

HERBS: SEASONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITY

DESCRIPTION

Students will learn about cultural traditions associated with spring and make nature art.

MATERIALS PROVIDED	MATERIALS NEEDED
• Images related to Nowruz • Acrostic Poem template	• For Acrostic Poem: Copies of template • For Spring Flower Crowns: Green construction paper, scissors, stapler, colored paper, markers, tape

PREPARATION

We provided two spring celebration activities to choose from, Acrostic Poems for older students and Flower Crowns for younger students. Decide which project the students will complete and collect the needed materials.

BACKGROUND FOR LEADER

Nowruz (pronounced noh-rooz), meaning “new day” in Persian, is an ancient festival celebrating the start of spring and the rebirth of nature. It symbolizes renewal and fresh starts. This New Year is observed by millions of people across Central Asia the Middle East, bringing together diverse communities to celebrate shared values of renewal and hope.

ACTION

A. Explain the following information about Nowruz to the students:

1. Nowruz (pronounced noh-rooz) is an ancient festival celebrating spring and the rebirth of nature. It starts on the first day of spring, typically March 20 or 21, and lasts 13 days.
 - Nowruz means “new day” in Persian. The festival symbolizes renewal and a fresh start.
 - Nowruz is celebrated by around 300 million people across Central Asia and the Middle East, including Iran and Afghanistan. **Share the map that shows the region where Nowruz is celebrated (Image 1).**

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2. People celebrate Nowruz in many ways, depending on what country they live in.
 - Traditions include spring cleaning, celebratory music and dances, visiting with family, and reading poetry. On the 13th and last day of Nowruz, people spend the day outside in nature and have picnics. **Show examples of Nowruz celebrations (Images 2-4)**
 - Families also set out a haft sin table (pronounced haft seen). The table displays seven ingredients that start with the letter 'S' in the Persian language. Each item symbolizes a different concept, such as health (garlic), patience (vinegar) and beauty (apple). **Show examples of a haft sin table (Images 5-6)**
3. Culinary herbs are a huge part of the celebrations!
 - Herbs are used in large amounts in Persian cooking. Herbs are called sabzi.
 - Some traditional foods made at Nowruz include kookoo sabzi, which is an egg dish full of herbs, and sabzi polo, which is a rice dish full of herbs.

B. Explain that we are going to do an activity to celebrate spring!

OPTION 1: Acrostic Poems (good for older students)

Students will use the template provided to create a poem about spring. This can be done as a whole group activity, in pairs, or individually.

Supplies Needed

- Enough copies of the acrostic poem template to facilitate individual, pair, or group work.

Instructions:

1. Tell students that they will use the template provided to create an acrostic poem about spring.
2. Have kids either work individually, in pairs, or in groups.
3. Share these guidelines:
 - Each line must start with the letter provided.
 - The poem doesn't have to rhyme.
 - You can use just one word per line, or a whole sentence.
 - Use adjectives and sensory words to make it more vivid.

Examples:

CAT

Cuddly

Active

Tall

DOG

Dashing through the park

Often fetching sticks

Gentle, happy friend

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OPTION 2: Flower Crowns (good for younger students)

What signifies spring more than fresh blooming flowers? Turning spring into a wearable art form!

Supplies Needed:

- Green construction paper, 11"x17"
- Scissors
- Assorted colors of construction paper
- Markers
- Stapler
- Tape

Instructions:

1. Cut green construction paper in half lengthwise. Give each student one piece.
2. Have students cut their paper to make it look like blades of grass. The leader can draw lines for students to cut along if needed.
3. Help each student wrap their paper around their head. Leaders should staple the ends together so the crown fits.
4. Have students cut out flowers from various colors of construction paper. They can use markers to draw the center of the flowers.
5. Use tape to fasten flowers to the blades of grass.
6. You can have kids wear their crowns and go on a spring parade!



**We are
here!**

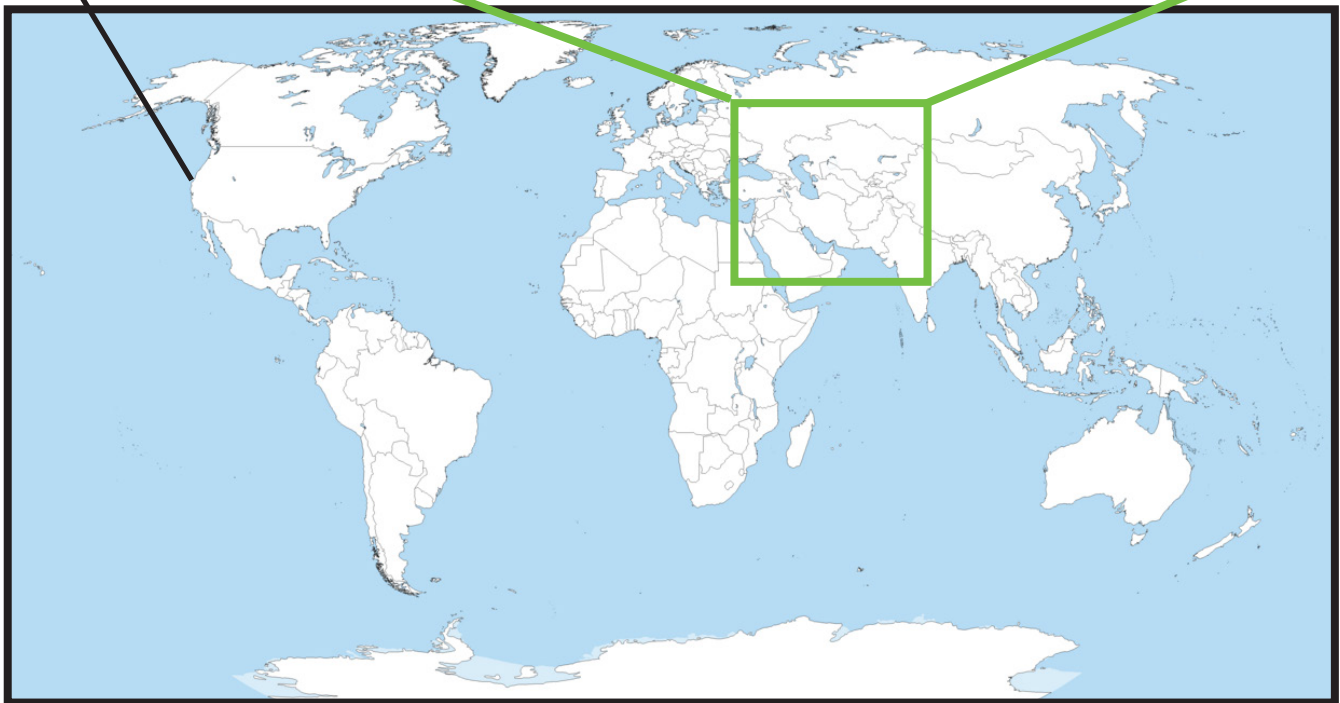


Image 1.

Map showing where Nowruz has been celebrated for over 3,000 years (it is currently a public holiday in countries that are dark green).



Images 2-4.
Nowruz celebrations.



Images 5-6.
Haft sin tables.

SPRING ACROSTIC POEM

Write an acrostic poem about spring. Start each line of your poem with the letter before the line.

S _____

P _____

R _____

I _____

N _____

G _____