

'More Birthdays! We Are Not Amused'

Comprehension Answers

1. When is Queen Elizabeth's actual birthday?
April 21st.
2. During whose reign were the rules changed to create an 'official' birthday for the monarch? Why?
George II. His actual birthday was in November (or October in the old Julian calendar) and deemed to be too cold a time of year for outdoor celebrations for him and the military.
3. What did the Mad Hatter create in 'Alice in Wonderland'?
The 'unbirthday' – a day to celebrate that wasn't your birthday.
4. What is the 'Trooping the Colour'?
The official inspection of the troops by the reigning monarch during the official birthday. It includes an inspection of the Household Guard at Horse Guards Parade in London and the symbolic moving about of the Regimental Colour (flag).
5. When did Australia begin to officially celebrate the sovereign's birthday?
1788.
6. Which Australian states changed the date of the Queen's official birthday? Why?
Western Australia celebrates differently because they celebrate their foundation day on the first Monday in June and the two weekends would be right next to one another. They have a moveable date based around school holidays and the Perth Royal Show. Queensland has the date correspond to the grand finals of the AFL and NRL.
7. When do Canadians celebrate the Queen's Birthday? What other holiday does this coincide with?
The Monday before May 24th. Corresponds to Victoria Day weekend when Queen Victoria's birthday is still celebrated.
8. Name two animals the Queen has received as gifts in the past.
She has received many gifts but included in the article are a pair of stags, two sloths and an elephant named Jumbo.
9. Why isn't the Queen's Birthday celebrated now in Fiji?
There was a military coup in 1987. The holiday continued to be celebrated for a time but in 2012 the government of the nation indicated that it would no longer be a holiday there.

10. Name one other reason why someone might have more than one birthday. What famous bear has two birthdays?

Students might mention the things in the article or come up with others. Those whose birthdays are on February 29th have a problem. Many Catholics also celebrate their name day as well as their own birthday. Students might also consider the fact that some people don't know for many years when they were actually born – adopted etc. There are also those who emigrated long ago and records were simply not kept properly. Some people who undergo life changing things (operations, joining AA, etc.) celebrate these events as a re-birth.

Extension:

Research the Julian and Gregorian calendars. Why was the change made from one to the other? What are the differences? Which countries still use the Julian calendar? Create a fact file about the calendars.

During the reign of George II the calendar underwent significant changes. There was an initial change and then a later one to amend some issues with the new calendar. Students might want to investigate why we now have leap year for example. Some countries and some religions (orthodox Christians for example) still follow the old Julian calendar for certain things. Students might investigate the alternative calendars that have been proposed over time or the use of daylight savings time.

Imagine being invited to celebrate the Queen's birthday at Buckingham Palace. What would you take as a present? Why? How would the Queen respond? Write out your imagined experience as a script.

Students might like to create a drama script, an improvisation or a creative writing piece based around this idea.

Find out about one of the countries/territories mentioned in the article and create an interesting fact file or information text entry about it. Why does this particular place still celebrate the Queen's birthday? Is it an overseas territory or a Commonwealth country? When did it belong to Britain? Does the Queen feature on the money of the country?

Students can use the fact file available with this pack to find out about the Commonwealth. They might like to find out about autonomous Commonwealth countries like Kenya, India or Canada or concentrate on the British Overseas Territories still owned by Britain such as the Falklands, Gibraltar etc. These are particularly interesting in terms of history and often in understanding naval strategy. One, the British Virgin Islands has now reinstated the tradition of sending the monarch one pound of salt as rent each year.