

Harvest

What Is Harvest?

Harvest is the time of year when **crops** planted in the spring are ready to be collected. Long ago, a good harvest meant guaranteed food for the harsh winter months. The whole community would work together to gather the crop and celebrate the success of the **yield**. With no supermarkets, the harvest was the only source of food so a bountiful harvest was for everyone to celebrate.

Did You Know...?

The Harvest Moon is the Full Moon closest to the autumn **equinox**.



When Is Harvest?

Harvest season in the United Kingdom begins at the end of August or the start of September. In years gone by, there was an ancient festival called Lammass to celebrate the beginning of harvest. But it has always been the end that sees the most festivities.

In the past, the harvest would not end until the last **sheaf** of the crop arrived at the village and there was often a grand procession to welcome it.

In more modern times, the end of harvesting and the start of celebrations are marked by the Harvest Festival on the Sunday closest to the Harvest Moon. The festivities include Saint Michael's Mass on 29th September.



How Is Harvest Celebrated?

In the past, the awaited arrival of the last crop meant the beginning of the Harvest Supper. A magnificent meal of meats, vegetables, fruits and puddings would be shared by the community. Everyone from the lord of the land to the labourers from the fields joined in with singing, dancing and games.



In more recent years, the Harvest Festival has been mainly celebrated by schools and churches. Decorations of fruits and grains can be found in churches and there are songs, readings and prayers that give thanks for the harvest. In some schools, children are often asked to bring food to be shared out to those who need it in the local community.

Harvest Traditions

Harvest season is steeped in wonderful traditions created over hundreds of years. Different areas of the country have their own legends and ways of honouring them.

'Crying the Neck'

In Cornwall, the final sheaves of corn in the field are held high in the air and then cheered by everyone present.



Corn Dollies

'Dolls' are made from the last of the crop to honour the spirit of the corn within it.



Hollaing Largesse

In East Anglia, if an unsuspecting stranger passed by the harvesting in the fields, they would be expected to donate towards a Harvest Supper for all of the workers!



Glossary

crops: A plant that is grown in large quantities, especially as food.

equinox: One of the two times in the year when the Sun is above the equator and day and night are of equal length.

sheaf: A bundle of wheat tied together after being cut.

yield: The total amount of crops that are produced on an area of land.

Questions

1. Which months can harvest begin in? Tick **two**.

- ☐ September
- ☐ August
- ☐ July
- ☐ October

2. Draw **four** lines and match the words to their definitions.

procession	To remind people of an important event or person from the past with a special action or object.
commemorate	A person whose job involves hard, physical work, especially work that is done outdoors.
labourer	A line of people or vehicles that move along slowly, especially as part of a ceremony.
honour	Show great respect for somebody.

3. Number the events from 1–4 to show the order which they occurred in.

- ☐ The Harvest Supper was shared by the whole community.
- ☐ The festival of Lammis celebrated the beginning of the harvest.
- ☐ The last of the crop was welcomed with a procession.
- ☐ St Michael's Mass is held on 29th September.

4. Underline one word which shows that harvest season has lots of traditions associated with it.

Harvest season is steeped in wonderful traditions created over hundreds of years.

5. Look at the section **How Is Harvest Celebrated?**

Find and copy **two** examples of alliteration.

- _____
- _____

6. Fill in the missing words.

In the past, the awaited arrival of the last _____ meant the beginning of the Harvest _____.

7. ... so a bountiful harvest was for everyone to celebrate.

What does this part of the sentence imply about the impact of a bad harvest?

8. What do you think historians will gain from this text in the future? Explain your answer.
