

Erster April

1st April/April Fool's Day

Background information

Some evidence suggests that April Fool's Day originates from Germany. Credit is given to Gabriel Hoffmann who lived in Darmstadt in the 1860s. There is also evidence to suggest that a similar day existed in Roman times, although it was then celebrated on New Year's Day. In Germany, as in many European countries, the 1st of April is the day on which practical jokes can be played on each other until twelve noon. After that it is believed to bring you bad luck if you play a joke on someone. Usually the newspapers, TV and radio stations will also join in to set up a hoax. There have been some very elaborate hoaxes with many people fooled! In Germany an April Fool's joke is known as an *Aprilscherz*. If you fool somebody you say, 'Jemanden in den April schicken', which means, literally, 'to send someone into April'. You say 'April, April' when you have successfully tricked someone.

April Fool's Day is illegal in the Peoples Republic of China, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, Alaska, Cuba and Bolivia.

Here is a Germany 'Klopf Klopf Witz' (knock, knock joke).

Klopf, klopf.	<i>Knock, knock.</i>
Wer ist da?	<i>Who's there?</i>
Tom.	<i>Tom.</i>
Tom wer?	<i>Tom who?</i>
Tom Ate.	<i>Tomato.</i>

Teaching activities

- ◆ Can you make up any of your own jokes in German?
- ◆ Write an acrostic poem about jokes and tricks using 'April Fool' as the title.
- ◆ Make a poster of your favourite jokes.
- ◆ Ask each member of your family for their favourite joke and write it down to add to a class anthology.
- ◆ Tell the class some jokes, in English. Others can score them out of ten for content and delivery.
- ◆ Children can use the guided sheet on page 40 to compare April Fool's Day in Britain and Germany.

Schlüsselwörter

der Aprilscherz	April Fool's joke
Erster April	1 st April
Jemanden in den April schicken.	To send someone into April.
Klopf, Klopf	knock, knock
ein Witz	a joke
Wer ist da?	Who's there?
Wer?	Who?
die Tomate	tomato

Erster April



Name:

Datum:

I have learned about April Fool's Day in Germany.

Write down at least three facts about April Fool's Day in Germany:

Describe a good April Fool's Day trick below. You could write it in the form of a diary or a newspaper report.

Extension activity

- ◆ Can you make up your own 'Klopf, Klopf' joke in German? Ask your teacher for help.