

Do you like playing tricks on people? April Fool's Day is a special day for jokes and tricks in many countries. Read this article to find out about it.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. a practical joke
2. jelly
3. a remote control
4. to stick out
5. spaghetti
6. to be fooled
7. left-handed
8. to be fluent

Definition

- a. an object you hold in your hand to control a TV or other device
- b. pasta made in the form of long, thin strings
- c. to be tricked into believing something that isn't true
- d. a joke that surprises someone
- e. to be able to speak a language easily and well
- f. a soft, sweet, brightly coloured food with a fruit flavour
- g. using your left hand to write and do most things
- h. to reach beyond the edge of something

April Fool's Day

April Fool's Day is celebrated on 1 April in many countries around the world. On this day, people play practical jokes on each other and have fun trying to make other people believe things that are not true. Traditionally, you should only play jokes and tricks until midday – after this time it is considered bad luck.

Tricks to play on your family and friends

In the UK and many other places, people play practical jokes on each other. Just remember that nobody likes to be embarrassed or made fun of – the jokes should be funny for everybody. Here are some easy tricks you could try on your family and friends.

- The jelly juice joke
Put some fruit jelly in a glass and ask someone if they'd like some juice. When they try to drink it, say 'April Fool!'
- The remote control trick
Make your family think the remote control is broken by putting a small sticker over the

sensor. After they fail to turn on the TV, take off the sticker and turn the TV on and say 'April Fool!'

- The spider joke
Do you know someone who's scared of spiders? Get a plastic spider and put it in their shoe! If you haven't got a plastic spider, you could find a picture online and print out lots of copies and put them around the house!
- The mouse under the fridge trick
Get a piece of string or an old shoelace and put it under the fridge. Leave a bit of the string sticking out. Then take a picture of the 'mouse' under the fridge, send it to the other members of your family and say something like, 'Help! It's moving! It's alive!' When they come running to the kitchen, shout 'April Fool!'

April Fool's Day around the world

In France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and French-speaking areas of Canada and Switzerland, the 1 April tradition is known as the 'April Fish'. A common joke is to try to stick a paper fish onto someone's back without them noticing.

In many Spanish-speaking countries as well as the Philippines, there is also a special day for playing jokes, but it is in December instead of April.

April Fool's Day in the news, on TV and online

For many years, TV programmes and newspapers have been playing tricks on people on 1 April, and now these jokes often happen online.

One of the earliest examples was in 1957 when the BBC, the UK's national TV channel, broadcast a report on how spaghetti grew on trees. The film showed a family in Switzerland collecting spaghetti from trees, and many people were fooled into believing it, as in the 1950s British people didn't eat much pasta and many didn't know how it was made!

In 1998, the American hamburger chain Burger King announced that it had created a left-handed hamburger. The advert said that the burger was more comfortable for left-handed people to pick up and eat! Thousands of customers ordered the new burger in restaurants.

In 2016, Duolingo, the language learning app, advertised special pillows that allowed you to become fluent in Spanish, French, Italian or Japanese in your sleep!

Of course, every day we need to think carefully about what we believe when we read or watch news and other stories, especially online. But on 1 April, be extra careful! Happy April Fool's Day!

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. April Fool's Day is on 13 April.	True	False
2. In the UK, you can play tricks on people all day on April Fool's Day.	True	False
3. People often play tricks on their friends and family on April Fool's Day.	True	False
4. With the 'April Fish' tradition, you put a fish in someone's shoe.	True	False
5. In some Spanish-speaking countries and the Philippines, there is a day for jokes in November.	True	False
6. The media and international companies invent stories to trick people on April Fool's Day.	True	False

Task 2

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

spider	spaghetti	left-handed
remote control	fluent	jelly

1. The joke is funny because you can drink juice, but you can't drink jelly.
2. The trick is funny because your family won't understand why the TV isn't working!
3. The and mouse tricks are funny if people are scared of small animals.
4. The BBC's trick in 1957 was funny because doesn't grow on trees!
5. The Burger King trick is funny because a burger doesn't exist!
6. The Duolingo pillow trick is funny because it's impossible to become in your sleep.

Discussion

Do you have April Fool's Day in your country or another day for jokes and tricks?

Answers

Preparation task

1. d
2. f
3. a
4. h
5. b
6. c
7. g
8. e

Task 1

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. False
6. True

Task 2

1. jelly
2. remote control
3. spider
4. spaghetti
5. left-handed
6. fluent