

13 April fool!

Before you read

1. Do you know any jokes? What is your favourite joke?
2. Do you know the difference between telling a joke and playing a joke on someone?
3. What is the best joke you've ever played on someone?

Reading

- 1 On 1 April 1998 the Burger King company released an advertisement for a new hamburger called the 'Left-Handed Whopper'. The advertisement said that the new hamburger had the same ingredients as a regular Whopper, but that the Left-Handed Whopper was a special burger for left-handed people. Thousands of people went into Burger King restaurants to ask for the Left-Handed Whopper. They didn't know that it was an April Fool's Day joke!
- 2 April Fool's Day began in France more than 400 years ago. Before then, people celebrated the new year on 1 April. Then in 1582 the French king, Charles IX, changed the calendar. He moved the beginning of the year from 1 April to 1 January. After this, anyone who celebrated the new year on 1 April was called an 'April fool'. People played jokes on these 'April fools'.
- 3 Today people in many countries play April Fool's Day jokes. Some of the best jokes have been played by the media. For example, in 1957 the British television news programme 'Panorama' showed a story about a family of spaghetti farmers in Switzerland. In the story, the farmers were pulling spaghetti off spaghetti trees. After the show, many people called the television station to ask how they could grow their own spaghetti trees!
- 4 Some people will believe anything!

Vocabulary

A. Complete each sentence with the correct word or phrase.

advertisement calendar spaghetti left-handed ingredients

1. If you want to check the date, look at the _____.
2. I don't write with my right hand because I'm _____.
3. I saw an _____ in the newspaper for a new restaurant.
4. Flour, butter, cocoa, eggs and sugar are the _____ for a chocolate cake.
5. Gina loves going to Italian restaurants because she loves eating _____.

B. Choose the correct word or phrase with the same meaning as the blue words in each sentence.

TV show ordinary television, radio and newspapers fooled
do something special for

1. People usually wear something special to a wedding. They don't wear regular clothes.
2. Phil and Hilary played a joke on John. They pretended he had a phone call from the police!
3. My favourite programme is 'The Simpsons'. I love it!
4. Let's celebrate Suzie's birthday. We should have a party.
5. The media are always interested in the lives of film stars.

In other words

A. What is the main purpose of the passage? Circle 1, 2 or 3.

1. To describe April Fool's Day.
2. To describe a joke about a left-handed hamburger.
3. To describe the funniest April Fool's Day joke ever played.

B. Match each heading to the correct paragraph in the passage.

1. Paragraph _____ People believe what they see on television.
2. Paragraph _____ The advertisement that was a joke.
3. Paragraph _____ April Fool's Day used to be New Year's Day.

General understanding

Circle T for true or F for false for each of the following statements.

| | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Everyone knew that the Left-Handed Whopper was a joke. | T / F |
| 2. King Charles IX played the first April Fool's Day joke. | T / F |
| 3. April Fool's Day jokes became popular around the world. | T / F |
| 4. Farmers in Switzerland grow spaghetti trees. | T / F |

In detail

Write short answers to the following questions.

1. Where was the first April Fool's Day? _____
2. What happened in 1582? _____
3. What happened to 'April fools'? _____
4. What was the 1957 'Panorama' programme about? _____
5. Why did people telephone the television station? _____

In focus

Read the text again and complete the table about two famous April Fool's Day jokes.

| QUESTION | JOKE 1 | JOKE 2 |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| 1. When was the joke played? | 1 April 1957 | |
| 2. Who played the joke? | a British television station | |
| 3. Where did the joke appear? | | in an advertisement |
| 4. Where were people told? | | that there was a Left-Handed Whopper |

Discussion

Discuss the following questions with a partner or in a group.

1. Has anyone ever played a joke on you? What happened?
2. Who do you find funny? Why do they make you laugh?
3. Do you think that people around the world find the same things funny?
4. Talk about an April Fool's Day joke that you would like to play.
5. Describe a special day in your country that you like. Why do you like this celebration?