

April Fools' Day



Roman Origins

Some historians feel that April Fools' Day is related to the Roman festival of Hilaria. It was celebrated every year around 25th March and was made up of parties, games and making fun of family and friends.

A Calendar Change

Another idea is that it began around 500 years ago in France. At that time, the country changed their calendar from the **Julian calendar** to the **Gregorian calendar** and this changed the start of the year from April to January. News of the change spread slowly through the country and many people still celebrated the new year on 1st of April. They were called 'April Fools' because of it.



April Fools' Day occurs on 1st April every year. It is a day when many people all over the world take part in tricks or hoaxes.



English Legend

There is an English legend that says it started hundreds of years ago in Gotham, England. King John wanted to build a new home there but the villagers didn't want him to. Together, they decided to do silly things in front of the King's men to persuade them that they were all fools. They were so convincing that the men told the King and he decided to build his house somewhere else.

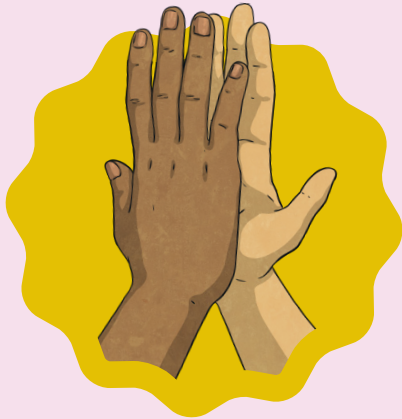


April Fools' Day



Did You Know...?

In Scotland, April Fools' Day is called Hunt the Gowk Day or Huntigowk Day. This refers to a tradition where people were tricked and purposely sent on fools' errands.



April Fools' Day Traditions

April Fools' Day began to spread throughout the UK around 300 years ago. Traditionally, it was okay to play tricks and pranks up until midday. If anyone played a prank or trick after that time, they were considered a new 'April fool'.



In France, it is called 'poisson d'avril' and it is tradition to pin a small fish to an unsuspecting person's back. This refers to how young fish are easily caught or fooled.

Glossary

Gregorian calendar: The calendar that most of the world uses today.

Julian calendar: A 12-month calendar introduced by Julius Caesar around 45 BC.



Questions

1. What calendar did France change to? Tick one.

- ☐ Julian calendar
- ☐ Gregorian calendar
- ☐ solar calendar
- ☐ lunar calendar

2. What is April Fools' Day called in France? Tick one.

- ☐ Huntigowk Day
- ☐ April Fish Day
- ☐ poisson d'août
- ☐ poisson d'avril

3. Where did King John want to build his new home? Tick one.

- ☐ Gotham
- ☐ London
- ☐ Rome
- ☐ Scotland

4. When did April Fools' Day spread throughout the UK? Tick one.

- ☐ 100 years ago
- ☐ 200 years ago
- ☐ 300 years ago
- ☐ 400 years ago

5. Fill in the missing words.

It is a day when many _____ all over the world take part in tricks
or _____.

6. Look at the section called **English Legend**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'persuasive'.

7. Summarise what you have learnt about April Fools' Day in 25 words or fewer.

Answers

1. What calendar did France change to? Tick one.

- ☐ Julian calendar
- ☒ **Gregorian calendar**
- ☐ solar calendar
- ☐ lunar calendar

2. What is April Fools' Day called in France? Tick one.

- ☐ Huntigowk Day
- ☐ April Fish Day
- ☐ poisson d'août
- ☒ **poisson d'avril**

3. Where did King John want to build his new home? Tick one.

- ☒ **Gotham**
- ☐ London
- ☐ Rome
- ☐ Scotland

4. When did April Fools' Day spread throughout the UK? Tick one.

- ☐ 100 years ago
- ☐ 200 years ago
- ☒ **300 years ago**
- ☐ 400 years ago

5. Fill in the missing words.

It is a day when many **people** all over the world take part in tricks or **hoaxes**.

6. Look at the section called **English Legend**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'persuasive'.

convincing

7. Summarise what you have learnt about April Fools' Day in 25 words or fewer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: April Fools' Day is the first day of April when people play tricks and try to fool one another. It's a very old holiday.

April Fools' Day



Roman Origins

Some experts think that April Fools' Day developed from the Roman festival of Hilaria, which was celebrated every year around 25th March. It was made up of parties, games and making fun of family and friends.



A Calendar Change

Other historians believe it began in 16th-century France when the country changed from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. This meant that the new year would now start in January rather than in April. Some people who hadn't heard about the change yet still celebrated the new year on 1st April and were called 'April fools' because of it.

In 1561, a poet called Eduard de Dene wrote a comical story about a nobleman sending his servant on silly errands specifically on 1st April.



April Fools' Day occurs on 1st April every year. It is a day when various people across the globe take part in tricks or hoaxes.



English Legend

There is a legend that says it started in 13th-century England. In the story, King John wanted to build a new home in the village of Gotham but the local villagers didn't want him to. The King sent some men to the village and they saw the villagers performing several silly acts, such as trying to drown fish in water. King John decided to build his house somewhere else after hearing about the villagers' behaviour.



April Fools' Day



Famous Pranks and Hoaxes

In 1698, people were invited to the 'Washing of the Lions' at the Tower of London. At that time, there were lions in the fortress but no one really planned to wash them.

In 1957, a popular BBC programme called 'Panorama' shared a fictional news story about Swiss farmers picking spaghetti from spaghetti trees. So many people wanted to know where to buy spaghetti trees that the BBC had to quickly admit that it was a prank.

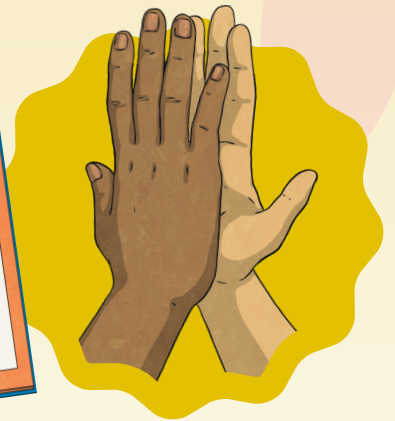
Did-You-Know...?

In France, it is called 'poisson d'avril' and it is tradition to pin a small fish to an unsuspecting person's back. This refers to how young fish are easily caught or fooled.

April Fools' Day Traditions

April Fools' Day began to become popular in the UK throughout the 18th century. Traditionally, it was okay to play tricks and pranks up until noon. Anyone who tried to play a prank or hoax after that was considered a new 'April fool'.

In Scotland, April Fools' Day is called Hunt the Gowk Day or Huntigowk Day. This refers to a tradition where unsuspecting people were purposely sent on fools' errands.



Glossary

Gregorian calendar: The calendar that most of the world uses today.

Julian calendar: A 12-month calendar introduced by Julius Caesar around 45 BC.



Questions

1. Which calendar started the new year in April? Tick one.
 - ☐ Julian calendar
 - ☐ Gregorian calendar
 - ☐ solar calendar
 - ☐ lunar calendar

2. What is April Fools' Day called in Scotland? Tick one.
 - ☐ Cuckoo Day
 - ☐ Huntigowk Day
 - ☐ Huntibird day
 - ☐ Hogmanay

3. What silly act were the villagers of Gotham seen doing? Tick one.
 - ☐ washing their clothes with ink
 - ☐ watering plants with hot tea
 - ☐ milking their cows while standing upside down
 - ☐ trying to drown fish

4. Until what time of day is it OK to play a prank or hoax? Tick one.
 - ☐ midnight
 - ☐ noon
 - ☐ evening
 - ☐ bedtime

5. Look at the section called **A Calendar Change**.
Find and copy one word that means the same as 'funny' or 'humorous'.

6. Fill in the missing words.
This refers to a _____ where unsuspecting people were
_____ sent on fools' errands.

7. Write a clever fools' errand that you could send someone on. Explain your answer.

8. Would you like to participate in April Fools' Day in Scotland? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Which calendar started the new year in April? Tick one.

- ☒ **Julian calendar**
- ☐ Gregorian calendar
- ☐ solar calendar
- ☐ lunar calendar

2. What is April Fools' Day called in Scotland? Tick one.

- ☐ Cuckoo Day
- ☒ **Huntigowk Day**
- ☐ Huntibird day
- ☐ Hogmanay

3. What silly act were the villagers of Gotham seen doing? Tick one.

- ☐ washing their clothes with ink
- ☐ watering plants with hot tea
- ☐ milking their cows while standing upside down
- ☒ **trying to drown fish**

4. Until what time of day is it OK to play a prank or hoax? Tick one.

- ☐ midnight
- ☒ **noon**
- ☐ evening
- ☐ bedtime

5. Look at the section called **A Calendar Change**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'funny' or 'humorous'.

comical

6. Fill in the missing words.

This refers to a **tradition** where unsuspecting people were **purposely** sent on fools' errands.

7. Write a clever fools' errand that you could send someone on. Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think I would ask someone to try and catch three cats. I think this is a fools' errand because cats are very fast and can climb trees. This makes them almost impossible to catch.

8. Would you like to participate in April Fools' Day in Scotland? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think I would like to participate in April Fools' Day in Scotland because I can think of a lot of silly errands to send people on and it would be great fun.

April Fools' Day



Roman Origins

Various experts believe April Fools' Day can be linked to the Roman festival of Hilaria, which was celebrated every year on 25th March. It consisted of parties, games and making fun of family and friends.

A Calendar Change

Other historians believe that it began in 16th-century France when the country changed from the **Julian calendar** to the **Gregorian calendar** and this changed the start of the new year from April to January. Since most communication was slow back then, the calendar took time to spread. Some people still celebrated the new year on 1st April and they were called 'April fools' because of it.

In 1561, a poet called Eduard de Dene wrote a comical story about a nobleman sending his servant on silly errands specifically because it was 1st April. It was called 'Refrain on errand day/which is the first of April'.



Every year on 1st April, various people worldwide participate in tricks or hoaxes. It is difficult to say for sure how or when April Fools' Day began but the fun and silliness it inspires continues even today.



English Legend

According to local legend, it started in 13th-century England. King John wanted to build a new home in the village of Gotham but the people who lived there were unhappy about it. When the King's men arrived, the villagers were performing several silly acts, such as trying to drown fish and building a small fence around the bottom of a tree to try and capture a cuckoo bird. King John decided to build his house elsewhere after hearing about the villagers' behaviour.



April Fools' Day



Famous Pranks and Hoaxes

In 1698, people were invited to the 'Washing of the Lions' at the Tower of London, which at that time was home to many animals. However, when people showed up to watch, it was revealed to be a prank.

In 1957, the popular BBC programme called 'Panorama' shared a news story about Swiss farmers harvesting spaghetti from spaghetti trees. The BBC received so many calls from viewers wanting to purchase spaghetti trees that they had to quickly announce it was a prank.

In 1977, The Guardian newspaper printed a story about a fictional island called San Serriffe.

For centuries, April Fools' day has been a special day when nothing can really be taken seriously.



April Fools' Day Traditions

April Fools' Day began to become a popular holiday in the UK during the 18th century. It was okay to play tricks and pranks up until noon but after that, it was considered inappropriate.

In Scotland, April Fools' Day was called Huntigowk or Hunt the Gowk Day. Historically, it was a two-day festival where unsuspecting people were sent on fools' errands.

In France, it is called 'poisson d'avril'. Various people, pin a small paper fish to each other's backs. If a person doesn't realise it, they are considered a young fish that is easily caught or fooled.

Glossary

Gregorian calendar: The calendar that most of the world uses today.

Julian calendar: A 12-month calendar introduced by Julius Caesar around 45 BC.



Questions

1. What were Swiss farmers supposedly harvesting? Tick one.

- ☐ popcorn
- ☐ spaghetti
- ☐ sweets
- ☐ crisps

2. What kind of animal was going to be washed at the Tower of London? Tick one.

- ☐ cuckoo
- ☐ fish
- ☐ lion
- ☐ tiger

3. Look at the section called **Famous Pranks and Hoaxes**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'made up' or 'not real'.

4. Fill in the missing words.

For centuries, April Fools' day has been a _____ day when nothing can really be taken _____.

5. What was the name of the story Eduard De Dene wrote?

6. If you could come up with another name for April Fools' Day, what would you call it and why?

7. Which theory about how April Fools' Day started do you believe and why?

8. How do you think the King's men felt when they saw the villagers doing silly things?

Answers

1. What were Swiss farmers supposedly harvesting? Tick one.

- ☐ popcorn
- ☒ **spaghetti**
- ☐ sweets
- ☐ crisps

2. What kind of animal was going to be washed at the Tower of London? Tick one.

- ☐ cuckoo
- ☐ fish
- ☒ **lion**
- ☐ tiger

3. Look at the section called **Famous Pranks and Hoaxes**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'made up' or 'not real'.

fictional

4. Fill in the missing words.

For centuries, April Fools' day has been a **special** day when nothing can really be taken **seriously**.

5. What was the name of the story Eduard De Dene wrote?

The story Eduard de Dene wrote was called 'Refrain on errand day/which is the first of April'.

6. If you could come up with another name for April Fools' Day, what would you call it and why?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think I would call it 'April Pranks and Hoaxes Day' because that way it would warn people to be wary of what others are saying and doing but wouldn't make anyone feel foolish by calling them a fool.

7. Which theory about how April Fools' Day started do you believe and why?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think I believe the story about the calendar changing the new year from January to April because it seems to make the most sense. People didn't receive the news very quickly and a change like that probably took time.

9. How do you think the King's men felt when they saw the villagers doing silly things?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think they were probably a bit shocked at what they were seeing because it was so strange and a bit frightened that they would become like that too. People back then thought you could catch anything.