



Kate: Hello, I'm Kate Colin and this is 6 minute English. Today I'm joined again by Jackie Dalton. Hi Jackie.

Jackie: Hi Kate

Kate: As you may know, yesterday, April 1st was April Fool's Day!

Jackie: Well, to be honest, I completely forgotuntil I was caught out that is...

Kate: Oh no – what happened?

Jackie: Well, my flatmate changed my clock so I ended up getting up a whole hour earlier than I needed to. I only realised just before I was about to leave the house and I heard the time on the radio. I felt quite silly!

Kate: Oh dear, but at least you were nice and early for work. I bet you'd have preferred an extra hour in bed though. Well April Fool's Day is the one day of the year when we are all allowed to have some fun and play a few jokes on our friends and colleagues. Newspapers, radio stations and even large companies have their share of fun as well. But before we go any further, here's my question for this week:

In the UK on April Fool's Day, we are traditionally allowed to play jokes on people until what time. Is it:

- a) midnight
- b) midday
- c) 4 o'clock

Jackie: answer

Kate: OK, we'll see if you answered correctly at the end of the programme. Next we're going to hear from our colleague Carrie as she tells us what usually happens on April Fool's Day. See if you can hear how she describes the jokes that are played on people?

Carrie

It's usually people playing **practical jokes** on other people. So if somebody makes somebody else look rather silly, by telling them something that isn't true, by playing a **practical joke** on them.

Jackie: She called the jokes '**practical jokes**' and these are when you play a trick on someone or do something to make them look silly. So the joke my flatmate played on me was an excellent example of a '**practical joke**'. I'll get her back next year though!

Kate: Another expression which has a similar meaning to '**practical joke**' is '**hoax**'. A hoax is when people are deceived into thinking something false and it's usually on a larger scale than a practical joke, involving many people. A '**media hoax**' is when the people in charge of the media (TV, radio or newspapers and online) play a trick on their audience. Listen to what Carrie says about '**hoaxes**'. What does she think is the problem with '**media hoaxes**'?

Carrie

The media have a lot of **hoaxes**, so you can pick up a newspaper on April Fool's Day and there'll be a story in it that you know is a **media hoax** and it's clearly not true. Or not as the case may be! I think the trouble is now that you pick up a newspaper on 1st April and you look through and try and find the **spoof story** and quite often you'll pick something that maybe isn't a spoof story at all, it really is a genuine story.

Jackie: Carrie says that the trouble with **'media hoaxes'** is that now we all expect that's there's going to be one and often we'll see a story and we think it's a hoax when actually it's true.

Kate: We also heard the expression **'spoof story'**. What does this mean?

Jackie: A **'spoof story'** is a kind of practical joke or hoax and it's a story that's not true, presented in a style that makes it look like as though it's really true. So an example of a spoof story would be a newspaper article saying that Elvis Presley has been seen walking down the streets of London, when in fact he's been dead for many years.

Kate: Yes, and it can be easy to be **'taken in'** by these kind of stories. **'Taken in by'** is a phrasal verb we use when we believe something that isn't true. Another way of describing someone who is easily taken in by things is to say they are **'gullible'**. A **'gullible'** person will believe most things you tell them, no matter how unlikely they are to be true. There have been plenty of other media hoaxes and spoof stories and many **gullible** people have been **taken in** over the years. Back to Carrie:

Carrie

I think the most famous media hoax is actually a BBC hoax which I think happened in the 1950s when a very well respected news programme called Panorama ran a story about spaghetti trees and how, I think it was the Swiss were harvesting a bumper crop of spaghetti and they had film clips of people picking spaghetti off trees. It's still probably the most famous, certainly in the UK, the most famous hoax.

Kate: So many people were **taken in by** that practical joke that a large number of people contacted the BBC wanting to know how to cultivate their own spaghetti trees! Unsurprisingly, as Carrie said, even after 50 years it remains one of the most successful TV hoaxes of all time.

Jackie: And the BBC have been quite naughty **pranksters** in the past. A **prankster** is someone who plays tricks or pranks on someone else. And in 1965, the BBC told the public that they were broadcasting smells through the airwaves so that if they sniffed their radios they would be able to get smells sent over from the BBC. Many people actually contacted the BBC saying that they could indeed smell things coming through their radio.

Kate: I bet they felt very silly after they realised it was just an April Fool. It's amazing what some people will believe.....Let's have a quick look over the vocabulary we came across today: We had:

practical joke - which a type of joke which is played at someone else's expense

hoax - to trick people into believing something that's not true, usually on a larger scale

spoof story - a story that's not true presented as though it were true

taken in by - to believe something that isn't true

gullible - describes someone who believes things easily, even if it's obvious that they're not true

prank - is a type of practical joke.

Kate: Now lastly to the question I asked you earlier, in the UK on April Fool's Day, we are allowed play jokes on people until what time?

Jackie: I said midday

Kate And you were correct...traditionally in England, the jokes only last until noon midday. Elsewhere, such as in Ireland, France, and the USA, the jokes can last all day. Unlucky for them! That's all we have time for today. Until next week.

Both: Goodbye!