

S4.3 WORK, LEISURE AND CELEBRATIONS

S4.3.2 We will interview an old person to see how he used to spend his free time.



A. Read this interview to get an idea of how people spent their leisure time.

- Toni** Grandpa Pinu, thank you for agreeing to talk to me about what you used to do in your free time when you were young.
- Grandpa** Well, you know how much I enjoy telling stories. Go ahead, Ton!
- Toni** How much free time did you use to have?
- Grandpa** Ton, you have far more free time nowadays. Life has changed. My dad was a carpenter, he used to make things out of wood. For as long as I can remember, I used to spend long hours helping him in his workshop. So, I can say that our only free time was on Sundays. The shop wasn't open on Sundays, so we used to go to mass early in the morning and then have the rest of the day off.
- Toni** So, what did you do on Sundays?
- Grandpa** In summer, we would either go to a feast in one of the nearby villages, or else, since we lived in Ħal Għaxaq, we would go down to Birżebbuġa for a swim. I can still remember Birżebbuġa bay full of folk singers, all strumming their guitars, rhyming and singing.
- Toni** And what about winter?
- Grandpa** In winter we used to love going to my uncles' fields. We would spend the day out in the open air, if it wasn't raining, of course. And listen, one more thing. When it was harvest time, between March and June, the shop would hardly open once, in a week. Everyone would go down to the fields to gather the onions and potatoes and to harvest the wheat. All

the men, and sometimes even the women, would help with the work in the fields.

Toni So didn't you have any hobbies, Grandpa?

Grandpa Like many other men, I used to love bird hunting and trapping. My brother Masu was more into it than me and I used to go with him most of the time.

Toni And what about feasts? Did you celebrate any feasts?

Grandpa Feasts were very important then Ton, more than they are now. No one used to work on feast days, so they gave us an opportunity to relax. On Christmas Day, for example, just like nowadays, we would put up the Christmas crib, go to mass and enjoy a nice dinner. On New Year's Day, which we called "I-Istrina", we, as children, would receive a lot of presents. Then on Carnival, before Lent started, both children and adults would dress up in Carnival costumes. During Lent we used to fast and not eat any sweets. On Easter Sunday, the parish priest used to come to bless our houses. Naturally he would also bless my workshop.

Toni Did you use to go to the "Imnarja"?

Grandpa Of course, could you imagine anyone not going to Busketto to listen to the folk singers and to watch the animal races at Saqqajja? We used to look forward very eagerly to the "Imnarja" celebrations.

Toni Grandpa, I read that in the past, a lot of men used to get drunk in the bars. Is that true?

Grandpa Of course it isn't! In the evening, I used to be so tired that, after coming back from the workshop, I would wash, eat, have a word with my family and then go straight to bed. Everyone went to sleep early because, not only didn't we have television, we didn't even have electricity. Naturally, everyone used to wake up very early in the morning.

Toni So Grandpa, didn't you ever play? Because so far, all you've talked about is work!

Grandpa Of course we used to play, Ton. Especially on Saturdays and Sundays. We children would spend a lot of time outside, in the street. There was no traffic, so we had the streets to ourselves.

Toni What games did you play, Grandpa?

Grandpa The girls used to play beads, or hopscotch or with a piece of elastic. We boys would play with marbles, or a game of "Xixu", "Čirku", or "taž-Žiernel". We also liked making carts on wheels so we could run about on them.

Toni Thanks for all the information, Grandpa. I'm really going to have a lot to talk about tomorrow, at school, when my teacher starts asking us questions.

Grandpa You're welcome, Ton! I love talking about my childhood!

Answer the questions.

1. Where did Grandpa Pinu spend most of his weekdays, when he was young?



2. Name:

something they used to do on Sunday in summer

something they used to do on Sunday in winter

3. Name a hobby that most men used to have in the past.

4. Why did people go to sleep early when Grandpa Pinu was young?

5. What used to happen when there was a lot of work to be done in the fields, during harvest time?

6. Name a feast on which the children used to get a lot of presents.



7. Mention an occasion when both children and adults would dress up in fancy costumes.

8. During which feast are animal races held at Saqqajja in Rabat?

9. Name:

a) two games which were popular with girls

b) two games which were most popular with boys

10. Is there anything Grandpa Pinu mentioned and which we still do today during our leisure time?
