

# around English

## April Fool!



### Who's an April Fool this year?

#### An old tradition

April Fools' Day - April 1<sup>st</sup> - is a popular and very old tradition. No-one really knows how the tradition started, but it is **at least** 500 years old in France and The Netherlands. The name is sometimes different (in France, April Fools' Day is called 'Poisson d'Avril' - April Fish) but the date April 1<sup>st</sup> is popular all over Europe.

#### Popular April Fools' jokes

Most April Fools' Day jokes **trick** people by asking them to go on a 'fool's errand' - a trip to get something which does not exist, like a left-handed pencil - or by making them **believe** something absurd. You can also play practical jokes on people, such as putting a cup of water on top of a door to fall on the next person who comes in. This kind of joke is **especially** popular in schools, where pupils try to play jokes on each other... and on their teachers!

#### Famous April Fools' jokes

There is a tradition in some countries of newspapers, television and radio playing jokes on their readers, viewers and listeners. The BBC, for example, said on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1957 that spaghetti grew on trees! Many people telephoned the BBC that evening, wanting to **grow** spaghetti in their gardens! Another famous BBC April Fools' joke was played in 1965, when they explained that there was a new technology to put smells into television programmes: 'Smell-o-vision'. Most of Britain was sure that they could smell things from their televisions that evening. One viewer even phoned the BBC to **complain** that the smell was too strong!



In the US, too, there have been some famous April Fools' Day jokes. In

1998, Burger King advertised a 'left-handed hamburger' for left-handed people. Thousands of customers tried to **order** one the next day!

#### April Fools' Day - the rules

Traditionally, there are some rules about April Fools' Day jokes. Most importantly, you must play all April Fools' Day jokes before 12.00 midday. If you play a joke on somebody after this time then the joke is on you: you are the April Fool, not your **victim**!

#### April Fools' Jokes -

#### something to remember

Good April Fools' Day jokes are fun. If the joke is not **fun**, or if it will make someone angry or **upset**, then it is better to play a different joke instead. Everyone - the jokers and their victims - should be smiling on April Fools' Day, and everyone should still be friends on April 2nd. Have fun!

#### Famous April Fools' Day Jokes

- 1957 The BBC said that Swiss farmers were growing spaghetti on trees
- 1962 Swedish Television said its (black and white) programmes could be watched in colour if viewers put a nylon stocking over the screen
- 1965 The BBC said viewers could smell as well as watch and hear the programmes on television ('smell-o-vision')
- 1998 Burger King advertised the 'left-handed burger'

*Each of these jokes fooled thousands of people!*

## Around English – Activities Sheet

### Starting off

Do you like to play jokes and tricks on people? Can you think of any examples?  
What do you usually do on April Fools' Day?

### Before you read

Here are some clues about April Fools' jokes. What were the jokes?

*Example* Spaghetti / tree / garden - Spaghetti growing on a tree in your garden!

1. water / cup / door
2. smells / television
3. left / hamburger
4. black and white TV programmes / colour / nylon stocking

### First reading

Read the text quickly and check your answers.

### Second reading

Read again and discuss the questions below with a partner.

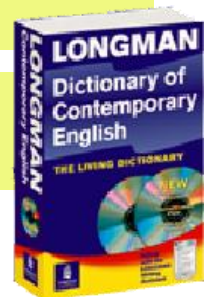
1. Which jokes are best? Would you believe them?
2. In your opinion, is it OK for pupils to play jokes on their teacher?
3. In your country do newspapers, television or radio play jokes on April Fools' Day?

### Vocabulary 1

Ten words and phrases in the text are underlined. Match them to the definitions below.

1. <i>when you are sure that something is true</i>	2. <i>something you do to surprise someone and to make other people laugh</i>
3. <i>when you are not happy about something and you tell somebody about it</i>	4. <i>when a person does something bad to another person, the second person is this</i>
5. <i>unhappy, angry or sad</i>	6. <i>a minimum of</i>
7. <i>something which you enjoy or which is exciting is this</i>	8. <i>when you ask for your meal in a restaurant or bar</i>
9. <i>very very - more than usual</i>	10. <i>when a flower, for example, gets bigger and taller</i>

(all definitions from the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English)





## Around English – Activities Sheet

### Vocabulary 2

Complete the sentences using one of the words or phrases from Vocabulary 1. You may need to change the form of the word.

1. She got some bad news this morning so she's very \_\_\_\_\_.
2. It will cost \_\_\_\_\_ £150 - maybe more.
3. I was the \_\_\_\_\_ of a horrible joke - but I'll get him back one day!
4. Some trees can \_\_\_\_\_ for hundreds of years.
5. The magician did some very clever card \_\_\_\_\_. We thought they were great!
6. Come to the party! You'll have a lot of \_\_\_\_\_, I promise.
7. Can I take your \_\_\_\_\_, Sir?
8. This meal is awful - cold chips, old salad. I'm going to \_\_\_\_\_ to the waiter.
9. I love sports - \_\_\_\_\_ football.
10. You won the lottery? I don't \_\_\_\_\_ it.

### Grammar 1

Look at the three example sentences:

- (a) ...you must play all April Fools' Day jokes before 12.00 midday.
- (b) ...everyone should still be friends on April 2nd.
- (c) You can also play practical jokes on people...

1. Find the VERBS in each sentence and underline them.
2. In each example there are two verbs. Which verb is the action verb in each? Which verb tells us how we see the action?
3. Match each example to one of the explanations below:
  - I. It is OK if you want to
  - II. It is a good idea
  - III. It is very important

## Around English – Activities Sheet

### Grammar 2

Below is a e-mail giving some advice about a country. Read it quickly and try to guess which country it is about.

**From:** Peter Moran  
**Subject:** Your holiday

Hi. Great to hear that you're going to visit - it will be great to see you again! Before you come, though, I think you might need some advice - some things are different here.

When you use the Tube, you ..... buy a ticket and you ..... put the ticket in the machine before you get on. Sometimes there are ticket inspectors so you ..... keep your ticket in your pocket so you can get it easily.

There are people from many countries here and so you. .... speak slowly if the other person does not speak English so well. You ..... speak your own language, though - maybe they will know it!

See you soon!

Now complete the sentences using 'must', 'should' and 'can'.

### Writing 1

Write an e-mail for a visitor coming to your country for the first time. What must they do? What should they do? What can they do? Think about:

*travel*

*clothes*

*documents*

*money*

*food*

*shopping*



## Around English – Activities Sheet

### Teacher's notes

#### Lead-in activities

Not all the learners will have stories to tell or examples to share so larger groups (of 4 or 5) will probably be best for this stage. Have some examples or an anecdote ready yourself as well to use as an example to start them off.

#### Before you read

You should check the students understand the vocabulary in the questions here (smells, stocking). Key:

1. water in a cup on top of the door
2. smells through the television
3. a left-handed hamburger
4. black and white TV programmes in colour through a nylon stocking

#### Second reading

The questions here are discussion questions, without correct answers, of course. They may lead to a whole class discussion, if the learners are interested.

#### Vocabulary 1

Key:

- |            |             |             |          |               |
|------------|-------------|-------------|----------|---------------|
| 1. believe | 3. complain | 5. upset    | 7. fun   | 9. especially |
| 2. trick   | 4. victim   | 6. at least | 8. order | 10. grow      |

#### Vocabulary 2

Key:

- |             |           |           |             |               |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| 1. upset    | 3. victim | 5. tricks | 7. order    | 9. especially |
| 2. at least | 4. grow   | 6. fun    | 8. complain | 10. believe   |

#### Grammar 1

Key:

1. must play; should be; can play.
2. play; be; play - must; should; can
  - I. c
  - II. b
  - III. a

## Around English – Activities Sheet

### Grammar 2

The grammar here avoids negative forms so as to avoid confusion with *mustn't*/*don't have to*. If your learners are strong enough introducing these elements would be a way to extend the activity. Key:

**From:** Peter Moran  
**Subject:** Your holiday

Hi. Great to hear that you're going to visit - it will be great to see you again! Before you come, though, I think you might need some advice - some things are different here.

When you use the Tube, you .....**MUST**..... buy a ticket and you .... **MUST** .... put the ticket in the machine before you get on. Sometimes there are ticket inspectors so you .....**SHOULD**..... keep your ticket in your pocket so you can get it easily.

There are people from many countries here and so you. .... **SHOULD**..... speak slowly if the other person does not speak English so well. You .....**CAN**.... speak your own language, though - maybe they will know it!

See you soon!

### Extension

The e-mails would make a good basis for a poster display: the learners could add illustrations and sections on what to see, where to go etc. in their town. Another possible extension would be planning April Fools' Jokes for their family and friends, or thinking up an April Fools' Day story for a newspaper, television or radio. These could be written up or performed, as appropriate.