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The 4 page 60 minute ESL British English lesson – 25/02/16

February 29

Today, we are going to talk about February 29. The extra day occurs ordinarily once every four years. It is called a Leap Day and is added to the calendar. When there is a leap year there are 366 days rather than 365 days of the year.

The previous leap year was in 2012. This year sees another leap year. The extra day is added because of the way the Solar System works. A complete orbit of the Earth around the sun actually takes approximately 365.2422 days.

Why are there 29 days in February rather than 30 or 31? This is down to history. During the Roman Empire Emperor Julius Caesar ordered his astronomer Sosigenes to simplify the 355 day Roman calendar, which had an extra 22 days added on every two years.

Sosigenes created the 365 day year, with an extra day every 4 years. This is how February 29 was created. However, in order to balance the calendar time correctly, Pope Gregory XIII and his astronomers introduced the Gregorian calendar in 1582. This loses three leap days every 400 years***. To date this method is still used.

So why is there not 30 or 31 days in February like the rest of the year? It is because of Roman Emperors. Under Emperor Julius Caesar, February had 30 days. His month - Julius - July had 31 days. His successor Emperor Caesar Augustus was annoyed that 'his' month - Augustus - August - had only 29 days. Augustus decided to make his month the same as his predecessor. He pinched two days from February, so February lost out. Daft but true!

Those with birthdays on February 29 will gain another year! The odds of having a birthday on February 29 are about one in 1,461. About 4.1 million people around the world celebrate their birthday on February 29th. Did you know that when there is a leap year women are allowed to propose to men?

In Denmark men who refuse must give the woman 12 pairs of gloves. The summer Olympics are also held during leap years! A disadvantage of a leap year could be that if you are on a fixed rate salary you have to work one extra day for free!

SPEAKING – WARM UP

Think of three things you know about February 29. Go round the room swapping details with others.

LISTENING – WRITING - DICTATION

The teacher will read some lines of the article slowly to the class.

READING

Students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

SPEAKING - UNDERSTANDING

1) The article – Students check any unknown vocabulary or phrases with the teacher.

2) The article - Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- 1) What is the article about?
- 2) What do you think about the article?
- 3) Was this an easy or difficult article to understand?
- 4) Was this a boring or interesting article?
- 5) Discuss the article.

3) Article quiz - Students quiz each other in pairs. Score a point for each correct answer. Score half a point each time you have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A questions

- 1) Name the Pope.
- 2) Name the two Emperors.
- 3) What happens in Denmark?
- 4) How many days are there in 2016?
- 5) Who pinched what and when?

Student B questions

- 1) What is a leap year?
- 2) What is the Gregorian calendar?
- 3) What happens every 400 years?
- 4) What does 'daft' mean?
- 5) Who was Sosigenes?

Note: *** Years that are divisible by 100, but not by 400, do not contain a leap day. So, 1700, 1800, 1900 did not contain a leap day. The year 2000 did contain a leap day. 2100, 2200, and 2300 will not contain a leap day.

Category: History / Calendar / February 29
Level: Intermediate / Upper Intermediate

February 29 – 25th February 2016

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs. On the board write as many words about the 'February 29' *One-two minutes.* Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs think of three things you know about February 29. Write them below. Talk about them!

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs - Think of three things you know about each of the following:

- 1) Emperor Julius Caesar.
- 2) Emperor Caesar Augustus.
- 3) The Gregorian calendar.

Talk about each of them! *3-5 mins.*

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings to the class.

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs – **On this day...** think of three famous people born on this day. Now add three famous events that happened on this day: *Google it if necessary!*

SPEAKING – ROLEPLAY 1

In groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *Discussion FM* radio studio in London. Today's interview is about: *February 29.*

- 1) Someone who has a birthday on February 29.
- 2) An Astronomer.
- 3) A historian.
- 4) A man who has been proposed to by a woman on February 29.

The teacher will choose some groups to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

SPEAKING - ROLEPLAY 2

In pairs - *Student A* is a reporter. *Student B* is someone in the street. The reporter is asking about the advantages and disadvantages of February 29. *3 mins.*

SPEAKING

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class.

February 29
Google it if necessary!

The teacher can moderate the session.

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Do you know anyone who has a birthday on February 29? Who?
- 3) Do you know anyone famous who has a birthday on February 29?
- 4) Did you know the history of February 29 before today's English lesson?
- 5) What two other things do you know about February 29?
- 6) Can you remember anything in your life about something that happened on February 29?
- 7) Do you celebrate February 29?
- 8) Give three disadvantages of being born in a Leap Year.
- 9) Give three advantages of being born in a Leap Year.
- 10) What is the star sign for February 29?

DISCUSSION

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you've read?
- 2) Why are the Olympics held during Leap Years?
- 3) What do you know about the Gregorian calendar?
- 4) Do you know any women who have proposed to a man on February 29?
- 5) Do you work for free on February 29?
- 6) Are you into astronomy?
- 7) Do you like learning about history?
- 8) Have you studied Roman history? When?
- 9) What do you normally do on February 29?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

GAP FILL: READING

February 29

Today, we are going to talk about February 29. The extra day occurs ordinarily once every four years. It is called a Leap Day and is added to the (1)__. When there is a leap year there are 366 days rather than 365 days of the year. The previous leap year was in 2012. This year sees another leap year. The extra day is added because of the way the Solar System works. A (2)__ (3)__ of the Earth around the sun actually takes approximately 365.2422 days.

Why are there 29 days in February rather than 30 or 31? This is down to history. During the Roman Empire Emperor Julius Caesar ordered his astronomer Sosigenes to (4)__ the 355 day Roman calendar, which had an extra 22 days added on every two years. Sosigenes created the 365 day year, with an (5)__ day every 4 years. This is how February 29 was created. However, in order to balance the calendar time correctly, Pope Gregory XIII and his (6)__ introduced the Gregorian calendar in 1582. This loses three (7)__ days every 400 years. To date this (8)__ is still used.

method / calendar / leap / simplify / extra / astronomers / orbit / complete /

So why is there not 30 or 31 days in February like the rest of the year? It is because of Roman Emperors. Under (1)__ Julius Caesar, February had 30 days. His month - Julius - July had 31 days. His (2)__ Emperor Caesar Augustus was annoyed that 'his' month - Augustus - August - had only 29 days. Augustus decided to make his month the same as his (3)__. He pinched two days from February, so February lost out. (4)__ but true! Those with birthdays on February 29 will gain another year! The (5)__ of having a birthday on February 29 are about one in 1,461. About 4.1 (6)__ people around the world (7)__ their birthday on February 29th. Did you know that when there is a leap year women are allowed to (8)__ to men?

daft / propose / predecessor / celebrate / successor / million / Emperor / odds

GAP FILL: GRAMMAR

February 29

Today, we are going to talk about February 29. The extra day occurs ordinarily once every four years. It is called a Leap Day and is added to the calendar. (1)__ there is a leap year there are 366 days rather (2)__ 365 days of the year. The previous leap year was in 2012. This year sees another leap year. The extra day is added because of the way the Solar System works. A complete orbit of the Earth around the sun actually takes approximately 365.2422 days.

Why are there 29 days in February (3)__ than 30 or 31? This is down to history. During the Roman Empire Emperor Julius Caesar ordered his astronomer Sosigenes to simplify the 355 day Roman calendar, (4)__ had an extra 22 days added on every two years. Sosigenes created the 365 day year, (5)__ an extra day every 4 years. This is how February 29 was created. (6)__, in order to balance the calendar time correctly, Pope Gregory XIII and his astronomers introduced the Gregorian calendar in 1582. This loses three leap days (7)__ 400 years. To date this method is (8)__ used.

however / than / which / still / when / with / rather / every /

(1)__ (2)__ is there not 30 (3)__ 31 days in February like the rest of (4)__ year? It is because of Roman Emperors. Under Emperor Julius Caesar, February had 30 days. His month - Julius - July had 31 days. His successor Emperor Caesar Augustus was annoyed that 'his' month - Augustus - August - had only 29 days. Augustus decided to make his month the same as (5)__ predecessor. (6)__ pinched two days from February, so February lost out. Daft but true! Those with birthdays on February 29 will gain another year! The odds of having a birthday on February 29 are about one in 1,461. About 4.1 million people around the world celebrate their birthday (7)__ February 29th. Did (8)__ know that when there is a leap year women are allowed to propose to men?

his / you / why / the / he / so / on / or



GAP FILL: LISTENING

WRITING/SPELLING

February 29

Today, we are going to talk about February 29. The extra day occurs _____ four years. It is called a Leap Day and is added to the calendar. When there is a leap year there are 366 days rather than 365 days of the year. The previous leap year was in 2012. This year sees another leap year. The extra day is added because of the way the Solar System works. _____ the Earth around the sun actually takes approximately 365.2422 days.

Why are there 29 days in February rather than 30 or 31? This is down to history. During the _____ Julius Caesar ordered his astronomer Sosigenes to simplify the 355 day _____, which had an extra 22 days added on every two years. Sosigenes created the 365 day year, with an extra day every 4 years. This is how February 29 was created. However, in order to balance the calendar time correctly, _____ and his astronomers introduced the Gregorian calendar in 1582. This loses three leap days every 400 years. To date this method is still used.

So why is there not 30 or 31 days in February like the rest of the year? It is because of Roman Emperors. Under _____, February had 30 days. His month -

Julius - July had 31 days. _____ Emperor Caesar Augustus was annoyed that 'his' month - August - August - had only 29 days. Augustus decided to make his month the same as his predecessor. He pinched two days from February, so February lost out. Daft but true!

_____ on February 29 will gain another year! The odds of having a birthday on February 29 are about one in 1,461. About 4.1 million people around the world celebrate their birthday on February 29th. Did you know that when there is _____ are allowed to propose to men? In Denmark men who refuse must give the woman 12 pairs of gloves. The summer Olympics are also held _____!

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WRITING / SPEAKING

1) On the board - *In pairs/As a class*, list 10 things you know about February 29. Talk about them. 3-5 minutes.

2) Sentence starters - Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- 1) February 29 _____
- 2) On this day _____
- 3) Emperor _____

3) Write down 50 words about: **February 29**. Your words can be read out in class.

4) Homework - Write and send a 200 word email to your teacher about: **February 29**. Your email can be read out in class.

SPELLING

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards check your answers.

- 1) astronomer
- 2) Gregorian
- 3) calendar
- 4) Augustus
- 5) February
- 6) Birthday
- 7) odds
- 8) propose
- 9) leap
- 10) disadvantage

SPELLING

Use the following ratings:

- Pass = 12**
- Good = 15**
- Very good = 18**
- Excellent = 20**

- 11) Emperor
- 12) predecessor
- 13) occurs
- 14) once
- 15) rather
- 16) previous
- 17) could
- 18) successor
- 19) correctly
- 20) simplify

February 29 – 25th February 2016