

APRIL FOOL'S DAY



What is April Fool's Day and what are its origins? It is commonly believed that in medieval France, New Year was celebrated on 1 April. Then in 1562, Pope Gregory introduced a new calendar for the Christian world, changing New Year to 1 January. With no modern communications, news travelled slowly and new ideas were often questioned. Many people did not hear of the change, others chose to ignore it, while some merely forgot. These people were called fools. Invitations to non-existent 'New Year' parties were sent and other practical jokes were played. This jesting evolved over time into a tradition of playing pranks on 1 April. The custom eventually spread to England and Scotland, and it was later transported across the Atlantic to the American colonies of the English and the French. April Fools Day has now developed into an international festival of fun, with different nationalities celebrating the day in special ways.

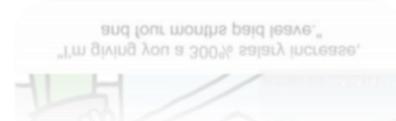
What kind of tricks do people play?

Here are some April Fool's tricks from around the world:

- In the 1990s **Burger King** published an advert in the magazine *USA Today* offering new 'Left-handed Whoppers' (hamburgers) for the 32 million left-handed Americans! Thousands of customers ordered the new burger in the restaurants.
- A **zoo** in Japan said that they had a giant penguin that was 165cm tall and weighed 80kg! In fact, it was a man dressed up in a penguin suit.
- One year in the UK a children's news programme said that scientists had invented a '**Brain Band**'. It was a coloured head band that you put on your head and it helped to make you more intelligent! In an on-line poll, 47 per cent of the children who heard the news wanted to buy a 'brain band'!
- In 1949 a radio presenter in New Zealand told listeners that there were millions of **wasps** coming to invade. He told viewers to wear their socks over their trousers and to put honey on their doors. Millions of listeners believed him!
- In 1976 a very famous **British astronomer** told radio listeners that at 9.47 a.m. the earth was going to experience a feeling of less gravity. He said that Jupiter and Pluto would cross and if listeners jumped in the air at exactly 9.47 a.m. they would feel the sensation of having no gravity! Hundreds of listeners phoned the radio to say they had jumped and floated in the air!
- **Ikea** announced that the shop had launched a dog highchair (highchairs are usually for babies!) named 'HUNDSTOL' (Swedish for dog chair). Google 'IKEA dog high chair' for more details.
- The free London newspaper, **Metro**, came up with a novel idea to deal with the problem of litter on the underground (unfortunately it was only a joke). They said that the newspaper was now edible – 'the only paper that you can eat after reading'.
- A **British newspaper** announced that Portugal had 'sold' Cristiano Ronaldo, the footballer, to Spain for €160 million. Why? To try to clear its national debt. It was a joke, of course.



"I'm giving you a 300% salary increase, and four months paid leave."



Do people actually like April Fool's Day?

We asked some Brits this question. This is what they said:



I love April Fool's Day. It can be really good fun. I love playing tricks on people and I don't mind if people play tricks on me. It's one day of the year you can be really silly and have a laugh and it's OK. You have to be quite sensible for the other 364 days of the year, so I look forward to 1 April.

Malisa

I don't like April Fool's Day. It makes me a bit nervous. I keep thinking someone is about to play a trick on me. When 12 o'clock passes I feel quite relieved that it's finished for another year!

Johnny



When I was at school, April Fool's Day was always good fun. We played tricks on each other and sometimes on the teacher. In fact, one year one of the boys at school put a bucket of water on top of the door and when the chemistry teacher came in, he got very wet! It was funny, but the boy got in big trouble!

Phil

April Fool's Day is a great idea. It's easy to forget the actual date and I always believe everything I read in the newspapers or watch on the TV news. I usually believe the big national hoaxes and it always makes me laugh afterwards. It's good to remind us that maybe we shouldn't always believe everything we hear in the news.

Louise



April Fool's Day is fun when you're young. I remember putting a plastic fried egg on my dad's plate for breakfast as a trick. He decided to cut it up and pretend to eat it! Now I think some of the tricks are a bit silly and people can be a bit cruel playing tricks on their 'friends'!

Clare

I hate April Fool's Day. Last year people at work changed the sugar for salt so we all put salt in our coffee! Then some joker in the office decided he wanted a day off and he did something to the computers so they wouldn't work. It just wasn't funny! I had lots to do and we all had to stop working and solve the problem.

Mark



Exercise 1.

Match the vocabulary with the correct definition and write a-h next to the number 1-8.

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|----------------------|--|
| 1. to have a laugh | a) a silly person |
| 2. to get in trouble | b) to do something funny |
| 3. a national hoax | c) it's not a problem for me |
| 4. a fool | d) very enjoyable |
| 5. I don't mind | e) to enjoy yourself and have a good time |
| 6. to play a trick | f) to be punished for doing something wrong |
| 7. a day off | g) a joke or trick on the entire country |
| 8. really good fun | h) a day when you don't go to work or school |

Exercise 2.

Write true or false.

1. April Fool's Day is on 13 April.
2. You can play tricks on people all day on April Fool's Day.
3. An April Fool is a person who plays a joke on someone after midday.
people.
4. People play tricks on their friends and family on April Fool's Day.
5. Most people don't like April Fool's Day.



Exercise 3.

Complete the sentences with a word from the box.

planets burgers insects paper
penguin invention sportsperson dogs



1. A fast food chain advertised _____ for left handed people.
2. A man pretended to be an extra large _____ at a Japanese zoo.
3. A TV programme told children about an _____ which can make you more intelligent.
4. Radio listeners were worried about _____ in New Zealand.
5. An astronomer said that the position of the _____ would change gravity.
6. A shop told costumers about a special piece of furniture for _____.
7. A London newspaper told readers that their news was printed on edible _____.
8. The British media said that Portugal sold a top _____ to solve the country's financial problems.