

Lip News

LIP SERVICE
Your Language Consultants
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APRIL FOOLS!

"April showers bring May flowers" the old saying goes. Winter is finally over and the tulips and daffodils are in bloom. Spring is in the air.

Lip Service will be taking an Easter break and the school will be closed from April 14th until the 18th. In honor of Liberation Day and Labor Day, we will be closed on Saturday April 22nd and 29th. Have a great spring break and Happy Easter to all of our readers!



In sixteenth-century France, the start of the new year was observed April 1st. Just like today, people celebrated with parties and dancing into the late hours of the night. Then in 1562, Pope Gregory introduced a new calendar for the Christian world, and the new year started on January 1st.

Some people didn't hear of the new calendar and other people didn't believe in the date change so they continued to celebrate New Year's Day on April 1st. As a result, people played tricks on these non-believers and called them "April fools." They sent them on "fool's errands" or tried to make them believe that something false was true.

The "fools' errands" we play on people today are called practical jokes or pranks. One common practical joke to play on April Fool's Day is putting salt in the sugar bowl. Another prank is to point down to a friend's shoe and say,

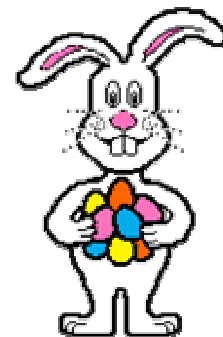
"Your shoelace is untied." School children might tell a classmate that school has been cancelled. Whatever the trick, if the innocent victim falls for the joke the prankster yells, "April Fool!"

The greatest April Fool's hoax ever played on TV was in 1957. The BBC broadcast a fake documentary on Panorama. The anchorman reported that spaghetti grew on trees and told of a record harvest in southern Switzerland. The program showed Swiss farmers picking strands of spaghetti from the branches of trees. Many TV viewers in Britain fell for the joke, calling the TV station, to ask for information about how they too could grow spaghetti on trees.

April Fool jokes are usually played in good fun and not meant to harm anyone. The most clever April Fool joke is the one where everyone laughs, even the person upon whom the joke is played.

TWO MEN EAT 350 EASTER EGGS

Two men have spent six months eating 350 Easter eggs. Jeff Pyne and Rahul Patel are professional Easter egg tasters for Tesco Storse in the UK. "There were simply too many products to be sampled by one person, so now there's two of us eating eggs round the clock!" says Patel. "There was only one minor problem, I didn't really like the taste of chocolate before I was offered this job."



During the course of their 10-year careers as tasters, Pyne and Patel estimate they have eaten at least 6,000 eggs and 4,000 boxes of chocolates. Pyne says "We may be the envy of kids and all of our female colleagues, but there are downsides. I can never give boxes of chocolates to friends or family who know I get them from work - and trips to the gym have become an absolute must!"

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THE GREAT DEBATES

CAN TV DEBATES STILL SWING THE UNDECIDED VOTERS?



Recently Italian viewers watched a BLOB flashback of the Nixon and Kennedy debates, the first presidential debate in television history. In September 1960, that debate was broadcast live, coast to coast in the U.S. It reached 67 million viewers and was the first of four televised "Great Debates" which forever changed political campaigning.

For the first time in history, voters could actually see their presidential candidates in competition. The visual contrast on TV was dramatic. People who had listened to the debate on radio thought Nixon won. Those who had watched TV proclaimed Kennedy the winner. Why?

Nixon had been advised to not participate in the debate. He had spent time in the hospital, was under-weight and pale. He arrived at the debate in an ill-fitting shirt, and refused to put on make-up to improve his color. Kennedy, by contrast, had been campaigning in California. He was tan and confident and well-rested.

The televised debate gave the young and less well-known JFK a golden opportunity to introduce himself to America. He looked straight into the camera (not at the journalists) and talked directly to the American people. For Nixon, the debate was a major political miscalculation that cost him the election. His advisers had urged him not to participate. He was leading in the polls and they feared sharing a debate stage with Kennedy.

Most experts agree today that presidential debates only reaffirm people's opinions rather than change them. However debates can still be useful in convincing swing voters (that proportion of undecided voters who are needed to win the election).

More than half of all voters in 1960 reported that the Great Debates had influenced their opinion. 6% reported that their vote was the result of the debates alone. Kennedy won the race and launched TV as the new medium to reach the voters.

Unlike in the 60s, nowadays we are over-loaded with televised politics and exposed to months of shouting matches and mud-slinging by candidates. Can a really good debate still play a vital role in a campaign?

Professional debate is all about rules, rules, rules. Anyone can over-talk, insult, and interrupt and bully their way into winning an argument. But a fine debater is a master in a contest of words. He exercises logic and speech with respect for the time constraints that guarantee equal play for each side and heighten the competitive atmosphere of the match.

In many countries, competitive debate is a highly organized activity with teams competing at the local, national, and international level. It is very popular in English-speaking universities and high schools around the world.

Competitive debate is a rule-governed contest presided by a debate moderator and judges. The principles of debate are logic, evidence, case construction, proof, refuting arguments, rebuttal, and summary. Each side is given a chance to propose their position and refute the opposition's position, all within equal time limits.

Nowadays, debates rarely change the momentum of a campaign like they did in the Kennedy-Nixon era. However a good match with a professional moderator can help candidates exploit an opponent's weakness, help deflect attacks, and provide a national audience with some new ideas.

"I think debating in high school and college is most valuable training whether for politics, the law, business, or for service on community committees. A good debater must not only study material in support of his own case, but he must also, of course, thoroughly analyze the expected argument of his opponent. The give and take of debating, the testing of ideas, is essential to democracy."

John F. Kennedy