



Matariki – Māori New Year (B1 - Lower Intermediate)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. What do people usually do on 31st December in your country?
2. Is it considered an important celebration? Why (not)?
3. What do you know about New Zealand?
4. How much do you know about its indigenous population, the Māori people?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

1. Māori New Year is in the middle of New Zealand's winter.
2. All Māori tribes celebrate Matariki in the same way.
3. Matariki will be in the second week of June this year.
4. During the 20th century, the celebration of Matariki declined.
5. As part of the celebrations, Māori enjoy food cooked on an open fire.
6. Matariki is also a time when Māori think of dead friends and relatives.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. Why is New Zealand one of the first places to welcome the new year?
2. What is Matariki?
3. When does it appear?
4. What does the date of Matariki depend on?
5. Why was the brightness of the stars considered important?
6. What happens at Matariki festivals?
7. What is the purpose of storytelling?
8. Why do people light fires at dawn and make food offerings to the stars?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from plural to singular.)

1. Our flight is at 5.00 in the morning, so we'll have to leave home before _____.
2. Ian put a pizza in the _____ and left it for too long, so it got completely burnt.
3. The sauce was easy to make. I just _____ mayonnaise and ketchup and added lemon juice.
4. The light in this room is too _____ for reading. Switch on that reading lamp, please.
5. Eggs have gone up in price because there's a _____ of them at the moment.
6. Diamond cutting is a skill that is often _____ from one generation to the next.

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam? (Paper 1, Reading: Part 5)

Choose the correct word in brackets for each space.

Matariki appears in the ¹_____ (early/first/soon/prime) morning sky in New Zealand during the midwinter months. It is a star cluster that is quite ²_____ (closest/closed/closely/close) to Earth. Therefore it is one of the brightest in the sky. Though it contains ³_____ (hundred/hundreds/a hundred/one hundred) of stars, only nine of them can be ⁴_____ (saw/seeing/seen/see) by the naked eye.

The star cluster is visible ⁵_____ (in/at/on/with) different times of the year in countries throughout the world. However, its name changes. In English it is known ⁶_____ (for/after/in/by) its ancient Greek name, Pleiades. In Japanese it is called Subaru.

F – Write about it

Write about the New Year celebrations in your city, town or village last year. Mention:

- community celebrations, like fireworks, concerts, parades, etc.
 - any unusual national or regional traditions;
 - how you and your family/friends celebrated New Year last year.
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Answers: Matariki – Māori New Year (B1)

B – Listen and answer

1. T 2. F – Each tribe celebrates Matariki in its own way. 3. F – It will be in the third week of June (on 20th June). 4. T 5. F – They enjoy food cooked underground. 6. T

C – Read and answer

1. Because of its time zone. (It is situated in the time zone that reaches midnight first.) 2. Matariki is the Māori name for the 'mother' (central star) of a cluster of stars known as the Pleiades. It is also the name of the cluster. 3. It appears just before dawn in midwinter. 4. It depends on the Māori lunar calendar and astronomical observations. 5. Because if the stars were bright, it meant there would be a good year (for crops). 6. There are songs, dances, prayers, performances and fireworks. People also eat traditional food and participate in story-telling. 7. To pass down Māori legends, traditions and knowledge.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. dawn 2. oven 3. blended 4. dim 5. shortage 6. passed down.

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam?

1. early 2. close 3. hundreds 4. seen 5. at 6. by