April Fools’ Day Trivia

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. On which date should a calendar put the annual observance called April Fools’ Day?
   - A. April 1
   - B. April 15
   - C. March 31
   - D. May 1

   Correct answer: A. April 1
   April Fools’ Day is observed on the first day of April. Historical accounts document the date in different countries.

2. The French expression poisson d’avril is associated with April Fools’ Day. What animal appears in its literal English translation?
   - A. A fox
   - B. A hare
   - C. A fish
   - D. A rooster

   Correct answer: C. A fish
   The expression translates as April fish. It can refer to a person who is fooled on the day.

3. A 1957 BBC television item showed people taking strands of what food from bushes as if they had grown there?
   - A. Blueberries
   - B. Spaghetti
   - C. Almonds
   - D. Rice

   Correct answer: B. Spaghetti
   Panorama staged a spaghetti harvest. Picking pasta from branches was part of the television joke.

4. On April 1, 2004, Google really launched a service that sounded too generous to be true. What kind of service was Gmail?
   - A. Music streaming
   - B. Weather forecasting
   - C. Video calling
   - D. Email

   Correct answer: D. Email
   Gmail really was an email service. The April 1 timing and its then unusually large storage allowance made the launch sound like a joke.

5. During a Pennsylvania April Fools' Day prank recorded by the U.S. Postal Service, what grew surprisingly long as a mail carrier pulled it out of a door slot?

A. A shoelace
B. A mock envelope
C. A kitchen towel
D. A postal route map

Correct answer: B. A mock envelope
Comedian Billy Kelly made the object look like a stamped envelope. It stretched about ten feet.

6. What did city streets become in the April Fools' edition called Ms. PAC-Maps?

A. A maze for the video game character
B. A musical staff that played notes
C. A drawing in a virtual coloring book
D. A racetrack for pedal cars

Correct answer: A. A maze for the video game character
Google Maps briefly turned ordinary street layouts into mazes with dots, fruit, and ghosts for players to navigate.

7. The Guardian's 1977 guide to the invented island of San Serriffe used geographic names drawn from which trade's vocabulary?

A. Watchmaking
B. Shipbuilding
C. Wool weaving
D. Printing and typesetting

Correct answer: D. Printing and typesetting
The newspaper disguised printing and typography terms as names for places in the fictional travel supplement.

8. When historian Joseph Boskin made up a story about an April Fools' king, what inspired the name King Kugel?

A. A medieval coin
B. A kind of crown
C. A noodle casserole
D. A board game piece

Correct answer: C. A noodle casserole
Boskin's jester was fictional. The historian said he chose the name after kugel, a noodle casserole.

9. An April Fools' Google Maps game asked players to find a familiar traveler in busy illustrated scenes. Who were they looking for?

A. Waldo
B. Carmen Sandiego
C. Paddington
D. Tintin

Correct answer: A. Waldo
Waldo and several companions appeared in a limited-time search game. The maps opened illustrated scenes people could search.

10. A banner on MIT's website in 1998 announced a fictional purchase of the university and showed ears atop its dome. Which company supposedly made the offer?

A. Mattel
B. Kodak
C. Hasbro
D. Disney

Correct answer: D. Disney
The April Fools' banner said Disney had offered to buy MIT. The altered dome picture added a Mickey Mouse clue.

11. In his 1686 account of April Fools' Day, English antiquarian John Aubrey noted that which other country observed the custom?

A. Portugal
B. Greece
C. Germany
D. Sweden

Correct answer: C. Germany
Aubrey described an April 1 observance in his own setting and explicitly recorded it in Germany.

12. In Eduard De Dene's 1561 poem, what does the nobleman ask his servant to do as an April Fools' trick?

A. Act as referee in a game of chess
B. Go on errands that cannot succeed
C. Write an invitation in an unfamiliar language
D. Wear his uniform with the buttons unfastened

Correct answer: B. Go on errands that cannot succeed
The servant recognizes the assignments as fool's errands. The poem ties the joke explicitly to the first of April.

13. In Frederick Burr Opper’s 1895 Puck illustration Trying to Make an April Fool of Him, which figure is the intended target?

A. Brother Jonathan
B. Father Time
C. The Statue of Liberty
D. Uncle Sam

Correct answer: D. Uncle Sam
The Library of Congress file identifies Uncle Sam as the central figure facing several political temptations.

14. A 1796 handbill requested April 1 delivery of fool’s coats and caps in Middletown. Which state was that Middletown in?

A. Connecticut
B. New York
C. New Jersey
D. Rhode Island

Correct answer: A. Connecticut
The Library of Congress example names Middletown, Connecticut. It is evidence the custom was familiar there by the late 1700s.

15. A 1508 French poem uses poisson d’avril. What would make that citation firmer evidence of an April Fools’ Day custom?

A. An illustration of the poem’s printer
B. A list of fish sold at a spring market
C. An explicit link between a prank and the first of April
D. A later edition using the same spelling

Correct answer: C. An explicit link between a prank and the first of April
An early phrase can have several meanings. A passage that clearly dates the prank to April 1 would connect the expression to the observance.