



# HAPPY PURIM

For Middle School  
and High School

In English  
with Debbie

listen • understand • speak



## Read the text.

### Do you understand all the bolded words?

Purim is a Jewish holiday that is celebrated in the spring. It **commemorates** the story of the Book of Esther, in which the Jewish people living in Persia were saved from **extermination**. The holiday is known for its festive and joyful atmosphere, and it is often compared to Halloween because of the costumes and parties.

One of the most important **traditions** of Purim is the reading of the Megillah, the Book of Esther. This is done in the synagogue, and every time the name of the **villain**, Haman, is mentioned, the **congregation** boos and hisses. It's a lot of fun, and it creates a lively and energetic atmosphere.

Another popular tradition is the giving of 'mishloach manot', or gift baskets. These are usually filled with sweets and other treats, and they are given to friends, family members, and even strangers. The idea is to spread joy and happiness on the holiday, and the **exchange** of gift baskets is a way to do that.

Costumes are also a big part of the Purim celebration. Many people dress up as characters from the Book of Esther, such as Queen Esther, King Ahasuerus, and Mordecai. Others choose more modern costumes, such as superheroes or movie **characters**. Some just add a few accessories such as hats, belts, and swords. There are even costume contests, and some people go all out with their outfits.

Food is another important aspect of Purim. One of the traditional foods is hamantaschen, which are triangle-shaped cookies filled with fruit preserves or chocolate. These cookies are said to **represent** Haman's three-cornered hat or his ears, and they are delicious. Other popular foods include kreplach, which are dumplings filled with meat or cheese, and challah, which is a **braided** bread.

In addition to the synagogue readings, there are also parties and **parades** held in many cities around the world. These events feature music, dancing, and lots of food. Some of the larger parades even include **floats** and performances. It's a great way to celebrate the holiday with friends and family.

**Overall**, Purim is a joyous and festive holiday that brings people together. **Whether** you are reading the Megillah, giving gift baskets, or dressing up in a costume, there is something for everyone to enjoy.



## **Discuss the following questions.**

How does the story of Purim, as recounted in the Book of Esther, resonate with modern-day issues and themes?

In what ways do the various traditions of Purim, such as the Megillah reading, giving of mishloach manot, and wearing costumes, contribute to the overall sense of community and togetherness?

What role does food play in cultural and religious celebrations, and how does the significance of foods like hamantaschen and kreplach enhance the Purim experience?

The comparison between Purim and Halloween is often made due to their shared elements of costumes and festivities. Do you think this comparison is apt, or are there significant differences between the two holidays?

Discuss the importance of storytelling and reenactment in preserving cultural and religious heritage, as exemplified by the tradition of reading the Megillah and the lively reactions to certain characters within the story.

How does the joyful and festive atmosphere of Purim contrast with the solemnity of other Jewish holidays, such as Yom Kippur or Tisha B'Av? What role do these different emotional tones play within the broader spectrum of Jewish observance?

Considering the themes of justice and courage within the story of Purim, how might these themes resonate with contemporary social and political issues?

In what ways does the celebration of Purim reflect the values and ethos of Judaism as a religion and culture? How does it contribute to the transmission of these values across generations?

## Clues/Tasks:

1. Find an object that represents "mishloach manot" in the text.
2. Locate a costume accessory mentioned in the text that is associated with Purim.
3. Find a word that means 'death'.
4. Find a phrase that means 'to wear a fancy dress costume'.
5. Find a word that is a synonym for 'plaited'.
6. Find an antonym for the word 'hero'.
7. What type of reaction does the congregation have when the name of the villain is mentioned during the Megillah reading?
8. What is one key similarity mentioned between Purim and Halloween in the text?

## Write your findings here.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

