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National Holidays

Read the articles entitled “Mother’s Day” and “Father’s Day.” Both articles discuss the historical background of these national holidays.

You will complete a chart and answer two short response questions about the reading selections. Then you will write an essay about the two articles. You may look back at the articles as often as you like.

Mother’s Day

At the urging of Anna Jarvis of Grafton, West Virginia, Mother’s Day was first celebrated on a large scale on May 10, 1908.

A day called Mothering Sunday originated in England many years ago. It took place in the middle of the Lenten (pre-Easter) season each year. Julia Ward Howe, the author of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” and suffragette, first suggested a Mother’s Day in the United States in 1872. She thought the day should be dedicated to the observance of peace. For several years, she held annual observances of the day in Boston, but it did not gain national support. In 1887, a Kentucky teacher named Mary Towles Sasseen began annual Mother’s Day celebrations, and in 1904 Frank E. Hering of Indiana did the same. But it was not until three years later that the interest was ignited in Anna Jarvis, and she began a campaign for the national observance of the holiday. She selected the second Sunday in May for the celebration. In May of 1908, churches in Grafton and Philadelphia began the tradition. A Grafton church devoted its service to the memory of Jarvis’s mother, Anna Reeves Jarvis.

The Methodist Episcopalian Church, to which Anna Jarvis belonged, designated her as the founder of Mother’s Day at a conference in 1912, and the conference also adopted her chosen date of the second Sunday in May for the observance. In May of 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed a resolution recommending that the government recognize and observe Mother’s Day, and in 1915 it was declared a national holiday.

Anna Jarvis began one more Mother’s Day tradition. On the first Mother’s Day, she wore a carnation in memory of her mother. Traditionally, people wear colored carnations if their mothers are living and white if they are not. Today, families in the United States have developed their own additional traditions that include cards, flowers, candy, gifts, and sharing mealtime with the whole family.



National Holidays (cont.)

Essay

Mother's Day and Father's Day have been declared national holidays in the United States in order to pay tribute to parents. Discuss each holiday and the characteristics that make a good mother or father. Use details from both reading selections.

In your response, be sure to include:

- ★ an introduction naming the holidays and when they are celebrated
- ★ characteristics you feel make a good mother and father, citing specific examples
- ★ a conclusion explaining general and/or your own traditions associated with each holiday

Check your essay for proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
