

Name: _____

April Fools

by Kelly Hashway

If you've ever been pranked on April Fools' Day, you may wonder how this tradition started. Well, you're not alone. No one knows for sure how April Fools' Day began. But the most likely explanation has to do with the calendar.



No, that's not an April Fools' Day joke. People used to celebrate New Years Day on April 1st. Just like today, people would have big parties to celebrate. Over time, the calendar changed and so did the date for New Years Day.

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They continued
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People following the new calendar played tricks on the "April fools" by sending them on "fool's errands". They had the "April fools" deliver invitations to big New Year's celebrations that weren't really going to happen. In France, "April fools" were called "Poisson d'Avril", which is French for "April Fish". This began because people thought fish were easy to catch since they could be fooled into taking the bait on a hook. Children would tag a paper fish on a person's back to mark them as an "April Fish". When the person discovered the fish, the prankster would yell "Poisson d'Avril".



Not everyone is convinced that this is actually how the tradition of April Fools' Day began. People have tried to pinpoint the exact date of the first April Fool's Day, but this only led to more pranks. A professor from Boston University pranked a reporter by making up a story about a court jester who said he could run the empire better than the king. The jester was made king for a day on April 1st. This turned out to be a big April Fools' Day trick because the reporter thought the story was real.

Even though we aren't sure how this tradition

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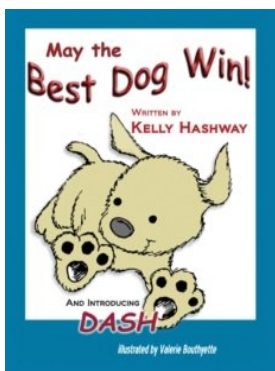
A red-bordered banner containing a cartoon superhero character flying through the air, holding a green object. To the right of the character, the word "PREVIEW" is written in large, bold, red letters with a black outline. Below the word, the text "Please log in or register to download the printable version of this worksheet." is written in a smaller, black font.

change their traditions when the new calendar was
adopted. Or maybe it's just a day to celebrate the joker
in all of us.



About the the Author

Kelly Hashway



Kelly Hashway's latest book, *May the Best Dog Win*, is now available!

Dash has the perfect life until the Super Sweeper 5000 shows up. Sweeper runs all over the house sucking up the leftover food scraps, and he even gets his own room! But Dash won't give up his place as the favorite dog without a fight.

Hashway, Kelly. *May the Best Dog Win*. ISBN: 9780984589081

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1. In the 1500s, which people were given the nickname "April fools"?
 - a. people who celebrated New Years Day on January 1st
 - b. people who didn't know when April started
 - c. people who were not smart
 - d. people who refused to recognize New Years Day as January 1st
2. In France, what did children do on April 1st?
 - a. wore paper fish on their backs
 - b. placed paper fish on other people's backs
 - c. went fishing
 - d. b

3. The article
What is



~ PREVIEW ~

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nds."
(re.)

4. What is the author's purpose for writing this article?
 - a. to teach readers about the history of April Fools' Day
 - b. to remind readers that April Fools' Day is coming up
 - c. to persuade readers into celebrating April Fools' Day safely
 - d. to teach readers how April Fools' Day is celebrated in America

Now try this: The fourth paragraph of the article describes a college professor who tell a made-up story to a reporter as an April Fools joke. On a separate sheet of paper, retell the professor's story in your own words. Add an illustration to your story.

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Match each vocabulary word from the article "April Fools" on the left to its definition on the right.

- _____ 1. jester
- _____ 2. discovered
- a. person who teaches at a college or university
- b. area ruled by a king or queen



~ PREVIEW ~

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_____ tell jokes
_____ ment

- _____ 5. empire
- _____ 6. pinpoint
- _____ 7. calendar
- _____ 8. resisted
- _____ 9. wonder
- e. to narrow information down to a specific place or moment in time
- f. desire to know something
- g. refused to change
- h. table for keeping track of days and dates
- i. person who looks for news and writes articles for a newspaper

ANSWER KEY

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An errand is a short trip taken to get something done.

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