

Name:

Reading

1 Look at the sentences about April Fool's Day. Read the text and decide if each question is correct. If it is correct, write A. If it is incorrect, write B.

- 1 It is clear when April Fool's Day started. _____
- 2 'April fish' continued to think the New Year began in April. _____
- 3 Some stories in the media on 1st April might not be true. _____
- 4 Everyone who watched the *Panorama* spaghetti item knew it was a joke. _____
- 5 There are rules about how and when you can play an April Fool's joke in Britain. _____

April Fool's Day

People around the world celebrate 1st April by playing practical jokes on others and trying to make them believe things which are not quite true. But where did this tradition come from? Well, we don't know exactly, but perhaps it started in France when the calendar changed in 1582. Before then, the New Year began in the last week of March. Pope Gregory moved it to the date most people in the West now use – 1st January.

However, some French people either didn't learn about the change or refused to accept it. These people were sometimes thought of as fools, made fun of and called 'April fish', because young fish are easily caught in the spring. Children stuck a paper fish onto the backs of others as a joke.

These days newspapers and TV programmes often have a story that isn't true and readers and viewers have fun guessing which story is made up. Usually these stories are written or presented just like any other item, but the content is a bit silly or unbelievable.

Probably the first April Fool joke on TV happened in the UK in 1957. A serious, very popular and highly respected BBC current events programme, called *Panorama*, ended with a short item about the Swiss spaghetti harvest. It showed a film of farmers collecting spaghetti from trees, drying it in the sun and then eating it. You may think nobody would believe spaghetti grows on trees, but back then not many British people ate spaghetti or knew much about it. People phoned the BBC asking how they could grow their own spaghetti trees! They were told to put a piece of spaghetti in a can of tomatoes and see what happened.

In Britain, if you play an April Fool joke on someone, you should do it before midday. It's considered bad luck if you do it later. Teachers always expect their classes to play a joke on them if 1st April is a school day. The important thing is that nobody is hurt, nothing is damaged and everyone should be able to see the funny side of what happens. Have you ever played a trick on any of your teachers on this day?

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