

# April Fools' Day

A Reading A-Z Level M Leveled Book

Word Count: 580

## Connections

### Writing

Write a letter to a friend describing an April Fools' joke not included in the book. Be sure your joke follows the rules described in the book.

### Social Studies

Research another country that celebrates April Fools' Day. Write a paragraph explaining how that country celebrates the holiday.

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APRIL  
FOOLS'  
DAY



**MULTI**  
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Written by Sharon Bowes

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## Focus Question

How is April Fools' Day best celebrated?

## Words to Know

celebrated  
costumes  
famous

media  
pranks  
victim

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Level M Leveled Book  
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### Correlation

#### LEVEL M

Fountas & Pinnell	L
Reading Recovery	19
DRA	24



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A common April Fools' joke is to loosen the top on a saltshaker.

## Pranking Fun

It's early spring. Your chili ends up buried under a pile of salt. You're the **victim** of an April Fools' joke.

April Fools' Day is on or near April 1. It's the one day of the year to play jokes, or **pranks**, on people.

A common joke may be replacing the sugar with salt. When people see that it's a joke, yell "April Fools'!"



On April 1, you may need to plan for a rude awakening.

## Why April First?

No one knows why April Fools' Day is on April 1. It may once have marked the coming of spring. People were often "fooled" by the changing weather at this time of the year.

Another idea is that April Fools' Day began when we first started using the calendar we use today. The start of the new year moved from the beginning of April to January 1. People who still celebrated New Year's Day on April 1 were called "April fools."

### Gotham Goes Mad

One story tells how April Fools' may have started in the English town of Gotham. King John planned to take villagers' property. The villagers acted like they suffered from insanity to scare King John away. In those days, insanity was thought to be contagious.





"Washing the Lions" was a fake event at the Tower of London in England. No actual lions were present.

Many celebrations were held in the past near April 1. The ancient Romans celebrated the longer days of spring. They dressed in **costumes** and played jokes.

In Europe in the twelfth century, people celebrated the Feast of Fools. A fake ruler led followers in a parade. People celebrated in this way until the sixteenth century.

## Around the World

Today, people celebrate April Fools' Day differently around the world.



### Scottish Scramble

In Scotland, April Fools' can go on for two days. On April 1, people in Scotland send friends on foolish tasks. The second day is for playing more jokes.

### Tips to Avoid Being the April Fool!

- Have you read it carefully? Do you *really* believe there is a cross between a sheep and a pig called a "shig?"
- Do you get the feeling you're being watched? Be on your guard!
- Careful! That present may not be what you think.





"April Fish" is also celebrated in other parts of Europe and Canada.

### *French Foolishness*

In France, April 1 is called "April Fish." The fish is a person who is easily fooled. People tape paper fish to each other's backs.



### *American Tricksters*

In the United States, the fun lasts all day. Tell a friend that class is canceled or punch holes in his or her water bottle! Other jokes may



be to put oil on a doorknob and food color in milk. You may find plastic bugs in food or on your bed.

### **Brazil's Day of the Lie**

In Brazil, April 1 is *Dia da mentira* (Lie Day). People enjoy playing practical jokes, or *brincadeiras* (breen-kah-DAY-rah), on each other and tell silly lies all day.



## Jordanian Jokesters

On April 1, 2010, a newspaper in Jordan had an interesting front-page story. It reported that three spaceships had landed in the desert nearby. Some people in the town were not used to April Fools' pranks and got scared.

The newspaper apologized for the story.



## Sizdah Bedar

The Iranian (Persian) calendar is very old. The thirteenth day of the Iranian new year is called *Sizdah Bedar* (seez-DAH be-DAR). It falls around April 1 and has been around since 536 BC. On *Sizdah Bedar*, families and friends share picnics, pranks, and fun. It might just be the oldest-known joke day in history.



BBC TV's show *Panorama* showed a family from Switzerland during its yearly "spaghetti harvest."

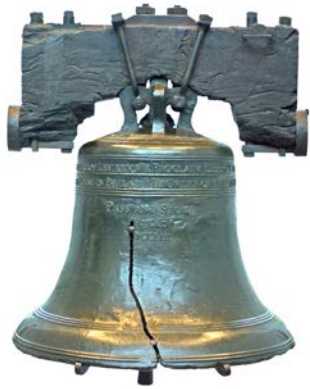
## Famous Foolery

Some April Fools' jokes are **famous**.

### *Spaghetti Trees?*

In 1957, a British TV show described a spaghetti tree. When the show was over, many people called the station wanting one.

## Corporate Chaos



Liberty Bell

Companies and the media fool people, too.

On April 1, 1996, Taco Bell said that it had bought the American Liberty Bell. The company said it would

now be called the “Taco Liberty Bell.” Many people believed the story. The company had to say it was a joke.

In 1998, Burger King showed an ad for a left-handed burger. They said it made left-handed eating easier.



Can you tell the difference between a left-handed and right-handed burger?

## Online Pranks

Internet April Fools' jokes spread fast. One of Google's famous jokes was a drink it said made people smarter.

In 2012, a radio station said that Twitter was changing to 133 characters per tweet. It was a joke.

In 2013, Twitter said it would ask people who used vowels in their tweets to pay more. This, too, was a joke.



To catch a creature in the April Fools' version of Pokémon Go, just tap the screen.

Even Pokémon Go began as an Internet joke in 2014. Google Maps said it had a tool that would find the best Pokémon Master in the world.





The best April Fools' pranks are fun but harmless!

## Conclusion

Follow certain rules during April Fools' Day. Don't be mean. If you're going to make a joke, make sure you can take a joke in return.

Many places around the world enjoy April Fools' Day. Keep it safe and fun!

## Glossary

- celebrated** (*v.*) did something special to honor an event (p. 6)
- costumes** (*n.*) outfits worn to match the style of a specific time, place, or event (p. 7)
- famous** (*adj.*) well known (p. 12)
- media** (*n.*) mass communication, such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet, through which information is given to the public (p. 13)
- pranks** (*n.*) tricks or practical jokes (p. 4)
- victim** (*n.*) a person or other animal harmed by an act or condition; someone who is fooled or tricked (p. 4)