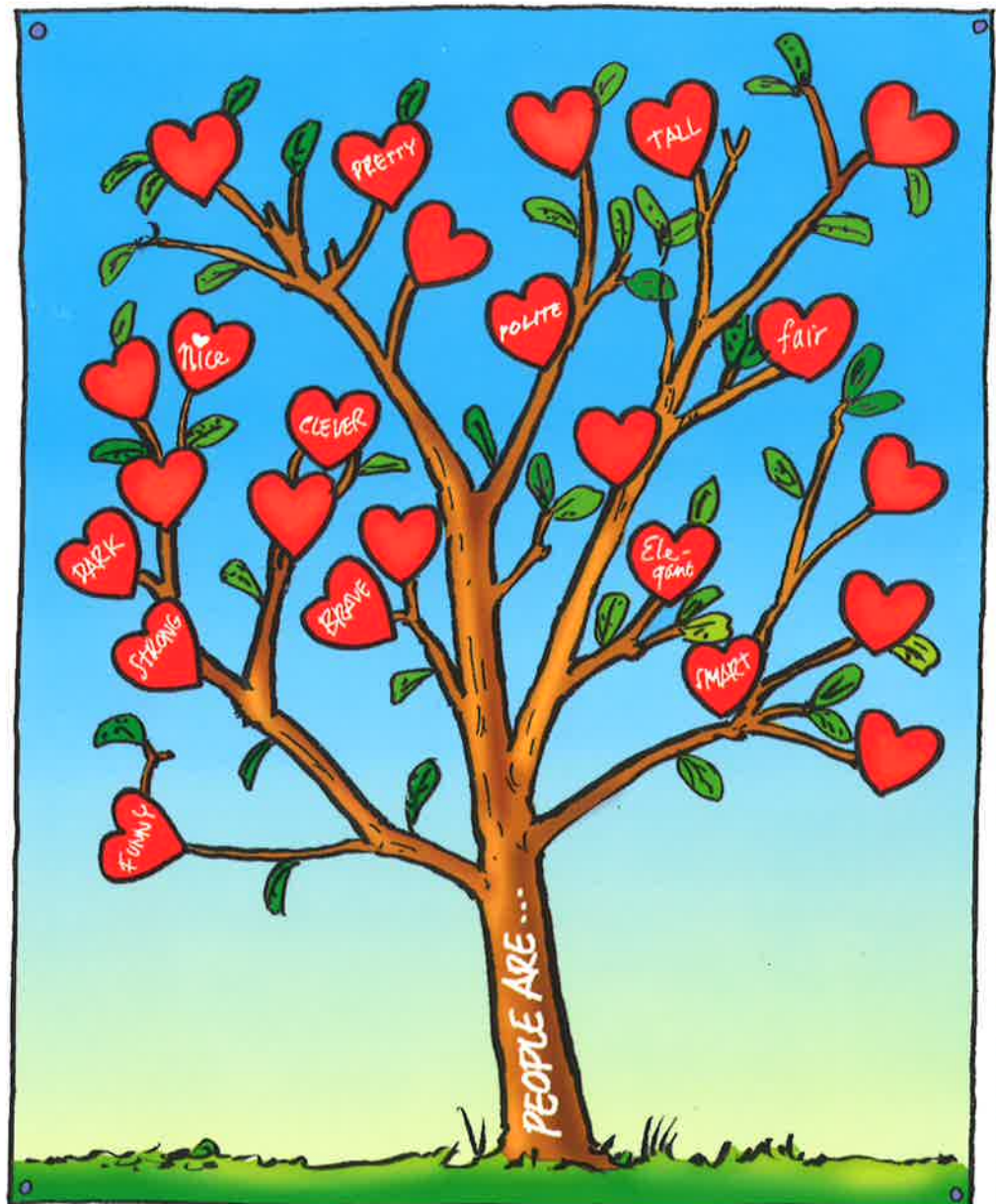
PEOPLE ARE... HEARTS IN A TREE

Red cardboard hearts, felt-tip pens, a large piece of white cardboard, scissors, blu-tack

- ♥ Prepare a number of cardboard hearts.
- ♥ Write positive adjectives on them and stick them on the board.
- ♥ Choose from the following adjectives or make your own list to suit your class' ability: **interesting, attractive, strong, brave, fun, lovely, friendly, kind, sweet, generous, happy, funny, tall, small, dark, fair, nice, good-looking, beautiful, pretty, charming, elegant, handsome, sensitive, polite, intelligent, clever, smart, active, quiet** etc. (With advanced classes brainstorm adjectives with your class and ask them to copy the words onto the cardboard hearts).
- ♥ Encourage the students to find the meaning of the words they don't know or they are not sure of by asking their friends:

What's the meaning of ...?
It's ...

- ♥ Make sure everyone has understood all the words. Practise pronunciation by asking the children to repeat the words. Have fun by repeating them in different styles - *aloud, singing, whispering, with funny voices, slowly, quickly* etc.
- ♥ Now ask the children to help you prepare the **Hearts in a tree** poster by drawing the tree trunk and the branches. When the tree is ready stick the hearts on the branches. Your tree, should look something like this:



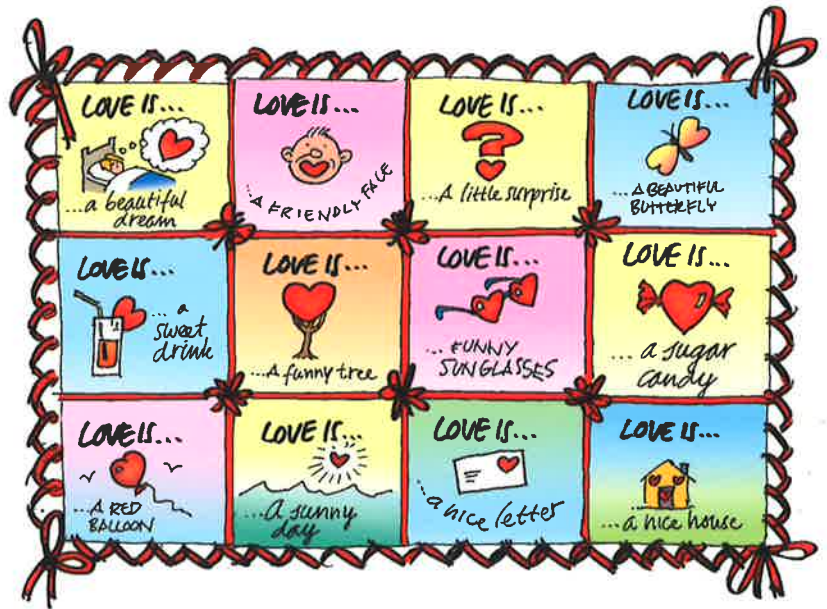
Arts and crafts

Stimulate your students' creativity and imagination by making a colourful Saint Valentine's Day patchwork poster. Language is developed through association and can be recycled from the previous activity. Keep up the tradition of Saint Valentine's Day by making cards in class and encouraging your students to exchange them with their classmates. Children of all ages, specially the shyer ones, get a great boost by receiving complimentary messages from their friends. The manual activity involved in this project will also help develop fine motor skills and co-ordination.

LOVE IS..... A VALENTINE PATCHWORK

Squares of coloured card (one for each student), felt-tip pens, red Cellotape, red ribbons, a large piece of white cardboard.

- ♥ Write 'Love is...' on the board and ask each child to make a sentence.
- ♥ Help them with examples and encourage them to include the adjectives they have learned in the previous activity. Now ask them to illustrate their phrase on their piece of coloured card.
- ♥ Get them to include a heart in their drawing. Now they complete their patch by copying their sentence onto the card.
- ♥ Stick the squares onto the piece of white cardboard to make a poster. Use little hearts and ribbons to decorate the poster. Alternatively make a *Love is...* booklet for your class.



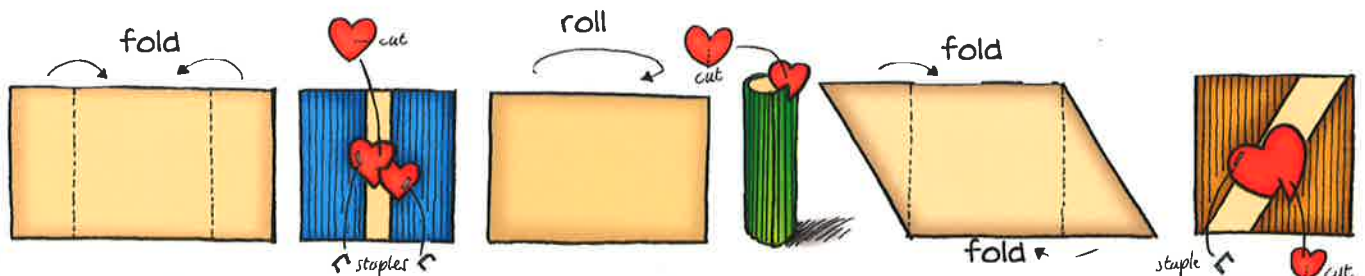
A VALENTINE CARD

Corrugated cardboard, scissors, red cardboard (for the hearts), glue and a stapler

- ♥ Ask your pupils to prepare their own Valentines for their best friends, parents, classmates etc.
- ♥ Let them choose the shape they like best and copy the drawings below onto the board:

Once the Valentine cards have been prepared ask the children to write friendship messages on them. Show them how to address their messages: "To.....from.....". Get them to write two or three Valentines and circulate helping and making sure everybody in the class receives their Valentines. See the activity in the **Playing with the language** section for the greetings.

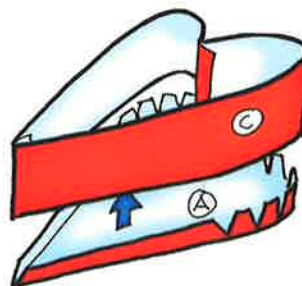
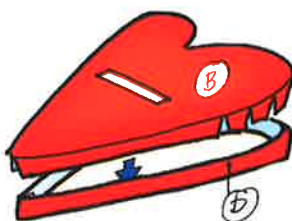
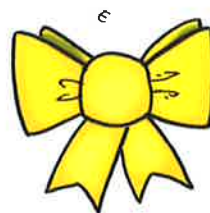
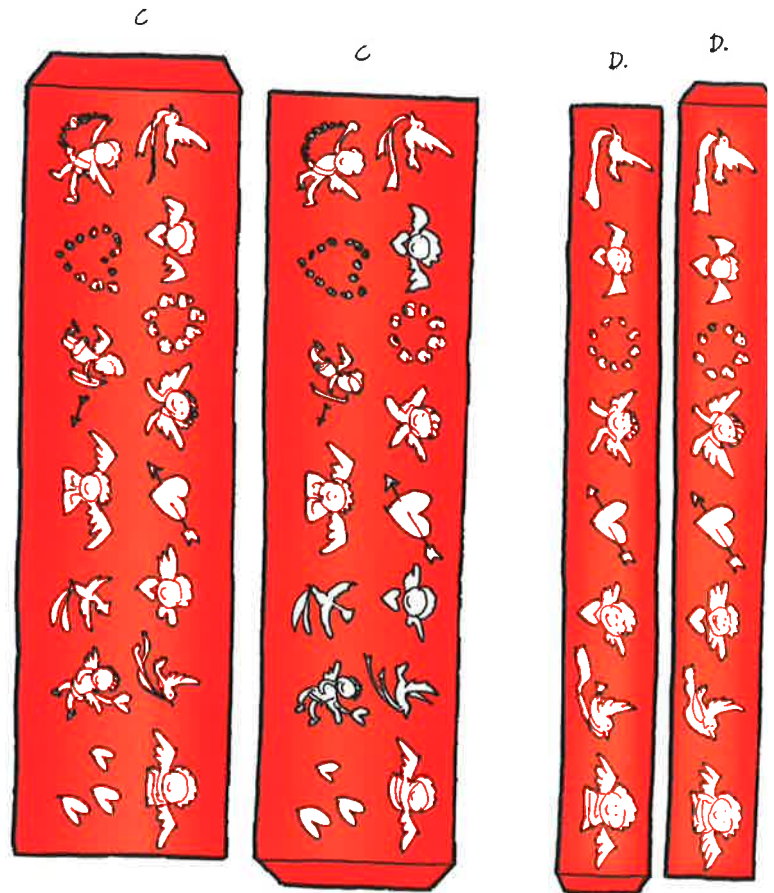
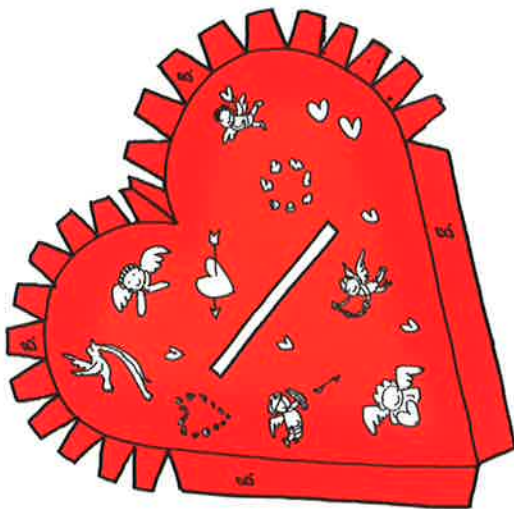
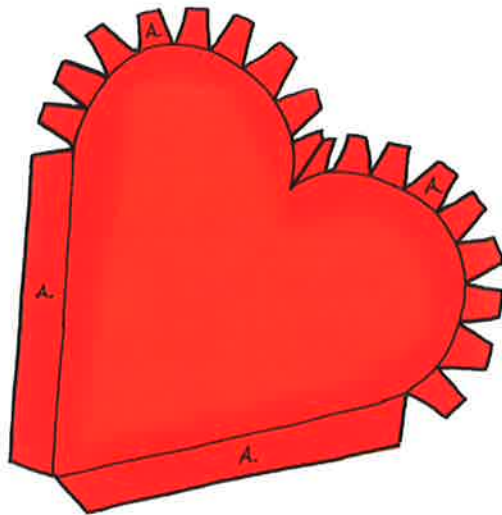
Alternatively tell your students to send anonymous cards with clues as to their identity: 'I'm small', 'I've got glasses', 'My name starts with M...', 'I'm wearing something orange', 'I've got blue eyes' etc. They'll have fun working out who the senders are.



A VALENTINE BOX

Introduce the American tradition of the Valentine Box to your students by preparing one with them. Use a heart-shaped box of chocolates or copy the box below.

Get your students to post their Valentines into the finished box. Ask the class to decorate the box with the symbols of Saint Valentine's Day - hearts, Cupids, Cupid's arrows, flowers, ribbons etc. Get the students to pick their cards out of the box and read them aloud.



Playing with the language

VALENTINE GREETINGS

Introduce the typical expressions and sentences used for conveying greetings and recycle the words and expressions used in the previous activities. Tell the class that some people in the USA and in GB send messages of love to their friends and not only to their beloved on Saint Valentine's Day.

- ♥ Get the children to sit in small groups and prepare their Valentine's greetings using the adjectives they have learned in *Love is...a Valentine's patchwork* or use the typical Valentine expressions listed below:

Just a card to say... "Happy Valentine's Day!"

Be my Valentine!

I like you.

For a lovely friend!

You are the best!

You are an angel.

You are my darling.

I think you're great!

You make me
feel good!

YOU'RE FUN
TO BE WITH.

You are
a sweet friend.

You are my love.

YOU ARE MY
NUMBER ONE.

You are mine:
Oh, Valentine!

I'm crazy about you.

Do you want
to be my Valentine?

YOU ARE
MY FRIEND.

What else can I say? Happy Valentine's Day!

- ♥ Make sure your students know the meaning of all the words by getting them to ask "What's the meaning of ...?"

CARD GAME

Divide the class into small groups of 4 to 5 students and ask them to sit around a table. Ask the groups to prepare a double set of cards using the adjectives introduced in the activity *People are...hearts in a tree*. Then ask the groups to shuffle the cards and to place them face down on the table. The aim of the game is to find pairs of same adjectives, turning two cards at a time. When a player finds a matching pair s/he keeps them, otherwise s/he puts the cards back on the table face down.

For a more advanced class use rhyming cards:
(red/head, cupid/stupid, heart/dart,
arrow/tomorrow)

Prepare by giving each child a rhyming pair and getting him/her to say one of the words aloud and mime the other. The class guess the rhyming word. When they are familiar with all the words, play the card game.



ANAGRAMS IN A BOX

Coloured cards, felt-tip pens, two or three boxes

Choose from words such as: **present, Valentine, February, message, love, friendship, ribbon, red, heart, arrow, Cupid, flowers, birds, friendly, beautiful, sweet, lovely**, etc. Use the coloured cards to write the letters of the words, making sure the letters of each individual word are written in the same colour. Put the cards in a box and mix them. Ask the children to form groups. In their groups they pick out the cards of the same colour and try to form the word. You can fix a time limit for the groups and the group with the most words at the end is the winner.

READING FUN

Reading is used here to fix the information the children have learned so far. It also develops co-operation since each child has to contribute to the final result. By repeating the text several times, in different ways, the students will easily memorise meaningful strips of content if not the whole text.

Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is on the 14th of February. It is the day for sweethearts and lovers. On Valentine's Day we send messages of love, affection and friendship to the people we love and care about. We make Valentine cards with red hearts, Cupids, arrows, birds and roses. Sometimes we also give our friends, family, classmates and teachers little presents such as chocolates, flowers, and Valentine cards. We hope to receive lots of cards and presents too!

- ♥ Read the paragraph above several times so that the children become familiar with the text.
- ♥ Make three copies of the text and divide each copy into a number of strips.
- ♥ Place the sentence strips in random order on a desk. Ask the students to form three teams and to stand around the desk. Pin the original text onto the board. One person from each team runs to the original text and reads as much of the text as s/he can remember. S/he returns to the desk, whispers the text to the rest of the team and they then find the corresponding strip on the desk. The runner cannot touch or look for the correct strips of paper.
- ♥ Play continues with different team members running to the board until each team has a complete and correctly sequenced text.
- ♥ Naturally the first team to finish wins. Check the sequenced texts by asking volunteers to read the texts aloud.



Songs and Rhymes

Use songs and rhymes to break the routine, energise or relax, practise intonation, pronunciation and stress, teach vocabulary and culture, but above all to have fun with your pupils.

Have your children act out or mime this rhyme. Language learned through movement is learned deeply as it is encoded kinaesthetically in their bodies.

To celebrate the start of spring
He gives me a wonderful ring
With a message of love
Brought by a dove.



Teach this traditional Valentine's rhyme. You may also use it as a model to create new rhymes by asking the children to replace the third line with one of their own choice.

Roses are red
Violets are blue
Sugar is sweet
And so are you

Chant this rhyme with your class. Ask the class to form five groups. Each group chants one line, standing up when it's their turn. The last line is chanted by the whole class, standing.

Write a card full of love
To your dear far and near
With Cupid sending darts
To big, red hearts
And when it's ready sign:
Happy Valentine!

Get the children to tap out the rhythm of the following chant with their hands, feet or pencils. This will help them learn the rhythm of the language and develop co-ordination.

Cupid, Cupid shoot your arrow
To my sweetheart in the barrow
Sing her my sweet rhyme
And I'll be her Valentine

Sing this short song to the tune of "Oh my darling Clementine". Have children stand in rows and swing while singing, adding a pleasant visual effect, and encouraging pupils to relax and develop greater body awareness.

Oh my darling,
Oh my darling,
Oh my darling Valentine!
You're the sweetest,
You're the greatest,
Oh my darling Valentine!

Use this choosing rhyme if you run short of volunteers for your activities. Ask one of the children to chant the rhyme while pointing to the others one by one. The child indicated on the last word is out and the rhyme is repeated until only one child is left. You can also use this choosing rhyme to pair up children during the activities.

One two three
This present is for me
Four five six
A kiss on your cheeks
Seven eight nine
Happy Valentine
I love you so
And out you go!

