

Grade 4 Informational

Pizza

How much pizza do you eat? Did you know that the average American eats 23 pounds of pizza each year? Many pick pepperoni and cheese as their favorite kind. Pizza even has its own celebration; February 9th is International Pizza Day.

Many people think that pizza was invented in Italy. However, the early Greeks were among the first to bake a large, round flat bread. It wasn't until the 18th century that the flat breads called "pizza" were sold on the streets and markets of Italy. Many poor Italians ate pizza because it was tasty, filling, and cheap to make.

The first pizzas were very different from what we think of as pizza today. They consisted of flat bread topped with olive oil and spices. It wasn't until a special pizza was created in 1889 for Italy's queen that tomato, mozzarella cheese, and basil were used. These ingredients represent the three colors of the Italian flag: red, white and green.

Beginning in the 1900's, Italian immigrants to the United States started selling pizza in small cafes in New York and Chicago. The first American pizzas were known as "tomato pie". Placing cheese, toppings, followed by tomato sauce on bread made tomato pies. You can still order a tomato pie in many Italian bakeries in the Northeastern United States.

In Chicago, many people order a pizza pie. This is a deep-dish pizza with deep piles of toppings and a flaky crust that rises above the plate. In 1957, grocery stores started to sell frozen pizza. It is now one of the most popular kinds of frozen food. Today you can choose from a variety of pizza crusts: thin, thick, or stuffed. An array of toppings allows people to make the perfect pie. It's no wonder that pizza has become an American favorite.

Grade 4 Narrative

The Great No-Vacation Vacation

The “Great No-Vacation Vacation” was Dad’s idea. He planned for Maggie’s whole family to visit Grandma and Grandpa at their farm. Everyone would spend the week doing repairs and other chores, because Dad said it was a lot of work for two people.

Maggie did not mind helping with repairs. She liked to do chores. In fact, she wanted to help. The problem was finding something she could do. Maggie’s cousins were either much older or much younger than she. Maggie was ten. She was five years older than the oldest preschooler, and she was five years younger than the youngest teenager. When the whole family was together, Maggie was right in the middle.

Once Maggie’s family arrived at Grandma and Grandpa’s farm, everyone hugged Maggie. They said they were happy to see her. A short while later, Aunt Mary took the younger cousins to feed the chickens. Maggie felt she was too old to go with them. Maggie’s other aunts and uncles started working, and the older cousins divided up other jobs. They felt Maggie was too young to help them.

Some cousins scraped paint off the toolshed. One cut the grass. Another trimmed the lilac bushes. Others weeded the garden. Maggie offered to help her cousins, but they always turned her down. They said they were almost finished or that the job was too hard for her.

For the next two days, Maggie tried to find ways to help. She watched everyone trim trees, paint fences, and hang wallpaper. She stood by while the others fixed a broken window and repaired the barn. People scurried everywhere. Grandma and Grandpa’s farm looked like a beehive. Maggie began to feel left out.

“It’s hard to be in the middle,” Maggie said to herself as she watched the others. Then she had an idea.

Maggie ran inside and grabbed her camera from her backpack. She went back outside to catch her relatives in action. She still watched everyone, but this time she saw them through the lens of her camera: Grandpa was on a ladder in the garage, tearing out the old ceiling. Cousin Mike was hauling tree branches to the pasture with Grandpa’s tractor. Aunt Terry was brushing thick, red paint onto the barn. Cousin Leah was cleaning out the goldfish pond. Grandma was planting flowers along the side of the house. Maggie took a picture of each of them. By the end of the day, she had a record of all events.

On Saturday, Maggie and her mother went to a store in town and printed out the pictures. They also bought a photograph album. They spent the afternoon arranging the

photos in the album.

Sunday was the last day of the “Great No-Vacation Vacation.” Everyone gathered in the backyard for a picnic lunch. Uncle Pat said, “We did so much work this week! How will we remember everything?”

That’s when Maggie showed the family the photograph album she had made for Grandma and Grandpa. Everyone crowded around her to see the pictures.

“Oh, look,” Grandpa said, “that’s me!”

Everyone began to recall the events of the week. One picture showed Uncle Mark with a wet paintbrush stuck to his overalls. Aunt Laura’s favorite picture showed her with twigs sticking out of her hair from clipping hedges. She looked like a deer with antlers.

Grandma said, “Maggie you did a great job of helping us remember this week! I would like to add one more picture to the album. Let’s get a picture of the whole family together.”

Dad set the camera on a timer so that everyone could be in the picture. Grandma and Grandpa, Mom and Dad, and all the aunts, uncles, and cousins smiled at the camera. And there was Maggie—right in the middle.