



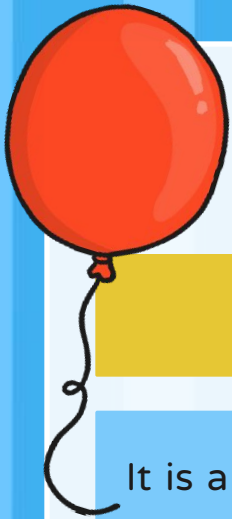
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# April Fools' Day



# Aim

- To understand key information about April Fools' Day.
- To understand some theories behind the celebration and some of its traditions.



# What Is April Fools' Day?

April Fool's Day is celebrated in most countries on **1st April** every year.

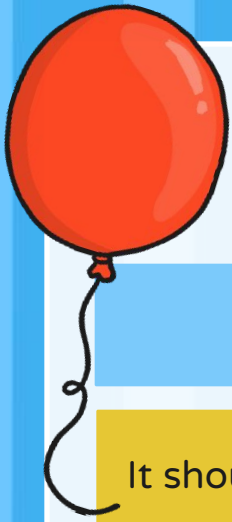
It is a fun-themed day of mischief where people play practical jokes, pranks, hoaxes and tricks on each other, mainly on friends, family, colleagues, classmates and neighbours.

It is also known as **All Fools' Day**.

It is not a public holiday in any country.

In some parts of England, people use different names for 'fool', including 'noodle', 'gob', 'gobby' or 'noddy'!

When someone reveals their prank, they shout "**April Fool!**" and the victims of the jokes are called the '**April fools**'.



# What Are the Rules?

April Fools' Day has some unwritten rules:

It should be light-hearted and funny to **all** involved, including the victim.

The pranks should **not** hurt anyone, cause harm or be illegal.

Most people, especially in English-speaking countries, follow the custom that pranks can only happen before twelve o'clock noon. After then, anyone who tries to play a prank actually turns out to be the 'April fool'!

Some people even say the following verse from 1855 if they find someone who is trying to play a prank after midday:

*April fool's gone past,  
You're the biggest fool at last;  
When April fool comes again,  
You'll be the biggest fool then!*



# Why Do We Celebrate?

The first recorded mention of the 1<sup>st</sup> of April and foolishness was in 'The Canterbury Tales' by Geoffrey Chaucer, 1392.

In the middle ages, a 'fool' was a jester whose job was to entertain the royal family by telling jokes and riddles.

It is the only celebration that doesn't have easily traced roots or origin stories or a deep history.

April Fools' Day has a few theories, with a common theme of making a fool of others.

A popular folklore states the day originated due to a change of the French calendar in 1582, when previously the new year began on 1<sup>st</sup> April (now January 1st). Those who celebrated at the wrong time were the focus of many jokes and were called 'poisson d'Avril', meaning April fish (a young, gullible, easily caught person).



# Why Do We Celebrate?

The true origins are unknown and effectively unknowable.

It is thought that April Fools' Day resembles festivals including the ancient Roman festival of **Hilaria** on 25th March and the Indian tradition of **Holi** on 31st March.

In both countries, the day is celebrated by sending others on '**fools' errands**'.

With so many different possibilities, it seems that the day itself is the ultimate prank. Never truly knowing where, why, or how this tradition started, means that the joke is on us!



# Traditions in Other Countries



In **Scotland**, people celebrate 'Gowkie Day', which is named after the gowk, a symbol of a fool.



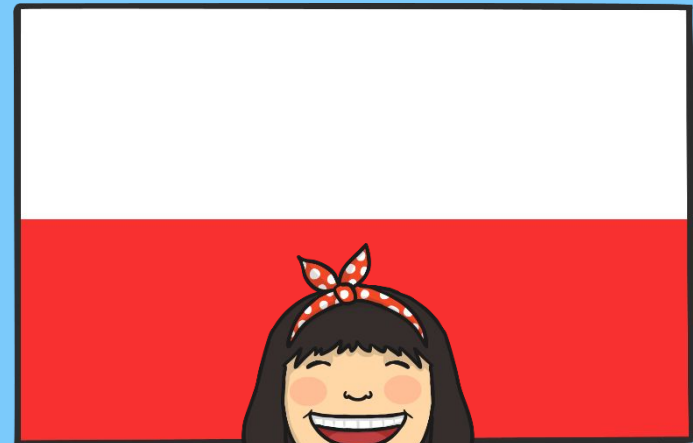
In **Ireland**, it was a tradition to fool the victim into giving an 'important letter' to a named person. That person would then ask the victim to give it to another person, and so on. When the letter was eventually opened, the words 'send the fool further' were read.



# Traditions in Other Countries



In **France**, **Italy**, **Belgium**, and French-speaking areas of **Switzerland** and **Canada**, the tradition is often called 'April fish' and people try to attach a paper fish to the victim's back without them noticing.



In **Poland**, it is a day when people tell each other lots of jokes.



# April Fools' Day Pranks

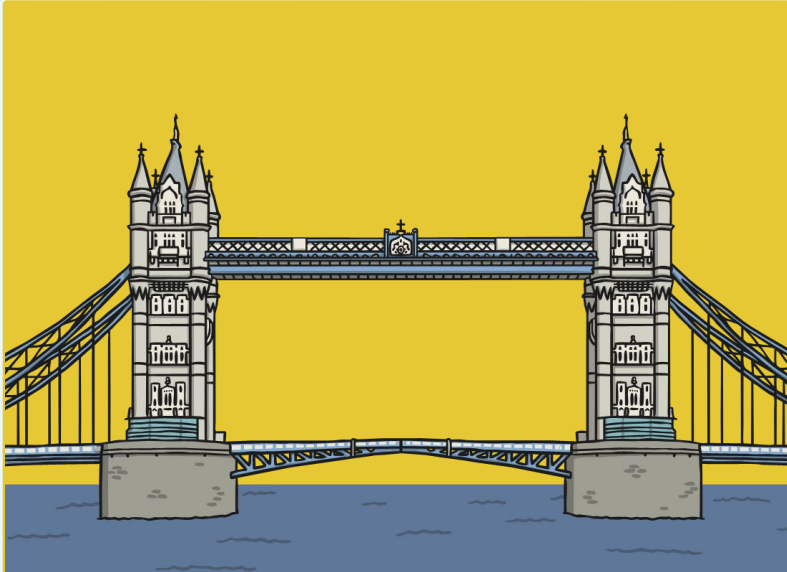


Printed media and tabloids, including some newspapers and magazines, report fake stories. They are usually explained below the news section in small letters or on the next day.



Traditional April fool pranks have involved putting salt in a sugar bowl, gluing a coin to the pavement, and tricking people into thinking their shoelaces are untied.

# Famous Pranks!



In 1860, many people in London had invitations to see white lions being washed at the Tower of London. They soon discovered that lions weren't in the tower!

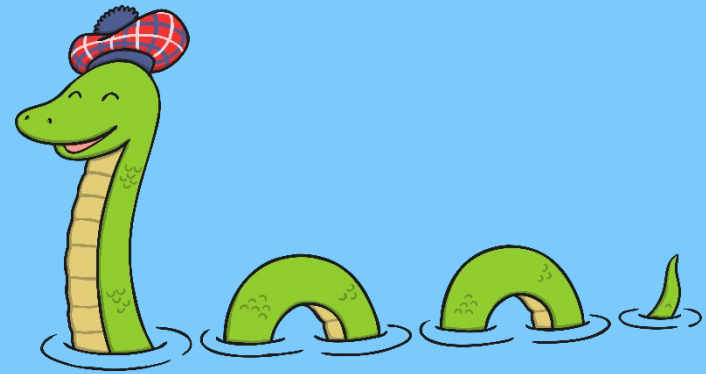


In 1957, to celebrate April Fools' Day, the BBC showed a film about the spaghetti harvest in Switzerland. This managed to fool a lot of viewers into thinking that spaghetti grew on trees!

# Famous Pranks!



In 1962, the only television channel in Sweden told people they were going to explain how to view colour images on their black and white TV sets. Thousands of viewers followed the advice to cut open a pair of stockings and tape them over the screen!



In 1972, Flamingo Park Zoo in Yorkshire revealed a photo claiming to be of the body of the Loch Ness Monster! It was later explained to be of a seal.

# Famous Pranks!



In 1976, astronomer Patrick Moore announced on BBC Radio 2 that a special astronomical event was going to take place that morning – Pluto would pass behind Jupiter, which would reduce Earth's gravity. He made people believe that if they jumped in the air at that exact moment, they would experience a strange floating sensation.



In 1977, the Guardian released a report about San Serriffe, a small country in the Indian Ocean made up of many islands that made the shape of a semi-colon. This began a tradition of newspapers fooling their readers on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

# Famous Pranks!

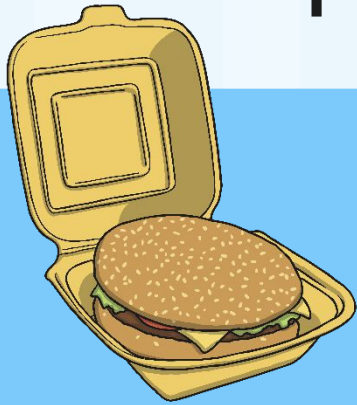


In 1978, adventurer and businessman Dick Smith advertised Antarctic ice cubes for sale for 10 cents a cube and said he would be towing an iceberg from Antarctica!



In 1980, the BBC announced that the famous Big Ben clock tower would be converted into digital. There were many outraged citizens!

# Famous Pranks!



In 1998, Burger King advertised the 'Left-Handed Whopper' and many customers actually ordered it in America!



In 2000, The Daily Mail reported that Esporta Health Clubs were introducing a new line of socks called 'FatSox' which would help people lose weight by sucking fat out of sweating feet!

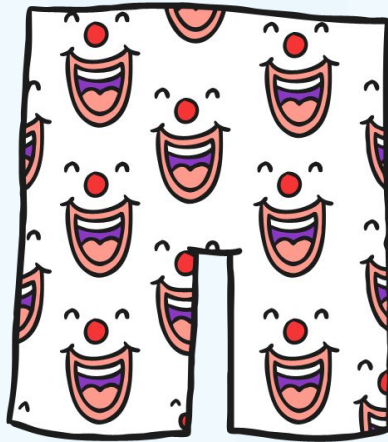


In 2007, Lebanon Circle Magik Co. claimed that a man had found a small mummified fairy and posted a picture on their website. Many people believed it so much that they didn't think it was a fake, even after the site's owner admitted it was an April Fools' hoax!

# Family Pranks

Find out if anyone in your family has ever fallen for a prank. Maybe they have heard of some of the famous ones!

Has anyone you know managed to pull off a clever, funny hoax?



# What Will You Do?

Will you play a harmless prank or tell a joke to celebrate?

**Remember** to play nice and do it before 12 o'clock midday!





