

Nombre: _____

Fecha: _____

Read each article and answer the questions that can be found in the passage.

Article 1: Quinceañeras

Quinceañeras, or commonly called Quince Años (Fifteen Years), is one of the most beloved and precious moments in any young girl's life. Looking into the elaborate and exquisite ceremony, one wonders where it all began, what does it all mean, and why do Hispanics celebrate Quinceañeras. One the outside of the ceremony it may seem like just a very dressed up version of a coming out party or a Hispanic version of a Sweet Sixteen. However, let's look behind the fancy dress and beautiful young girl and see the history and cultural value of the Quince años celebration.



Photo source: ourweddingdance.com

The beginning of the Quinceañera begins not with the festivities, as many believe but in the preparation of the upcoming event. In some families, the planning begins up to two years in advance of the actual day. During the preparation time, much dreaming and planning takes place with many friends and more importantly family members involved. There is much work to be done and many details to be worked on. From planning menus to choosing an area for the celebration, hours of time are dedicated and spent to ensure that the Quinceañera has the day of her dreams.

The key components of the traditional Quinceañera celebration are as follows. The dress of the Quinceañera is one of the most stunning details and traditionally is white signifying her purity. Pale pink is also a very common and favorite color. The dress is similar to a wedding dress in its grandeur, yet no train is placed upon a Quinceañera dress, but all of the splendor and beauty is there. Much like a ball gown and covered in fine lace and satiny material, the dress of the Quinceañera makes her appear to float as if an angel upon a cloud.

The Quinceañera begins the celebration with a mass service where she is be accompanied by her full court, consisting of 14 damas, 14 chambelans, as well as her personal *chambelan* (escort) for the evening. During the mass, there are children who act to place the pillow she will kneel upon at the altar, sprinkle flowers in her path as she makes her way to the altar. At the end of the ceremony the children pass out bolos or small gifts to those who attended the mass as the Quinceañera places her bouquet upon the altar of the for the Virgin Maria.

Once the mass has ended, the party moves over to the party, usually held in a reception hall. All of the guests are seated and the Quinceañera makes a secret entrance and is hidden behind a curtain or stage. Once all of the guests have arrived and they are all seated, the court of the Quinceañera is introduced and the Quinceañera makes a much-anticipated entrance. The dance of the Quinceañera commences with a *vals* (waltz) with her father followed by her chambelan.



There is usually a toast in honor of the Quinceañera where all in attendance have the opportunity to wish her well and make a toast. The cake is a masterpiece by any standards and usually is ornately decorated with miniature statues of the Quinceañera and her full court. The cake is usually multi-tiered and beautifully decorated. The ceremony of lighting the fifteen candles upon her cake takes place in different places according to the region. During the party 15 guests, usually family members or very close friends of the family are called up to light the candles and a specially prepared dedication is said for each of the named guests.



When the Quinceañera enters the festivities, she enters wearing flat shoes. These shoes are worn during the *misa de acción de gracias* (thanksgiving mass – not to be confused with the holiday!). At her entrance to the party, and in South Florida her blessing, the young girl’s father changes her shoes from flat shoes to high heels, symbolizing her changing into a woman and she leaves wearing those shoes. Towards the end of the celebration, the Quinceañera walks around, passes out the ribbons and personally thanks each of the guests who attended her Quinceañera celebration. This usually draws an end to the formal celebration of the Quinceañera, having begun the day as a child and ending the day affirmed in her newly acknowledged position of young woman, loved and adored by all who see her, but none as much as the family who gracefully brought her to this day.

Source: <http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art40429.asp>

Article 1 Questions:

1. The Quinceañera is a celebration for what age? _____
2. In some families, planning begins up to _____ in advance to the day of the event.
3. The traditional white color of a Quinceañera dress represents _____. What is another occasion in which a woman might wear a white dress?

4. What is the longest in advance that you have ever planned for an event? What event was it? Explain. _____

5. What does the changing of shoes represent?

6. If you were planning a quince, who would be your chambelanes? Name 14 couples.

7. During the party, 15 guests each come up and do what?

8. Translate the following terms from this article:

- Chambelan: _____
- Vals: _____

Article 2: Coming of Age - The Quinceañera Celebration

The *quinceañera* celebrates a girl's coming of age on her 15th birthday (also called her *quince años* or fifteen years). It is a tradition celebrated throughout Latin America, and Hispanic communities around the world. This is an important moment in a young woman's life, considered to be as important as her wedding day.

The roots of the celebration lie within the indigenous peoples of Latin America. In the Mayan and Aztec cultures, a girl nearing the age of 15 was taken from her family to prepare to enter womanhood and marriage. She would learn the history and the traditions of her people. Other lessons included how to be a responsible adult in the village and a good wife in marriage. When the girl returned to her community she entered as a woman, an occasion of great celebration. When the conquistadors arrived, this tradition was integrated into the Catholic religion. 400 years later, the *quinceañera* celebration remains a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood.

The modern Quinceañera greatly resembles a wedding. The girl wears a long gown of white or pastel colors (such as pink or lavender), with gloves, flat shoes, and a head piece. She also carries a bouquet of flowers. Relatives and friends (who are instrumental in helping with the costs and preparations of the event) arrive with gifts in the morning. Musicians play music and Las Mañanitas, a birthday song. Then friends and family go to the church for a special birthday mass.

Fourteen pairs of *damas* (girls) and *chambelanes* (young men), also known as the honor court, walk down the aisle. Each couple represents one year of the girl's life. The quinceañera is then escorted down the aisle by her parents. During the hour long mass, those selected will speak and make special presentations of gifts. Traditional gifts include a tiara (symbolizing that the girl is

a princess before God), a bracelet (symbolizing the unending circle of life), a pair of earrings (reminder to listen to God's word), and a cross, bible and rosary (representing religious faith). The girl lays her bouquet on the altar as a gift of gratitude to the Virgin Mary, and ends the mass with a traditional speech and a prayer of dedication.

After the mass, there is a party with mariachi and modern music, food, and dancing. Traditional foods served are mole, rice, chicken or turkey, tamales, and a large multi-tiered cake.

During the reception, there is a "crowning ceremony" where a parent or godparent (*madrina* or *padrino*) replaces the headpiece worn by the quinceañera with the tiara. A Scepter (an emblem of authority and responsibility) is also presented to her, in recognition of her passage into adulthood. The young woman will then present her younger sister with a porcelain doll. This symbolizes that she is ready to move on to the next stage of her life by leaving her childhood and becoming a woman. After the presentation of the doll, her father will change her shoes from flats to heels. This symbolizes that he accepts this change in her life. A toast will be made to honor the young lady.

After these traditions, the young woman will waltz with her father because he has always been the man in her life. Her father will then hand her over to dance with her escort. This celebration culminates with the *festejada*- a dance to a traditional waltz by the quinceañera and her escort with the honor court joining in.

Source: http://www.mendycolbert.com/BV1ch6_Coming_of_Age.doc

Article 2 Questions:

1. The tradition of the Quinceañera comes from the indigenous people of _____.
2. The modern Quinceañera greatly resembles a _____.
3. Who helps with the cost of the event? _____
4. Each *chambelan* couple represents _____.
5. Name some foods that might be served after the ceremony:

6. Define the following terms from this article:
 - Las Mañanitas - _____
 - Festejada - _____
 - Madrina/Padrino - _____
 - Dama - _____

Article 3: Traditional Quinceañera Gifts and Accessories



-Tiara: The Tiara symbolizes a princess before God. This usually replaces a headpiece worn by Quinceañera until she is blessed during the festivities.

-Scepter: A Scepter is placed in the hand of the Quinceañera to symbolize her taking on adult roles as well as the authority that goes with her new position in the family and society.

-Prayer Book or Bible: A prayer book or Bible is given to the Quinceañera as a resource to keep the word of God in her life.

-A Ring or Bracelet is given to symbolize the never-ending circle of life, the never-ending cycle of womanhood as well as symbolic of her future contributions.

-Earrings: Earrings are given to remind her to keep her ears in tune to the voice of God, or to listen to the word of God as well as the world around her.

-Medallion: A medallion may be given to the Quinceañera as a symbol of her faith or as a reminder of her Quinceañera's celebration, usually numbered 15.

-A Rosario: A Rosario or Rosary Beads are often given in combination with the bible as a useful tool in prayer life of any young Catholic Woman.

-Bouquet: Used if a mass service is held to place at the Altar of the Virgin Maria as a gift of thanksgiving.

-Quinceañera Doll: A Quinceañera Doll is used to hold ribbons with the Quinceañera's name and the date of her birth imprinted upon them, to be passed out as bolos to guests who attended the reception.

-Pillows: There are several pillows used during a Quinceañera ceremony. One is for kneeling during the service, one for carry her new shoes and usually one for the Tiara she receives.

Source: <http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art40433.asp>

Article 3 Questions:

1. Which of the gifts represents the never-ending circle of life? _____
2. Think about your own birthdays that you have celebrated. Have you ever received any gifts that were very special to you? What was it?

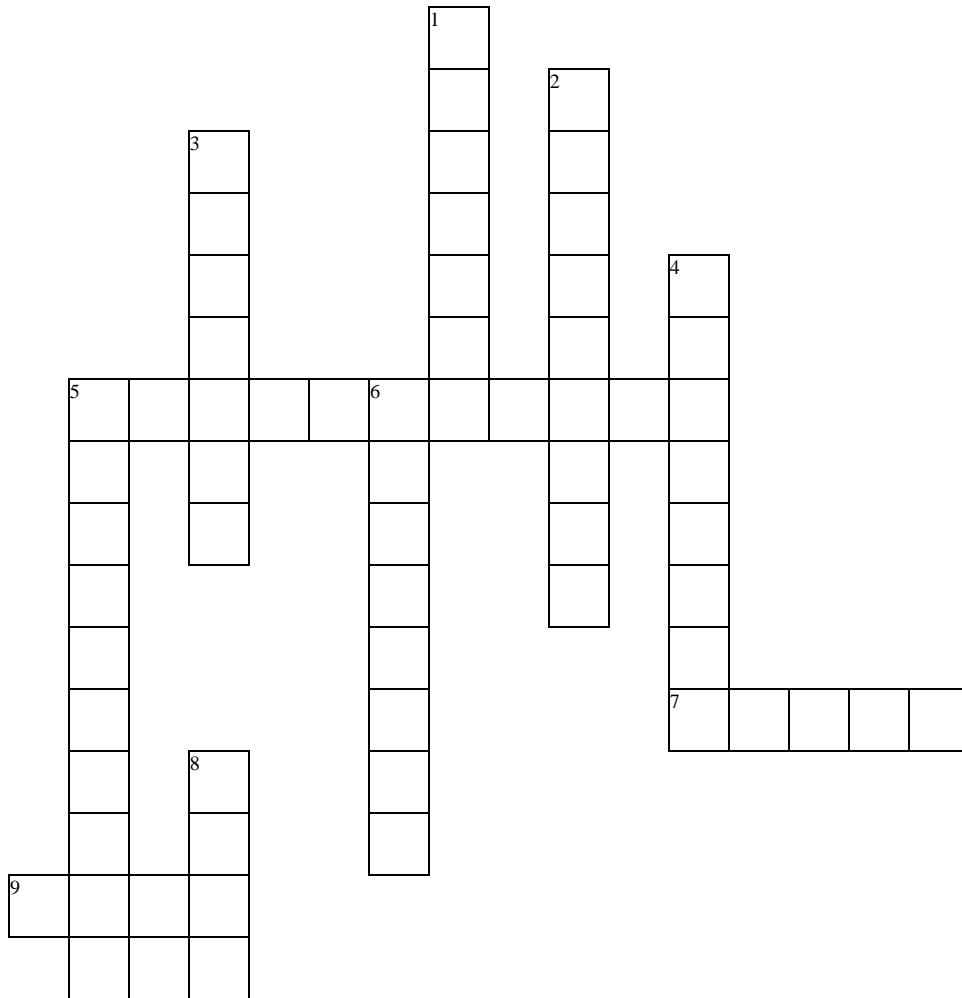
3. Name the three uses of pillows during the ceremony.

4. Why do you think the bracelet represents the unending circle of life? Why would a gift like this be important to this event?

5. **Draw** six of the gifts that are given and write what each represents.

<p>Gift: _____ Meaning: _____</p>	<p>Gift: _____ Meaning: _____</p>
<p>Gift: _____ Meaning: _____</p>	<p>Gift: _____ Meaning: _____</p>
<p>Gift: _____ Meaning: _____</p>	<p>Gift: _____ Meaning: _____</p>

Crucigrama



Across

- 5. 15th birthday
- 7. symbolizes being a princess before God
- 9. used to hold ribbons with the Quinceañera's name and the date of her birth

Down

- 1. godmother
- 2. escort
- 3. godfather
- 4. symbolizes the unending circle of life
- 5. 15 years
- 6. a reminder to keep your ears in tune to the voice of God
- 8. waltz