

A Lesson Plan on April Fools' Day (B2)

1

Let's Warm Up with Some Lead-in Activities!

Choose one or more ideas from the ones below to introduce the topic and activate prior knowledge of the topic in your students. Alternatively, you can use your own ideas to break the ice and start off the lesson.

Lead-in activities:

- 1 Give your students a list of famous April Fools' Day pranks from history and ask them to guess whether each prank is real or fictional. After a few minutes, reveal the answers and have a discussion about how creative and believable the pranks were.
- 2 Divide your students into pairs and ask them to come up with their own April Fools' Day prank ideas. They should discuss the logistics of the prank, who their target would be, and how they would execute it. After brainstorming for a few minutes, have each pair present their prank idea to the class.
- 3 Show your students a video clip of a classic April Fools' Day prank and ask them to describe how they would feel if they were the victim of that prank. Encourage them to use descriptive language to express their emotions and reactions.

2

Let's Discuss!

- 1 Have you ever played tricks on someone for April's Fools Day?
- 2 What is the funniest prank you have witnessed on this day?
- 3 Do you enjoy participating in hoaxes or pranks during April's Fools Day?
- 4 How do you feel about becoming the butt of a joke on this occasion?
- 5 Why do you think people enjoy playing tricks on each other on April's Fools Day?
- 6 Can you share a memorable experience related to a prank played on April's Fools Day?
- 7 What are some common themes or ideas behind the jokes and hoaxes on this day?
- 8 Do you think it's important to keep the tradition of pranking alive on April's Fools Day?
- 9 How do you usually react when someone plays a trick on you during this time?
- 10 In what ways can pranks and hoaxes bring people together on April's Fools Day?

Time to Read!

Skim read the text to get the gist of it. Then, do a second reading trying to memorise as many details as possible. Would you be able to answer the questions below without looking at the text?without

Thousands of people in the UK have been playing tricks on each other for April Fools' Day, but where did this tradition come from? And what are some of the most famous pranks in history?

The first day of April is a day when it's traditional to play jokes and tricks on friends and family. It's called April Fools' Day. In the UK, France and Canada, the jokes and their victims are called 'April fools'. In Scotland, they're called 'gowks' (cuckoos). The person who plays the trick is called the 'April fooler'.

Nobody knows exactly how or when April Fools' Day started but there are many theories. Some people think it began about 1582 when people moved from the Julian calendar (which celebrated New Year in late March/early April) to the Gregorian calendar (which celebrated New Year on 1 January). People who forgot the change and celebrated New Year in April were laughed at and became the butt of jokes.

Another theory is that April Fools' Day comes from the Roman festival of Hilaria, which was held on 25 March. This was a day of fun and laughter when people played jokes on each other. A third theory is that April Fools' Day was the idea of the god of laughter, Momo. He was the son of Nyx, the goddess of night, and he loved playing tricks on people. The ancient Greeks believed that Momo invented April Fools' Day.

Some of the best April Fools' Day pranks include:

In 1957, the BBC news programme Panorama broadcast a report about a bumper spaghetti harvest in southern Switzerland. Many viewers believed the report and phoned the BBC to ask how they could grow their own spaghetti tree. The BBC replied, 'Place a sprig of spaghetti in a tin of tomato sauce and hope for the best.'

In 1996, the fast food chain Taco Bell announced that it had bought the Liberty Bell, a famous American symbol. The company said that it had renamed the bell the 'Taco Liberty Bell'. Many people were shocked but some were angry and phoned the National Historic Park in Philadelphia to complain. When they discovered that it was an April Fools' Day joke, the park's director replied, 'We're sorry if we confused you. We didn't expect this level of interest.'

In 2008, the BBC news website published an article about flying penguins. It said that a film crew for the BBC programme Natural World had followed a group of Adélie penguins as they flew thousands of miles to the rainforests of South America. The article included a video of the penguins flying. Some people believed the story and others complained that it was a waste of the licence fee. The BBC responded, 'This film was clearly labelled as an April Fool.'

April Fools' Day is also popular in other countries. In France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland, the jokes stop at midday. If someone plays a trick on you after midday, they say, 'April fish!' In Portugal and Brazil, people play pranks on each other on 1 April (dia das mentiras) and again on 13 April (dia dos namorados).

The best April Fools' Day pranks are the ones that make people laugh, not the ones that hurt or upset them. So be careful who you choose as your April fool!

4

Answer the following questions!

Answer the following questions without looking at the text.

- 1 What are the different names used for the jokes and their victims on April Fools' Day in the UK, France, Canada, and Scotland?



- 2 How did the change from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar contribute to the origins of April Fools' Day?



- 3 According to one theory, who is believed to have invented April Fools' Day and why?



- 4 Describe the prank played by the BBC news programme Panorama in 1957 for April Fools' Day.



- 5 What was the controversial announcement made by Taco Bell in 1996 as an April Fools' Day joke?



- 6 Explain the article published by the BBC news website in 2008 about flying penguins and the response it received.



- 7 How do countries like France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, and Brazil celebrate April Fools' Day with unique traditions?



5

Vocabulary practice

Match these phrasal verbs with their definitions.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1 go along with (a joke) | a dismiss or treat lightly a practical joke by laughing at it |
| 2 crack up (laughing) | b engage in playful or silly behavior involving deceptions or pranks |
| 3 egg on (pranksters) | c prepare and plan a humorous story or situation |
| 4 pull off (a prank) | d complete a deceptive scheme or fraud |
| 5 come up with (a trick) | e deceive someone into believing something false or misleading |
| 6 trick into (believing) | f burst into uncontrollable laughter |
| 7 play along (with a prank) | g pretend to believe or participate in a joke or trick |
| 8 pull a trick | h create or invent a clever deception or illusion |
| 9 set up (a joke) | i avoid being caught or punished for a practical joke |
| 10 fool around (with tricks) | j perform a deceitful act or mischievous action |
| 11 laugh off (a prank) | k successfully execute a practical joke or trick |
| 12 carry out (a hoax) | l encourage or provoke individuals who play tricks or jokes |
| 13 get away with (a prank) | m agree to participate or support a humorous story or situation |

6

Can You Fill in the Blanks?

along (2), with (4), around (2), out (2), up (2), off (2), away, on (3), into (2)

- 1 He pulled ____ (1) a prank on his sister by hiding all her pens.
- 2 Sarah set ____ (2) a joke for the office party to make everyone laugh.
- 3 The kids carried ____ (3) a hoax by pretending they saw a ghost in the garden.

- 4 Maria decided to play ____ (4) ____ (5) the prank to see how it would end.
- 5 Jack came up with a trick to fool his friends ____ (6) thinking he could speak French.
- 6 The boys pulled a trick ____ (7) their teacher by switching the classroom chairs around.
- 7 Despite being caught, Tom managed to get ____ (8) ____ (9) the prank without punishment.
- 8 We carried ____ (10) with the joke until everyone was laughing uncontrollably.
- 9 Jake cracked ____ (11) laughing when he heard the funny knock-knock joke.
- 10 The teenagers always mess ____ (12) ____ (13) pranks during sleepovers.
- 11 She tricked Sarah ____ (14) believing that her cat had learned how to do tricks.
- 12 The comedian acted ____ (15) a gag that had everyone in the audience in stitches.
- 13 The children fooled ____ (16) with tricks to entertain themselves at the party.
- 14 Despite feeling embarrassed, Alex managed to laugh ____ (17) the embarrassing prank.
- 15 The older siblings egged ____ (18) the younger ones to pull more pranks on their parents.
- 16 I decided to go ____ (19) ____ (20) the joke, even though I knew it wasn't true.

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Time to improvise!

How would you continue the conversation starters below? In pairs, pick a situation and improvise a dialogue using the vocabulary learnt thus far.

A Did you hear what John did yesterday? He pulled off a prank on his classmates.

B No way! What did he do?

A I can't believe you fell for my prank. I carried out a hoax perfectly.

B I can't believe I fell for it too. You're really good at this.

A I'm going to trick my brother into believing there are monsters under his bed.

B That's mean, Sarah. But I have to admit, it's a pretty good trick.



Correct Answers

4 Correct Answers:

- 1 In the UK, France, and Canada, the jokes and their victims are called 'April fools', while in Scotland they are referred to as 'gowks' (cuckoos). The person playing the trick is known as the 'April fooler'.
- 2 The change from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar led to confusion among people celebrating New Year in April instead of January, making them the butt of jokes.
- 3 According to a theory, the god of laughter, Momo, son of Nyx, the goddess of night, is believed to have invented April Fools' Day due to his love for playing tricks on people.
- 4 The BBC news programme Panorama broadcasted a report in 1957 about a bumper spaghetti harvest in southern Switzerland, leading viewers to inquire about growing their own spaghetti tree.
- 5 Taco Bell announced in 1996 that they had bought the Liberty Bell and renamed it the 'Taco Liberty Bell', causing shock and anger among some individuals who believed the news.
- 6 The BBC news website published an article in 2008 about flying penguins following Adélie penguins to the rainforests of South America, which sparked both belief and criticism from the audience.
- 7 Countries like France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, and Switzerland end their pranks at midday on April Fools' Day, saying 'April fish!' if a trick is played after that time. In Portugal and Brazil, pranks are played on 1 April (dia das mentiras) and again on 13 April (dia dos namorados).

5 Correct Answers:

- 1 m
- 2 f
- 3 l
- 4 k
- 5 h
- 6 e
- 7 g
- 8 j
- 9 c
- 10 b
- 11 a
- 12 d
- 13 i

6 Correct Answers:

- 1 off
- 2 up
- 3 out
- 4 along
- 5 with
- 6 into
- 7 on
- 8 away
- 9 with
- 10 on
- 11 up
- 12 around
- 13 with
- 14 into
- 15 out
- 16 around
- 17 off
- 18 on
- 19 along
- 20 with