



April Fools' Day (B1 - Lower Intermediate)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Does 1st April have a particular name in your country? If so, what is it?
2. Do people often play tricks on each other on 1st April?
3. Have you ever been the victim of an April Fools' trick?
4. If so, did you find it amusing? Why (not)?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and choose the correct answer.

1. Some connect April Fools' Day to an ancient Roman festival which
 - a) was celebrated on 1st April.
 - b) was called Cybele.
 - c) was a day for fun and games.
2. There is a lot of evidence linking April Fools' Day to similar Hindu, Persian and Jewish festivals.
 - a) True.
 - b) False.
 - c) The article doesn't say.
3. In one of the stories in *The Canterbury Tales*, written in 1392 by Geoffrey Chaucer,
 - a) a fox and a cock play a trick on a man.
 - b) a cock tricks a fox.
 - c) a fox tricks a cock.
4. The first definite mention of April Fools' Day was in
 - a) the fifteenth century.
 - b) the sixteenth century.
 - c) the seventeenth century.
5. In Scotland, April Fools' Day is called
 - a) Taily Day.
 - b) Pigs' Day.
 - c) Kick-Me Day.
6. The article says April Fools' jokes can go too far and cause problems when they
 - a) go viral on social media.
 - b) are played on one person.
 - c) aren't funny.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. What was the purpose of the Roman festival Hilaria?
2. What do the Roman, Hindu, Persian and Jewish festivals have in common?
3. What is the connection between April Fools' Day and the Gregorian calendar?
4. What was the prank described in a Flemish poem of 1561?
5. Why was the Treaty of Warsaw backdated?
6. What is a possible explanation for the 'April fish' tradition in Italy and France?
7. What kind of April Fools' trick was often played in Ireland?
8. Why do some April Fools' tricks leave people disorientated nowadays?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from plural to singular.)

1. Every year, over a million people die from diseases that are _____ by mosquitoes.
2. The policeman ran after the thief and _____ him before he could get onto his motorcycle.
3. Amanda's very _____. She's always looking at herself in the mirror.
4. The animal I saw in the garden was a fox, not a cat. It had a big bushy _____.
5. The government needs to act _____ to solve the situation before it gets worse.
6. I was a _____ to lend James my bike. When he gave it back to me it was damaged.

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam? (Paper 1, Reading: Part 5)

Choose the correct word in brackets for each space.

Nowadays, misinformation can spread widely and rapidly on social media and cause great inconvenience or ¹ _____ (even/still/little/many) serious harm. In 2013, April Fools' Day coincided with Easter Monday, a public holiday ² _____ (at/in/on/for) which many families go out for the day. The previous evening, a foolish Dutch police officer decided to ³ _____ (play/trick/joke/strike) his fellow citizens by posting a false message on the national police website. The message informed motorists that a 20-mile section of the A2 motorway between Amsterdam and Utrecht ⁴ _____ (had/will/would/can) be closed to traffic the following day, so that an episode of a popular TV programme could be filmed. ⁵ _____ (However/As/Through/Though) the message remained on the website for only an hour, it caused such a serious disruption to Easter traffic ⁶ _____ (so/that/but/yet) the Dutch police were forced to apologise to the public.

F – Write about it

Write about a trick that you didn't find amusing. Mention:

- who played the trick;
- who the victim was;
- what the trick consisted of;
- how the victim reacted;
- why you didn't find it amusing.

The Serum Run (B1 - Lower Intermediate)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Have you ever travelled to anywhere extremely cold in winter? If so, where?
2. What are the major difficulties for anyone living in a remote town with a very cold climate?
3. What do you know about Alaska?

B – Listen and answer

Read these incomplete statements. Then listen (without reading) and complete them.

1. In the winter of 1924-25, there were about _____ people living in Nome, Alaska.
2. An antitoxin was needed because the disease diphtheria had already killed _____.
3. It couldn't be transported to Nome by road or air because of the bad _____.
4. The antitoxin was transported to the town of Nenana, which is _____ miles from Nome.
5. From there it was taken to Nome by a dog-sled relay of _____ men and about _____ dogs.
6. The journey was completed in just over _____ days.
7. The antitoxin was delivered on _____, 1925.
8. Statues of one of the dogs now stand in Anchorage, Alaska, and New York's _____.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. Why are the winters in Nome so cold?
2. How did the diphtheria antitoxin arrive in Nenana?
3. How far did each team travel before handing the antitoxin to the next team?
4. What is the driver of a dog sled called?
5. What happened to some of the men and dogs during the journey?
6. What other problem did the teams have besides the severe cold? Why?

7. Why was it so surprising that the relay had taken 127.5 hours to arrive in Nome?
8. Why do some think Leonhard Seppala and his dog Togo were the real heroes of the race?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change verb tense, or change from singular to plural.)

1. We came to live in this village because the _____ countryside is so beautiful.
2. Thanks to widespread vaccination, many serious _____ of the past are now rare in Europe.
3. _____ were traditionally made from strips of wood. Today some are made from aluminium.
4. The advertisement says these boots will _____ the harsh winter conditions in Canada.
5. The band was _____ of a vocalist, a drummer, a rhythm guitarist and a bass player.
6. When the hotel receptionist _____ us our room key, he also gave us a useful map of the city.

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam? (Paper 1, Reading: Part 6)

Write one word only in each space.

The discovery in Siberia of ancient wooden sleds near to the bones of dogs ¹_____ led scientists to believe that man has used dogs to pull sleds over snow and ice ²_____ at least 8000 years. Dog sleds have long been used ³_____ indigenous peoples in Alaska and parts of Canada, too.

Another name for dog-sledding is 'mushing'. ⁴_____ is thought that this comes from the French word 'marcher' which ⁵_____ to walk, march, or move. The first European mushers were French explorers and hunters who began to colonise Canada in the 1600s. They learnt dog-sledding from the native Iroquois hunters who, at the time, ⁶_____ already used dogs for transport for many centuries.

F – Write about it

Write about a heroic rescue operation that took place in your country. Mention:

- where/when it took place;
- who/what was in danger;
- who carried out the rescue;
- how it was carried out;
- how the rescue was celebrated.

William Shakespeare – Genius at Work (C1 -Advanced)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Do you ever go to the theatre? If so, how often? What kind of plays do you prefer?
2. If not, why not?
3. Are theatre tickets expensive in your country?
4. What are the advantages of live theatre over cinema? And of cinema over live theatre?
5. Have you ever seen a Shakespeare play at the theatre, at the cinema or on TV? If so, which one? What did you think of it?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

1. In Shakespeare's time, theatre audiences did not keep quiet during performances.
2. Shakespeare was an actor as well as a playwright.
3. The plays being performed at the Globe changed every week.
4. Shakespeare avoided including important female roles in his plays.

5. At that time it was illegal for women to perform in plays.
6. As Shakespeare mixed with different social classes, he was able to create all types of characters.
7. You can get a ticket to see a Shakespeare play at the Globe for as little as £5.
8. The purpose of the Shakespeare and Race festival is to remove racist language from the plays.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. In what way is the Globe different from most modern theatres?
2. How do we know that Shakespeare often made last-minute changes to his scripts?
3. What made it possible for Shakespeare to know the actors of the King's Men company very well?
4. Who played the female parts in the plays?
5. When did women start acting on stages in London?
6. How did Shakespeare's company come to acquire royal patronage and the privileges it brought?
7. What do some people think about the link between colonialism and Shakespeare's popularity?
8. What issues, in addition to racism, do some people find in Shakespeare's plays?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from singular to plural.)

1. I sent a complaint to the computer company with a _____ photo of the crack in the screen.
2. For a _____ who performs without a safety net, the slightest mistake can be fatal.
3. Luke's parents were worried because they didn't like the boys he was _____ with.
4. One of the government's main _____ is to build more affordable housing for young people.
5. Our school drama club is going to _____ a musical this term.
6. The last _____ of the play will be on Thursday, the day before the opening night.

E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test? (Reading and Use of English, Part 3)

Use the word in brackets to form a word that fits in the space given.

1. The Globe is a _____ (CONSTRUCT) of Shakespeare's theatre of 1614.
2. The theatre was a very popular form of _____ (ENTERTAIN) in Shakespeare's time.
3. Shakespeare knew his actors' strengths and _____ (WEAK) very well.
4. Boy actors who had female roles were _____ (HOPE) given adult roles when older.
5. The theatre was considered rather _____ (REPUTE) by English moralists.
6. Shakespeare's connections with royalty influenced the _____ (RECEIVE) of his works.
7. Royal patronage gave his company more financial security and _____ (HEIGHT) prestige.
8. Nowadays, theatre performances in London can be _____ (ACCESS) because of the cost.

F – Talk about it

In pairs or groups.

1. Do you think Shakespeare's works would have become just as well-known if Britain had not been a colonial superpower? Why (not)?
2. Do you think great works of literature should be judged according to today's values or according to the values that were prevalent when they were written? Why?

G – Write about it

Write about one of your country's most famous playwrights, living or dead. Mention:

- some biographical details;
- what kind of plays he/she is known for;
- what his/her best-known works are;
- whether you've seen or read any of them;
- if so, what you thought of them.

The Sea Wolf by Jack London (B2 Upper Intermediate)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Do you like reading adventure stories?
2. If so, do you have a favourite?
3. What do you know about Jack London?
4. Have you read any of his novels or seen the film versions?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

1. One of the themes of Jack London's novel *The Sea Wolf* is the fight for survival.
2. The main protagonist of the story, Humphrey Van Weyden, is a literature professor.
3. The other protagonist is Wolf Larsen, a sea captain.
4. Van Weyden offers to work as a cabin boy on Larsen's ship.
5. Larsen is a foolish and ignorant man.
6. He treats the ship's crew very badly.
7. Maud Brewster comes to work on the ship.
8. She wants Van Weyden to kill Larsen.
9. Van Weyden's personality changes during his time on board the ship.
10. Wolf Larsen abandons Van Weyden and Maud Brewster on a remote island.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. How did Humphrey Van Weyden come to be on Wolf Larsen's ship?
2. What did he expect Larsen to do with him?
3. Why does Larsen think working as a cabin boy will be good for Van Weyden?
4. How does Larsen see relationships between human beings?
5. Why does Van Weyden think moral courage is useless when dealing with Larsen?
6. Why doesn't Maud Brewster feel safe even though she and Van Weyden have got away?
7. What inspired Jack London to write a nautical adventure?
8. What did he intend to counter in writing the novel?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense.)

1. It's dangerous to swim in that bay. Lots of people have _____ there.
2. If you don't know the answer, try _____. You might be lucky.
3. Flying over the Grand Canyon in a helicopter is a _____ experience.
4. Robert's manager _____ to dismiss him if he kept arriving late and leaving early.
5. The Titanic _____ on 15th April 1912 after striking an iceberg.
6. If you don't exercise regularly, your muscles will _____.

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English? (Reading and Use of English, Part 2)

Read the text and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word for each gap.

A literary critic once said of Jack London, "The greatest story Jack London ever wrote was the story he lived." His tales of survival were all ¹_____ on his own experiences.

London left school at the age of 14 and, ²_____ the time he was 18, he had already been a crew member on a ³_____ hunting seals in the Bering Sea and had spent a month in prison, having been arrested ⁴_____ living as a vagabond.

Profoundly affected by the abuse he had suffered in prison ⁵_____ still an adolescent, he ⁶_____ the Socialist Party and began writing stories. Then, at the age of 21, he travelled to

the Yukon in north-west Canada to ⁷_____ part in the Klondike Gold Rush. His experience of winter in the Yukon ⁸_____ him with the material for his best-seller, *The Call of the Wild*, a story about Buck, a sled dog in Alaska.

F – Write about it

Write about your favourite adventure novel. Mention:

- who wrote it;
 - where/when the story is set;
 - who the main characters are;
 - what happens in the story;
 - why you enjoyed it.
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Answers: April Fools' Day(B1)

B – Listen and answer

1. c 2. b 3. c 4. b 5. a 6. a

C – Read and answer

1. Its purpose was to welcome the arrival of spring. 2. They focus on joy and fun during spring. 3. The new year was once celebrated around 1st April. After the adoption of the Gregorian calendar, people who continued to celebrate it in April were ridiculed. 4. It involved a nobleman sending his servant on meaningless tasks on 1st April. 5. It was backdated to 31st March to prevent any possible confusion with a trick. 6. A possible explanation is that fish are more gullible in spring because they are hungry. As a result, they are easier to catch. 7. The trick was to send someone to deliver a note that said, "Send the fool further". 8. Because they add to the flood of fake news already on the internet.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. spread 2. caught 3. vain 4. tail 5. swiftly 6. fool

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam?

1. even 2. on 3. trick 4. would 5. Though 6. that
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Answers: The Serum Run (B1)

B – Listen and answer

1. 1,400 2. four children 3. weather conditions 4. 675 5. 20 – 150 6. five 7. 1st February 8. Central Park

C – Read and answer

1. Because Nome is in the Arctic region of Alaska. 2. It arrived by rail from Anchorage. 3. Between around 18 and 40 miles. 4. A musher. 5. Some of the men suffered from frost-bite and some of the dogs died. 6. They also had the problem of visibility, which was reduced almost to zero because of the snow and wind. 7. Because until then the fastest recorded time for this route by dog sled was nine days. 8. Because they travelled the longest and most dangerous part of the route.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. surrounding 2. diseases 3. dog sleds 4. endure 5. made up 6. handed

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam?

1. has 2. for 3. by 4. It 5. means 6. had
-

Answers: William Shakespeare – Genius at Work (C1)

B – Listen and answer

1. T 2. T 3. F – They changed almost every day. 4. F – He wrote some prominent female roles. 5. F – There was no legal prohibition of female actors. 6. T 7. T 8. F – It's to discuss the plays in the light of the different sensibilities of today's audiences.

C – Read and answer

1. It's circular and roofless and there's an area where spectators can stand to watch the performance. 2. There are notes added to the scripts. 3. He spent practically his entire career working for this one company. 4. Boy actors aged from around twelve up to around twenty. 5. After the Restoration in the 1660s. 6. As The Lord Chamberlain's Men, the company was patronised by the Lord Chamberlain and his son and frequently performed at court. This brought the company into contact with Queen Elizabeth I and her successor James I. King James became the company's patron, renamed it The King's Men and granted it lots of special privileges. 7. Some people think Shakespeare's work became a global phenomenon as a result of Britain's position as a colonial superpower in the 1800s. 8. Some people also find there are issues of mysogeny, ageism and heterosexism in the plays.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. close-up 2. tightrope walker 3. hanging out 4. aims 5. put on 6. rehearsal

E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test?

1. reconstruction 2. entertainment 3. weaknesses 4. hopefully 5. disreputable
6. reception 7. heightened 8. inaccessible

Answers: The Sea Wolf by Jack London (B2)

B – Listen and answer

1. T 2. F – He's a literary critic. 3. T 4. F – He's forced to work as a cabin boy. 5. F – He's an intelligent, self-educated man. 6. T 7. F – She's a passenger. 8. F – She wants him to show moral courage and to protect the crew from Larsen. 9. T 10. F – They escape from Larsen and go to a remote island.

C – Read and answer

1. He was on a boat that sank in San Francisco Bay and was rescued from drowning by Larsen's ship *Ghost*. 2. He expected Larsen to put him (safely) to shore. 3. Because he thinks Van Weyden is a weak person who has never done manual work and would not be able to survive on his own. 4. He sees them as a fight for survival in which the strong eat the weak. 5. Because he has learnt that it's impossible to try to reason with Larsen or appeal to his humanity. For Larsen, people are just commodities like the seals he hunts. 6. Because her intuition tells her something is going to happen to them. 7. He was inspired by his own experience and by a real-life sea captain.

8. He intended to counter Nietzsche's super-man ideal.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. drowned 2. guessing 3. thrilling 4. threatened 5. sank 6. weaken

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English?

1. based 2. by 3. boat/ship 4. for 5. while 6. joined 7. take 8. provided/supplied