**The sentences from A-E have been removed from the text.**

**Choose the one that best fits each gap.**

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A.

*The festivities begin with the Flight of the Angel, featuring a woman in full carnival regalia who descends from a bell tower in St. Mark's Square.*

B.

*Creative disguises and parody are characteristic of carnival in many countries, which historically gave oppressed and marginalized groups the opportunity to subvert norms of class, race and gender.*

C.

*That's longer than any carnival in the world.*

D.

*Rent a costume, or fashion your own with a makeshift cape and a beautiful mask purchased from any cart along the canals.*

E.

*In the old days, gangs would battle one another to assert territory.*

F.

*But it actually had an elite, predominantly European character until the 20th century, when African and indigenous traditions -- in particular samba music -- began to play a central role in the celebrations.*

G.

*Carnival in these Caribbean islands reflects their multicultural heritage.*

H.

*Other members of the tribe along with spectators march randomly through their neighbourhood, where they may encounter other Indians.*

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**It's carnival season**, that pre-Lent period of collective frenzy that celebrates overindulgence and transgression before Ash Wednesday ushers in a more sober time of prayer, penance and abstention in the weeks leading up to Easter.

But the roots of carnival are both older and newer than the Christian traditions that started

in Europe and have spread with colonialism throughout much of the world. Ancient Greek and Roman pagan rituals as well as the folklore, music and dance of colonized peoples have forged colourful expressions of each country's respective history and cultures.

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| 1. |

Here are some of the most dazzling carnival celebrations around the world.

**New Orleans**

As winter drags into March, the Big Easy will explode into a cacophony of colour, music and dance. Carnival started here January 6, but it's the weekend before Mardi Gras, or Fat Tuesday , that has become the biggest street party in the United States.

Contrary to reputation, carnival here is largely a family friendly affair, with the most authentic events taking place far from the rum-soaked, topless naughtiness of the French Quarter. If you're looking to experience the unique traditions of New Orleans' carnival, you need to find the "krewes," neighbourhood social clubs that organize their own parades, complete with flashy floats and their own carnival king and queen.

Be sure to bring bags to catch the "throws" -- beads, stuffed animals and other trinkets that are tossed to the crowd. Information about parade schedules, routes and other carnival events and history is available online, although routes are subject to change up until the day of the parade.

New Orleans also illustrates the story of carnival throughout the New World: Groups that were initially excluded from the festivities, especially people of African descent, created their own parallel celebrations, which over time flourished and became fundamental features of carnival. In New Orleans, nothing demonstrates this history like the Mardi Gras Indians.

Distinct from the krewes, these "tribes," or "gangs," began appearing in late 19th century New Orleans, representing specific neighbourhoods.

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Today, they battle for the title of "prettiest" big chief, the ceremonial leader of each tribe.

The chief and his family work on his carnival costume throughout the year, constructing stunning suits of satin, beads, sequins and rhinestones and enormous plumed headdresses that shake and sway like some rare, exotic creature.

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They dance to the sounds of jazz, blues and the distinctive call-and-response that brings the sounds of West Africa to the rich musical melting pot of Louisiana. Mardi Gras Indians do not march on specific city-sanctioned routes, so talk to locals and tourist information officials to find out where and when to see them.

**Rio de Janeiro**

Carnival, or carnaval, in Rio tends to conjure images of glittering bikinis, body paint and huge plumed headdresses.

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That shift helped made Rio's carnival the biggest, most spectacular one on the planet.

The huge Samba Parade is held at the massive Sambodromo, an exhibition area designed by Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer. Here you'll see Rio's famous samba schools compete all night while spectators generate a powerful energy in the stands.

As throughout the Americas, the heart and soul of Rio's carnival is in working class neighbourhoods and favelas, the city's mountainside slums, many of which have become considerably safer for tourists in recent years. Each neighbourhood has its own samba street bands and costumed participants, along with throngs of locals and tourists who dance along.

**Venice, Italy**

Half a world away from Rio's dazzling sun-drenched street party, Venice offers possibly the world's most romantic carnival destination. Get ready to be transported back in time as ladies in Renaissance-era gowns and men in ruffled coats and powdered wigs stroll through the city's famous piazzas while gondoliers transport partygoers to elaborate feasts and masquerade balls.

From mid-February until Shrove Tuesday (March 4), the city is a place of mystery and enchantment.

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The square is the centre of carnival action, with jugglers, acrobats and a variety of musicians. On Shrove Tuesday, known elsewhere as Fat Tuesday, the celebration concludes with a costumed ball and fireworks in front of the Palazzo Ducale.

While some Venetians and visitors may plunk down thousands for custom-made gowns and masks, you don't have to break the bank.

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5 Presto! -- You’re part of the scene.

**Montevideo, Uruguay (January 20-early March)**

Uruguay may be small, but its carnival is mighty, lasting 40 days.

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It starts with the selection of the carnival queen in January, followed by lavish parades. Then begin the tablados -- stages across the city where carnival shows are held. One of the main events is the murga, groups of musicians that perform a form of street theatre involving powerful, haunting choral song that incorporate clever parody and satire.

Neighbourhood murga groups work throughout the year on themes, lyrics and beautiful costumes reminiscent of commedia dell'arte characters, complete with painted faces, colourful capes and lavish headgear. Top groups compete in large theatres around Montevideo, but you can also catch fantastic performances at the tablados throughout the city, many of which cost little or nothing.

**Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago**

Officially, carnival in Trinidad'sPort of Spain is the two days before Ash Wednesday. Unofficially, the city fills with the sounds of the steel pan -- calypso, limbo competitions and soca (a popular fusion of calypso and traditional Indian instruments) -- right after Christmas.

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 People of African, European, Amerindian, Indian, Middle Eastern and Chinese descent join in the festivities, but especially the African slaves and Indian indentured servants who were originally excluded from French plantation owners' carnival celebrations have created their own traditions.

The celebrations and competitions last through Tuesday, with thousands of lavishly costumed bands and their affiliated masqueraders competing in an enormous parade.