

April Fools' Day

April Fools' Day—celebrated on April 1 each year—has been celebrated for several centuries by different cultures, though its exact origins remain a mystery. April Fools' Day traditions include playing hoaxes or practical jokes on others, often yelling "April Fools!" at the end to clue in the subject of the April Fools' Day prank. While its exact history is shrouded in mystery, the embrace of April Fools' Day jokes by the media and major brands has ensured the unofficial holiday's long life. Some historians speculate that April Fools' Day dates back to 1582, when France switched from the Julian calendar to the [Gregorian calendar](#), as called for by the Council of Trent in 1563. In the Julian Calendar, as in the Hindu calendar, the new year began with the spring equinox around April 1.

People who were slow to get the news or failed to recognize that the start of the new year had moved to January 1 and continued to celebrate it during the last week of March through April 1 became the butt of jokes and hoaxes and were called "April fools." These pranks included having paper fish placed on their backs and being referred to as "poisson d'avril" (April fish), said to symbolize a young, easily caught fish and a gullible person.

April Fish!



Around the world, April 1 is a day when people try to fool their friends. In France, April Fool's Day is called "Poisson d'avril." In English that means "fish of April."

A popular joke, especially with schoolchildren, is to hook or stick a cardboard fish onto someone's back. When the joke is discovered, the trickster shouts, "Poisson d'avril" (April Fish!)

What does a fish have to do with April Fool's Day?

Some people think that it is because there were always lots of fish in French streams and rivers during early April after the baby fish had hatched. These young fish were easy to fool with a hook and lure, and were very easy to catch. The French called them "Poisson d'avril" or "April Fish." It then became a custom to fool people on April 1, as a way of celebrating all foolish fish.

1. What does the French word "poisson" means?

A. fish

B. fool

C. April

2. What is the zodiac sign for Pisces?

A. fish

B. rat

C. tiger

3. What do French people say after playing a joke on April 1st?

A. Happy April Fools Day!

B. Bon chance

C. Poisson d'avril

4. People give each other chocolate hearts on Poisson d'avril.

A. True

B. False

C. It doesn't say in the story.

5. Why are there lots of fish in the rivers in April?

A. The baby fish hatch then.

B. People throw fish in the water.

C. They swim in from the lakes.

6. What do French people often do as a joke on April Fool's Day?

A. go fishing

B. tie their shoelaces together

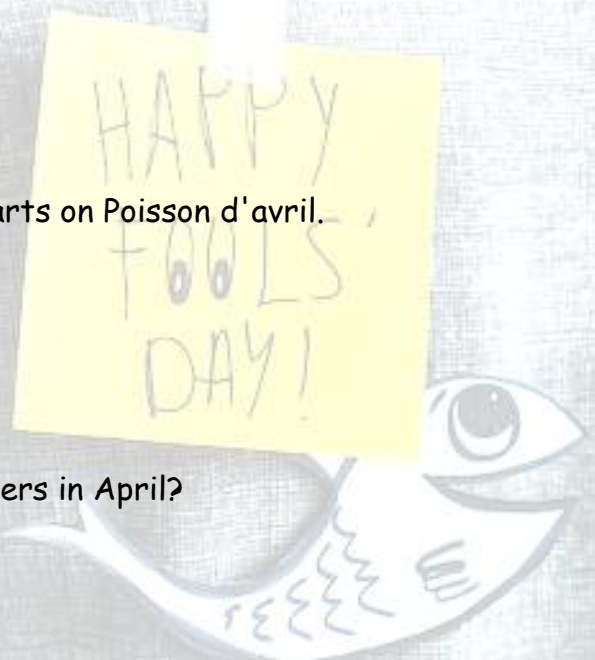
C. stick a fish on someone's back

7. Why did people think the fish in the rivers were foolish?

A. They were fooled by the hooks and lures and got caught.

B. They swim every which way.

C. They jump around a lot and look silly.



8. What does the French word "avril" means?

- A. fish
- B. fool
- C. April

9. When is Poisson d'avril?

- A. January 1
- B. April 1
- C. September 1

10. What do French people often do as a joke on April Fool's Day?

- A. go fishing
- B. tie their shoelaces together
- C. stick a fish on someone's back

Others say the fish custom is because the zodiac sign of Pisces, occurring just before April, is a fish.

On "April Fish Day" in France, bakeries are full of cookies and cakes shaped like fish, and people often give each other chocolate fish.

