skills
w o r k s h o p

Leap Year: It's nearly February 29th – but why does the month have an extra day every four years?

Why do we have leap years?

A leap year, where an extra day is added to the end of February every four years, is down to the solar system's mismatch with our calendar.

A complete orbit of the earth around the sun takes exactly 365.2422 days to complete, but the Gregorian calendar uses 365 days. So leap seconds - and leap years - are added as means of keeping our clocks (and calendars) in sync with the Earth and its seasons.

Why does the extra day fall in February?

All the other months have 30 or 31 days, but February lost out to the ego of Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus.

Under his predecessor Julius Caesar, February had 30 days and the month named after him - July - had 31. August had only 29 days.

When Caesar Augustus became Emperor, he added two days to 'his' month to make August the same as July.

So February lost out to August in the battle of the extra days.

Is February 29 a bank holiday?

It's not - but there is a campaign to make February 29 a bank holiday.

Workers have realised that every leap year, they have to work one extra day for no extra pay.

If a person earns the national average salary of £26,500 a year, that works out at £2,208.33 per monthly payslip – which breaks down to £71.24 per day in a 31-day month but a daily wage of £78.87 in February.

This realisation prompted Karl Savage, who was a high school teacher from Maryland, to try and kick-start the "No Work on Leap Day Revolution" in 2008, when the extra day fell on a Friday.

What if you're born on February 29?

The chances of having a leap birthday are one in 1,461. About 4.1 million people around the world have been born on the 29th.

Level 1- 2 questions

1.   The earth takes just over 365 days to go around the sun. How much more?
      Answer either as a fraction or a percentage of a day.

2.   What is the name of our current calendar system?

3.   "Sync" is an informal word for what? Look it up in a dictionary if you need to.

4.   Who was August named after and how many days did it originally have?

5.   If someone is on the national average salary, how much to they get paid each month?

6.   Which day of the week was February 28th 2008?

7.   How many people will be celebrating their birthday on 29.2?

8.   You have been asked to write a history webpage for teenagers. Write a short paragraph
      explaining why February only has 28 days. You need to make it factual, lively and interesting.

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Entry Level 3 questions.

1. How long does it take for the earth to go round the sun?

2. Who was July named after?

3. How many days did Caesar Augustus add to August?

4. What was Karl Savage's job?

5. What did Karl Savage think people should do on February 29th?

6. Which day of the week was February 28th 2008?

7. How many people will be celebrating their birthday on 29/2?

8. When will the next leap year be?

Additional information for discussion and embedded maths

Technically, a leap year isn't every four years

The year 2000 was a leap year, but the years 1700, 1800 and 1900 were not.

There's a leap year every year that is divisible by four, except for years that are both divisible by 100 and not divisible by 400.

The added rule about centuries (versus just every four years) was an additional fix to make up for the fact that an extra day every four years is too much of a correction.

Additional Questions for L1-2 text

1. What is the main purpose of the text?

   Select two examples from the text to support your answer.

2. Identify two presentational features used in the text.

   Explain why each feature is effective.

Leap year Curriculum mapping and answers

skills workshop

| **Entry 3 Reading skill standard:** | Read and understand the purpose and content of straightforward texts that explain, inform and recount information |

Coverage and range statements

a) Understand the main points of texts ✓
b) Obtain specific information through detailed reading ✓
c) Use organisational features to locate information ✓
d) Read and understand texts in different formats using strategies and techniques appropriate to task

| **Level 1 Reading skill standard:** | Read and understand a range of straightforward texts |

Coverage and range statements

a) Identify the main points and ideas and how they are presented in a variety of texts ✓
b) Read and understand texts in detail ✓
c) Utilise information contained in texts ✓
d) Identify suitable responses to texts ✓

| **Level 2 Reading skill standard:** | Select, read, understand and compare texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions |

Coverage and range statements

a) Select and use different types of texts to obtain and utilise relevant information ✓
b) Read and summarise, succinctly, information/ideas from different sources ✓
c) Identify the purposes of texts and comment on how meaning is conveyed ✓
d) Detect point of view, implicit meaning and/or bias
e) Analyse texts in relation to audience needs and consider suitable responses ✓

** This resource also covers many adult literacy curriculum http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf1286 elements.

L1-2

1. The earth takes just over 365 days to go around the sun. How much more?
   Answer either as a fraction or a percentage of a day. 25% or ¼
2. What is the name of our current calendar system? Gregorian
3. "Sync" is an informal word for what? Look it up in a dictionary if you need to. Synchronise /synchronisation
4. Who was August named after and how many days did it originally have? Caesar Augustus and 29
5. If someone is on the national average salary, how much to they get paid each month? £2,208.33
6. Which day of the week was February 28th 2008? Thursday
7. How many people will be celebrating their birthday on 29.2? About 4.1 million

Entry 3

1. How long does it take for the earth to go round the sun? 365.2422 days
2. Who was July named after? Julius Caesar

3. How many days did Caesar Augustus add to August? 2
4. What was Karl Savage's job? High school teacher
5. What did Karl Savage think people should do on February 29th? Not go to work
6. Which day of the week was February 28th 2008? Thursday
7. How many people will be celebrating their birthday on 29.2? About 4.1 million
8. When will the next leap year be? 2020 (Note this answer will change over time)

Additional

1. To explain (because it answers questions). [So leap seconds – and leap years – are added to keep…. / If a person…. / etc. etc.]
2. Large title tells you what it's about. Bold/enlarged font draws your attention to the headings. The headings (in the form of questions) tell you what each section covers.
Calendar image - attracts readers attention and adds interest / appeal.