

Happy April Fools Day

Read some unbelievable stories which happened on (or almost on) April Fool's Day. Decide what really happened and how the stories ended.

1) UFO Lands Near London

On 31st March 1989, thousands of motorists driving on the highway outside London saw a glowing flying saucer descending on the city. The saucer finally landed in Surrey, on the outskirts of London. Local residents immediately called the police to warn everyone of an alien invasion. When the policemen arrived on the scene and approached the craft, a door opened in the bottom of the ship and a small figure wearing a silver space suit walked out. The policemen immediately ran away in the opposite direction.

2) I'm Here To Take Money

On 1st April 2006, a 57-year-old woman stopped at a bank to make a withdrawal. She, as a joke, handed the teller a note that read "I'm here to take money."

3) The Sydney Iceberg

On 1st April 1978 a giant iceberg appeared in Sydney Harbour. Sydney was actually expecting it. Dick Smith, a local adventurer and millionaire businessman, had been loudly promoting his idea to tow an iceberg from Antarctica for quite some time. He said that he was going to carve the berg into small ice cubes, which he would sell to the public for ten cents each. These Antarctic water cubes were promised to improve the flavor of any drink.



4) Bombs away!

On 1st April 1915, in the midst of World War I, a French aviator flew over a German camp and dropped what appeared to be a huge bomb. The German soldiers immediately scattered in all directions, but no explosion followed.

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Now, read the endings to these stories. Were your right?

a) Slowly the iceberg made its way into the harbour. Then, it unexpectedly started to rain, and the firefighting foam and shaving cream that the berg was really made of washed away, uncovering the white plastic sheets beneath.

b) After some time, the soldiers crept back and approached the bomb. They discovered it was actually a large football with a note tied to it that read, "April Fool!"

c) The alien turned out to be a midget, and the flying saucer was a hot air balloon that had been specially built to look like a UFO by Richard Branson, the 36-year-old chairman of Virgin Records. Branson had taken off in the balloon the day before, planning to land in London's Hyde Park on April 1. However, a wind change had blown him down a day early in the Surrey field. One of the policemen who had to approach the craft later said "I have never been so scared in 20 years of being a policeman."

d) The teller pressed the alarm button, but by the time the Police arrived, the lady had left the bank. She was later picked her up and charged her with disorderly conduct.



Teacher's Notes and Answer Key

This material is intended as a fun activity on or around April Fool's Day. There are many ways in which you can use it with students at different levels. Below are presented two.

A) Option for intermediate students.

Pre-teach some vocabulary or give out monolingual dictionaries. Give out *Students' Worksheet A* and ask students to read the April Fool's hoaxes and to think what really happened or how these stories ended. Elicit some possible endings. Then, give out *Students' Worksheet B* and ask students to match the stories' beginnings with their endings.

Answers: 1c, 2d, 3a, 4b

B) Option for upper intermediate students.

Divide your class into groups four (or more) groups. Assign each group one story and ask students to think of an ending to the story. Ask each group to present their story and ending to the class. Reveal the real ending at the end. Award the best students' endings.