

## C 5.1 LET'S CELEBRATE



### C 5.1.5.

We explore the importance of celebrating together as a Nation.

#### A. What is a Nation?

A Nation is us altogether, as the Maltese People. The Maltese islands, which comprise of Malta, Gozo, Comino and St. Paul's Islands form the Maltese Nation.

The Maltese people join together and celebrate the National feasts, as a united people. When we celebrate a national feast many people do not work and the children have no school. Let us together go through some memories of important happenings in our country's history.

#### Il-Vitorja - Otto Settembre (8 th September):

Although this is a religious feast, it is a national feast because we celebrate the defeat of the Turks during the Great Seige by the Maltese, together with the Knights. The Great Seige monument is found in Valletta in front of the Law Courts.



#### A. Together we will watch the video about The 8th of September:

<http://youtu.be/sIFrzN3370Y>

#### B. Now that you have watched the video, read the following and underline the right answer.

1. The 8 th September is

- a) One of the five Maltese national feasts.
  - b) The feast of Santa Marija.
  - c) The feast of Independence.
2. '**Otto Settembre**' means
- a) The first of September.
  - b) The 8<sup>th</sup> of September.
  - c) The day of war.
3. The Otto Settembre monument is the work of the Maltese sculptor
- a) Dun Karm Psaila.
  - b) Ġlormu Cassar.
  - c) Antonio Sciortino.
4. During Otto Settembre we commemorate
- a) The birthday of Malta and Gozo.
  - b) The freedom of Malta and Gozo.
  - c) The defeat of the Turks by the Knights and the Maltese in 1565 and the end of the second World War.
5. The Otto Settembre monument is found
- a) In Birgu.
  - b) In Marsa.
  - c) In Valletta.
6. When the Otto Settembre monument was uncovered the talks were
- a) In Maltese only.
  - b) In Maltese, in English and in Italian.
  - c) In Maltese and in French.
7. The Otto Settembre monument comprises

- a) Four figures.
- b) Two figures and a sword.
- c) Three figures.

8. The figure in the middle of the monument represents

- a) The people of Malta and Gozo.
- b) The Pope.
- c) Maltese men.

9. The monument is in the square in front of

- a) Auberge de Castille.
- b) The President's palace.
- c) The Maltese Law Courts.

10. Otto Settembre is also known as

- a) Victory day.
- b) Independence day.
- c) Republic day.

**C. Read, then reply.**

1. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of September of every year, the Maltese people commemorate two important occasions in the history of Malta. These are the winning of the Great Siege (1565) and the end of the Second World War (1943).



*Jean De Valette*



2. In May 1565 when the Maltese islands were run by the Knights of Saint John, the Turks attacked the Maltese

islands. The Turks had 180 ships and 40,000 soldiers. The knights and the Maltese were led by the Grand Master Jean De Valette; in all there were around 9,000 people to resist the Turks. The Turks won the Fortress of St. Elmo but Victoriosa and Senglea held their ground.

3. On the 7th September 1565, aid arrived from Sicily and the Turks were defeated and left Malta. In remembrance of such a major win, Birgu started to be called *Città Vittoriosa* which means 'winning city'.



*The Victory Monument - Vittoriosa*

4. In Vittoriosa and in Valletta there are monuments which commemorate this occasion.

5. More than 300 years later. Malta was now occupied by the British. On the 10th of June 1940, Italy declared a war against England and hence Malta found itself face to face with its enemies. This was the start of three years of great suffering for the Maltese people.



*The Royal Theatre destroyed*

6. The next day on the 11th of June 1940, the first Italian airplanes arrived to attack Malta. It was not the first or last attack. German airplanes started to join the Italian planes. Thousands of people who lived close to the Grand Harbour had to evacuate their homes; to go and live in other parts of Malta.
7. The people who now slept in shelters suffered from hunger as the ships carrying food (convoys) were not arriving. In August 1942, when we were about to give up for lack of food, the convoy of Santa Marija arrived on the 15th August 1942.
8. As a recognition of bravery, King George VI of England, on the 15th April, 1942 awarded the medal of the *George Cross* to the Maltese Islands.

9. Every year, on the 8th of September, the boat Regatta is held in the Grand Harbour and other commemorative ceremonies are held in remembrance of the two sieges that of Victoriousa and that of Valletta.



*Passage adapted from a writing by Winston L Zammit*

**Answer these questions.**

1. What do we commemorate every year on the 8th September?

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2. Who attacked the Maltese Islands between May and September 1565?

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3. Who was the *Grand Master* of the *Order of St. John* at the time?

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4. Name two *Maltese towns* which were attacked during the *Great Siege*.

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5. In the first picture we can see a statue of the *Grand Master De Valette*.  
Where can we find this statue?

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6. In the second picture we see the *Victory monument* which we find in *Victoriosa*. Where can we see the other monument known as the '*Otto Settembre*' Monument?

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7. Name the famous *Maltese sculptor* who gave us this *Otto Settembre* monument.

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8. What happened on the 10th of June 1940?

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9. In the third picture we see the Royal Theatre after it was bombed. Write out a thought you have when you see such a picture.

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10. In the fourth and last picture we see a boat race. What do we call this race?

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11. When is this race held?

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12. Where is it held?

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