



When the News Plays a Joke

Read the passage and answer the questions. (CEFR B1–B2)

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1 The 1957 spaghetti report did more than fool viewers; it revealed how much trust people placed in television news. Panorama was a respected current affairs program, so its calm and factual style made an impossible story seem believable. Some viewers loved the joke, while others complained that a serious program should never mislead its audience. That tension between fun and responsibility still exists today.



2 Since then, April Fools' Day has turned into a major marketing event. Fast-food chains, game makers and tech giants announce fake products, hoping their jokes will spread for free on social media. In Japan, many companies began using the day this way in the 2010s, because it costs little and attracts attention. However, a joke that seems harmless to a company can upset customers who take it seriously.

3 In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Google decided not to run its usual April Fools' pranks, and it skipped them again in 2021. When real news is frightening, fake news stops being funny. In an age of online misinformation, this playful tradition raises a serious question: how do we decide what to believe?

Comprehension

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- (A) The 1957 spaghetti report was the first April Fools' joke in history. (B) Companies should stop making jokes on April 1 because they lose money.
- (C) Google invented the modern style of April Fools' Day. (D) April Fools' jokes in the media can be fun, but they also raise questions about trust and responsibility.

2. Why did the spaghetti story seem believable to many viewers?

- (A) Because spaghetti trees were common in Switzerland. (B) Because Panorama was a respected program and used a calm, factual style.
- (C) Because the report was shown on April 2. (D) Because famous chefs appeared in the report.

3. According to paragraph 2, why do companies make fake products on April 1?

- (A) Because their jokes can spread for free on social media and attract attention. (B) Because the government asks them to do it.
- (C) Because customers always buy the fake products. (D) Because it is a public holiday in many countries.

4. Based on the passage, how would the writer probably feel about a news joke made during a natural disaster?

- (A) It would be a good way to cheer people up. (B) It would be a smart marketing idea.
- (C) It would probably not be funny and could cause problems. (D) It would be fine if it appeared on television.

5. In paragraph 1, the word 'tension' is closest in meaning to

- (A) a difficult balance between two different needs (B) a feeling of being very tired
- (C) a TV program about the news (D) a joke that everyone enjoys

6. Why does the writer end the passage with a question?

- (A) To ask readers to send their favorite jokes. (B) To make readers think about how they judge information today.
- (C) To show that the writer does not understand the news. (D) To announce a new April Fools' joke.



Vocabulary, Paraphrase & Summary

Match the words with the definitions. Then rewrite and summarize.

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|-------------------|---|
| 1. reveal | a. based on facts, not on opinions or stories |
| 2. respected | b. to make someone believe something that is not true |
| 3. factual | c. a difficult situation where two different needs or ideas pull against each other |
| 4. mislead | d. a duty to do the right thing and to care about the results of your actions |
| 5. tension | e. not likely to hurt or upset anyone |
| 6. responsibility | f. information that is wrong, especially when many people share it |
| 7. harmless | g. to show something that was hidden or not known before |
| 8. misinformation | h. thought of very highly by many people |

Paraphrase — say it in your own words

1. “Panorama was a respected current affairs program, so its calm and factual style made an impossible story seem believable.”

Hint: Start with 'People trusted Panorama, ...' and use 'even though'.

2. “However, a joke that seems harmless to a company can upset customers who take it seriously.”

Hint: Use 'might think' and 'if they believe it'.

3. “When real news is frightening, fake news stops being funny.”

Hint: Use 'scary' and 'people do not enjoy'.

Summary

Summarize the passage in about 50 words.



Debate & Opinion Essay

Prepare for a debate. Then write your opinion (100–150 words).

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Motion: News organizations should be allowed to publish fake stories on April Fools' Day.

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- Many viewers loved the 1957 spaghetti joke, and it is still remembered as a classic.
- A clear joke on a known day can teach people to check information carefully.
- Humor helps people trust and like a news organization more, as long as it tells the truth later.

Add your own reason:

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- A serious news program should never mislead its audience, as some viewers said in 1957.
- In an age of online misinformation, a fake story can spread without the April 1 date and fool people later.
- When real news is frightening, as in 2020, a fake story can upset or confuse people.

Add your own reason:

Opinion	<i>I believe / I think that ...</i>
Reason 1	<i>First, ... For example, ...</i>
Reason 2	<i>Second, ... In fact, ...</i>
Counter	<i>Some people say ... However, ...</i>
Conclusion	<i>In conclusion, ...</i>