

# The Lazy Editor

We love this story. Too bad we couldn't be bothered to edit it! **Will you fix it for us?**



## Worst Party Ever?

Weird and wonderful birthday traditions around the world **BY MACKENZIE CARRO**

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the article, which contains many mistakes. Then follow the prompts in the box on p. 31.

**1** Imagine you are walking home from school when you hear a noise behind you. You whip around. Nothing is there, so you keep on walking. Then BAM! A thick cloud of powder smacked you in the face. Coughing and sputtering, you see a group of your friends hysterically laughing nearby. *Happy birthday!*

**2** Being coated with flour might sound like an odd way to be treated on your birthday, but in the Caribbean country of Jamaica, that's the tradition. Friends and families spent hours plotting exactly how to sneak up on the birthday girl or boy.

**3** Flouring is one of many birthday rituals observed around the world. But when did the whole idea of birthdays even start? Some historians believed it began with ancient Egyptian pharaohs,

who held feasts to commemorate their coronation day. (The day you became a pharaoh, you were considered "born" as a god.) Ancient Romans were the first to honor the birthdays of non-royals. Parties were limited to the wealthy and typically involves a gathering of friends and family, a banquet, and a gift to the guest of honor's guardian god.

**4** The parties familiar to us now—of the cake and candles variety—became popular in Germany about 200 years ago. It would be made in the morning and topped with burning candles. At night, the birthday boy or girl would blow out the candles and make a wish. Birthday parties spread to the U.S. in the mid-19th century, when cake ingredients like sugar became more widely available. Still, they were mostly modest—a cake, a few friends, some music. It wasn't until the early 1900s that parties became more elaborate, with party favors and presents. By the 1950s, a birthday party had become a standard part of American childhood. Kids came to expect a birthday party every year—and the bigger, the better.

**5** But individual birthdays are not celebrated in every country. In Vietnam, for example, everyone celebrates their birthdays together during Lunar New Year festivities. In Somalia, loved ones'

death anniversaries are honored instead. I think that's a really nice idea.

**6** In countries that do observe birthdays, traditions can get wacky. When it's your birthday in Brazil, you can expect someone to crack an egg on your head. In Hungary, people will tug on your earlobes. In some parts of Canada, you might wake up to find your mom has put butter on your nose. In Ireland, you'll be dangled upside down and gently bumped on the floor—once for every year of your age, plus an extra bump for luck. The shamrock is a symbol of Ireland.

**7** Not everyone has cake for birthdays, either. In Australia and New Zealand, they eat "fairy bread"—white bread slathered with butter and sprinkles. My friend Sam calls sprinkles "jimmies." In China, a birthday celebration isn't complete without *shou mian*, or "long-life noodles."

**8** Of course, all these birthday rituals are about more than having fun and gorging on tasty treats. In Mexico, piñatas are a birthday tradition. Whether it's baking a cake or throwing flour in a friend's face, every tradition is a way to celebrate peoples' lives and remind them that they are cherished. ●

DAVE CLEGG

JOHN CORBITT

### FIND IT/FIX IT

**DIRECTIONS:** Can you find and fix all the errors in the article? Write the answers on your own paper.

**Paragraphs 1, 2 & 3:** The verbs in these paragraphs are out of control! Please fix four verbs that are in the wrong tense.

**Paragraph 4:** Pronouns (such as *it*, *them*, and *one*) are called "vague" if what they refer to is not clear. Please correct two vague pronouns.

**Paragraphs 5, 6, 7 & 8:** Each paragraph has one sentence that is not relevant and just doesn't belong. Cross out those sentences.

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