ARTICLES & ACTIVITIES

GRADES 3–5



The History of April Fools' Day

Have you ever played a funny trick on someone on April 1st? If so, you've taken part in April Fools' Day! But where did this day of pranks come from? The truth is, no one knows for sure. There are a few ideas about how April Fools' Day started, and people around the world celebrate it in different ways. Let's take a look at some of the stories behind this silly holiday!

How Did April Fools' Day Begin?

...ere are a few different ideas about ... April Fools' Day started. Here are ...e of the most popular ones:

1. **A Calendar Mix-Up**
   A long time ago, people used a different calendar that started the new year on April 1st. Then, in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII changed the calendar so that the new year would begin on January 1st instead. Some people didn't hear about this chang... or refused to follow it, so others mad... fun of them and called them "April fools."
2. **An Old Roman Holiday**
   ...g time ago in Rome, people ... a festi... called Hilaria ... ...stun... ...other ... ...come...

How People Around the World Celebrate April Fools' Day

April Fools' Day is not just for people in the United States. Many countries celebrate it in their own special ways!

- **France** – In France, people celebrate Poisson d'Avril, which means "April Fish." Children try to stick paper fish on their friends' backs without them noticing. If someone finds a fish stuck to their back, they are the "April Fish!"
- **Scotland** – In Scotland, April Fools' Day lasts for two days! The second day is called Tailly Day, and it is all about playing jokes on people's backs, like pinning a silly sign to someone's shirt.
- **England** – In England, people play tricks only in the morning. If someone pulls a prank after noon, they are ...

A Fun and Silly Tradition

April Fool... Day is a day full of laughter, jokes, and ... No m... ...ere or how peop... ...orate, the... fun and sh... ...good lau... remembe... ...neone pl... ...ke a... it's all in g... ...do... laugh alo...

Do y... ...favori... prank? ... ...his year, ... with a f... harmle... your fri... family!

Famous April Fools' Day Pranks

April 1st is a day full of jokes and tricks, and even news stations like to get in on the fun! Over the years, some news channels have played pranks on their viewers by sharing fake stories that sound real. Some of these pranks were so good that people actually believed them! Let's look at some of the most famous April Fools' Day jokes played by news stations.

The Swiss Spaghetti Tree (1957)

One of the most famous April Fools' Day pranks happened in 1957 when the BBC, a news station in England, told people that spaghetti grew on trees! They showed a video of farmers picking spaghetti from trees in Switzerland. At the time, many people in England didn't know how spaghetti was made, so they believed the story. Some even called the station to ask how they could grow ... trees!

Liberty Be... 99...

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...wers a... ...ews statio...
...nou...ed th... ...ad bought the Liberty
...ell, a famous symbol of American
...istory, and would re... ...it the "T...
...any p... ...were up
...d it w... ...April Fools
...Peng... ...2008
...08, t... ...tric... ...people again
...ving ... ...penguins!
...time... ...the...
...the... ...ial

cold. The video looked so real that many people believed it!

Big Ben Goes Digital (1980)

Another joke from England's BBC news station happened in 1980 when they announced that London's famous clock, Big Ben, would be changed to a digital clock. Many people were shocked and called the station to complain. Some even said they wanted to buy the old clock hands!

Google's Crazy Pranks

Google loves playing April Fools' jokes, and they come up with a new one almost every year! Some of their funniest ones include:

- In 2013, Google announced "Google Nose," a search tool that could let users smell things through their screens.
- In 2016, Google introduced "Mic Drop," a feature in Gmail that allowed users to end conversations with a funny animation, but people got confused and Google had to remove it quickly.
- In 2018, Google Ma... ...he game "Wh... ...ng Waldo or... ...mo...

...n Tradition

...ools' Day pranks ... ...news ... ...sfa... ...ind us always ... ...ck i... ...somet... ...nds too silly ... ...true ... ...e made p... ...s get foole... ...e a surpri... ...ou might want to think ... ...twice before believing it!

HISTORY OF APRIL FOOL'S DAY

2 READING PASSAGES

KEEP SCROLLING TO SEE WHAT'S INSIDE!

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

📖 **Two Nonfiction Reading Passages**

- *The History of April Fools' Day*
- *Famous April Fools' Day Prank*

🧠 **Comprehension & Thinking Activities**

- Discussion cards
- Note-taking organizers
- Compare & contrast activities
- Sequencing famous pranks
- Opinion writing: *Are pranks fun or annoying?*

🔍 **Higher-Order Skills**

- Pros and cons of pranking
- Media literacy & fake news analysis
- Critical thinking questions



THE HISTORY OF APRIL FOOL'S DAY

FAMOUS APRIL FOOL'S DAY PRANKS

While You're Reading

Mark with Symbols

!	when you find something interesting
?	when you are unsure or confused by something
*	when you find something important that you want to remember

Highlight with Colors

yellow	vocabulary words or key words
green	key phrases or definitions

Make Your Own Notations

symbol or color	meaning

The History of April Fools' Day

Have you ever played a funny trick on someone on April 1st? If so, you've taken part in April Fools' Day! But where did this day of pranks come from? The truth is, no one knows for sure. There are a few ideas about how April Fools' Day started, and people around the world celebrate it in different ways. Let's take a look at some of the stories behind this silly holiday!

How Did April Fools' Day Begin?

There are a few different ideas about how April Fools' Day started. Here are some of the most popular ones:

1. **A Calendar Mix-Up**
   A long time ago, people used a different calendar that started the new year on April 1st. Then, in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII changed the calendar so that the new year would begin on January 1st instead. Some people didn't hear about this change or refused to follow it, so others made fun of them and called them "April fools."
2. **An Old Roman Holiday**
   A long time ago in Rome, people celebrated a festival called Hilaria. During this holiday, people dressed in costumes and played tricks on each other. Some believe April Fools' Day may have come from this old tradition.
3. **Tricky Spring Weather**
   Springtime weather can be very tricky. One day, it might be warm and sunny, and the next day, it might rain or even snow! Some people think April Fools' Day started because spring weather can be unpredictable, just like a prank.

How People Around the World Celebrate April Fools' Day

April Fools' Day is not just for people in the United States. Many countries celebrate it in their own special ways!

- **France** – In France, people celebrate Poisson d'Avril, which means "April Fish." Children try to stick paper fish on their friends' backs without them noticing. If someone finds a fish stuck to their back, they are the "April Fish!"
- **Scotland** – In Scotland, April Fools' Day lasts for two days! The second day is called Tailly Day, and it is all about playing jokes on people's backs, like pinning a silly sign to someone's shirt.
- **England** – In England, people play tricks only in the morning. If someone pulls a prank after noon, they are called the fool instead!
- **The United States** – In the U.S., people love playing pranks all day long! Even companies and news stations join in by creating fake stories to trick people.

A Fun and Silly Tradition

April Fools' Day is a day full of laughter, jokes, and silly surprises. No matter where or how people celebrate, the goal is to have fun and share a good laugh. Just remember, if someone plays a joke on yo it's all in good fun—so don't forget to laugh along!

Do you have a favorite April Fools' D prank? Maybe this year, you can com with a funny but harmless joke to shar your friends and family!

Famous April Fools' Day Pranks

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Taco Bell Buys the Liberty Bell (1996)

In 1996, the fast-food company Taco Bell played a trick with the help of newspapers and news stations. They announced they had bought the Liberty Bell, a famous symbol of American history, and would rename it the "Taco Liberty Bell." Many people were upset until they realized it was an April Fools' joke!

Flying Penguins (2008)

In 2008, the BBC tricked people again by showing a video of flying penguins! They claimed that these special penguins had been discovered in Antarctica and could fly thousands of miles to South America to escape the cold. The video looked so real that many people believed it!

Big Ben Goes Digital (1980)

Another joke from England's BBC news station happened in 1980 when they announced that London's famous clock, Big Ben, would be changed to a digital clock. Many people were shocked and called the station to complain. Some even said they wanted to buy the old clock hands!

Google's Crazy Pranks

Google loves playing April Fools' jokes, and they come up with a new one almost every year! Some of their funniest ones include:

- In 2013, Google announced "Google Nose," a search tool that could let users smell things through their screens.
- In 2016, Google introduced "Drop," a feature in Gmail that allowed users to end conversations with a funny animation, but people got confused and Google had to remove it quickly.
- In 2018, Google Maps let people play the game "Where's Waldo?" by finding Waldo on world maps.

A Fun Tradition

April Fools' Day pranks from news stations remind us always to check if something sounds too silly to be true! These jokes have made people laugh (and sometimes get fooled) for years. Next time you see a surprising news story on April 1st, you might want to think twice before believing it!

CLOSE READING BOOKMARK PAGE

INFORMATIONAL ARTICLE

Which of the possible origins of April Fools' Day do you find the most believable? Why?

Have you ever played a harmless prank on someone or had one played on you? What happened, and how did it ke you feel?

Some people think April Fools' Day is fun, while others find it annoying. Do you think playing pranks is a good tradition? Why or why not?

If you saw a video of flying penguins, would you believe it? Why or why not?

Why do you think so many people believed the spaghetti tree story in 1957?

How did Taco Bell's prank about the Liberty Bell trick people, and why do you think some were upset at first?

DISCUSSION CARDS

Name: _____

The History of April Fools' Day Note-Taking Sheet

How Did April Fools' Day Begin?

Three Other Facts

How People Around the World Celebrate April Fools' Day

Name: _____

The History of April Fools' Day Note-Taking Sheet

How Did April Fools' Day Begin?

How People Around the World Celebrate April Fools' Day

Note-Taking Sheet

Name: _____

What is one possible reason April Fools' Day may have started?

What is the main goal of April Fools' Day?

Write three facts about the history of April Fools' Day:

Fact

Fact

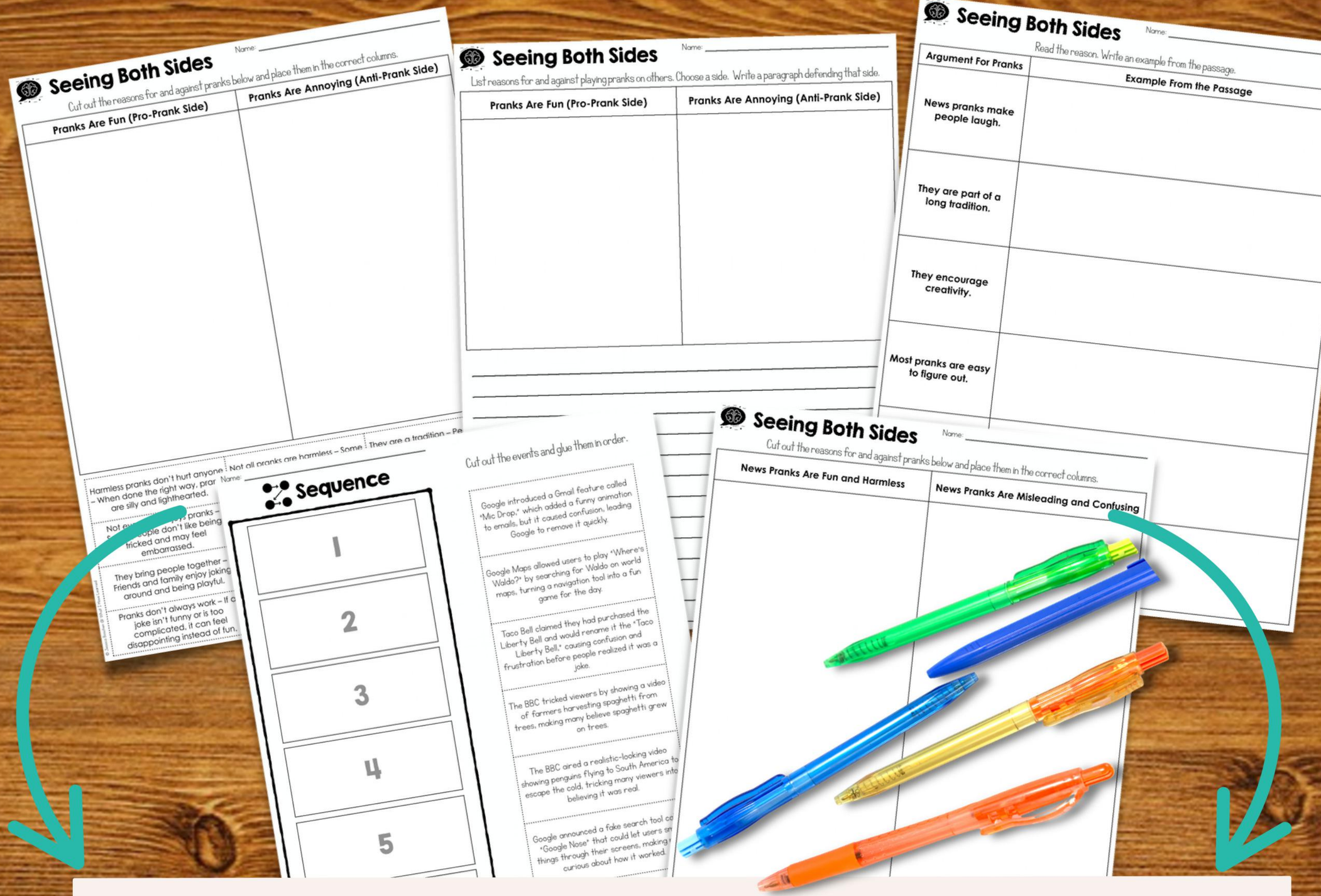
Fact

What are some fun traditions people may follow on April Fools' Day?

Other Information:

NOTE-TAKING SHEETS

COMPARE & CONTRAST AND SEQUENCING ACTIVITIES



WEBSITES


LISTEN
FunKids
DIGITAL RADIO AND ONLINE
FunKids
TOP 10 FACTS!
APRIL FOOLS' DAY


ory of April Fools Day
April Fools Day
(All Fools Day)
0:07 / 2:20
CC


Web Sites
April Fools' Day
Videos
01
APRIL

Directions: Cut apart the labels and each fact. Sort facts into the best category or do an open sort and create your own categories.

Why April Fools' Day Began

Celebrations Around the World

Why We Celebrate April Fools' Day

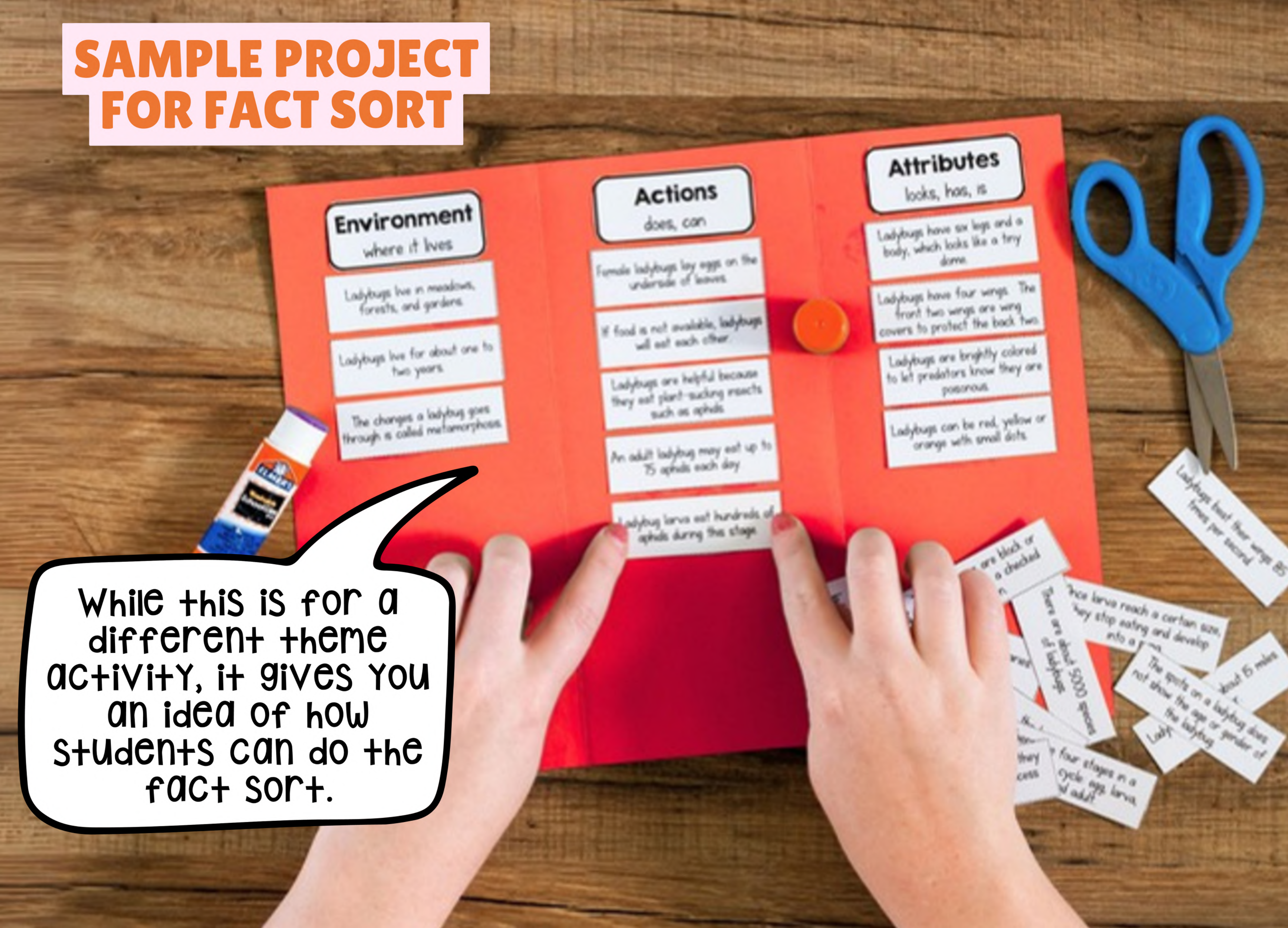
For a more advanced sort, do an open sort and make up your own categories.

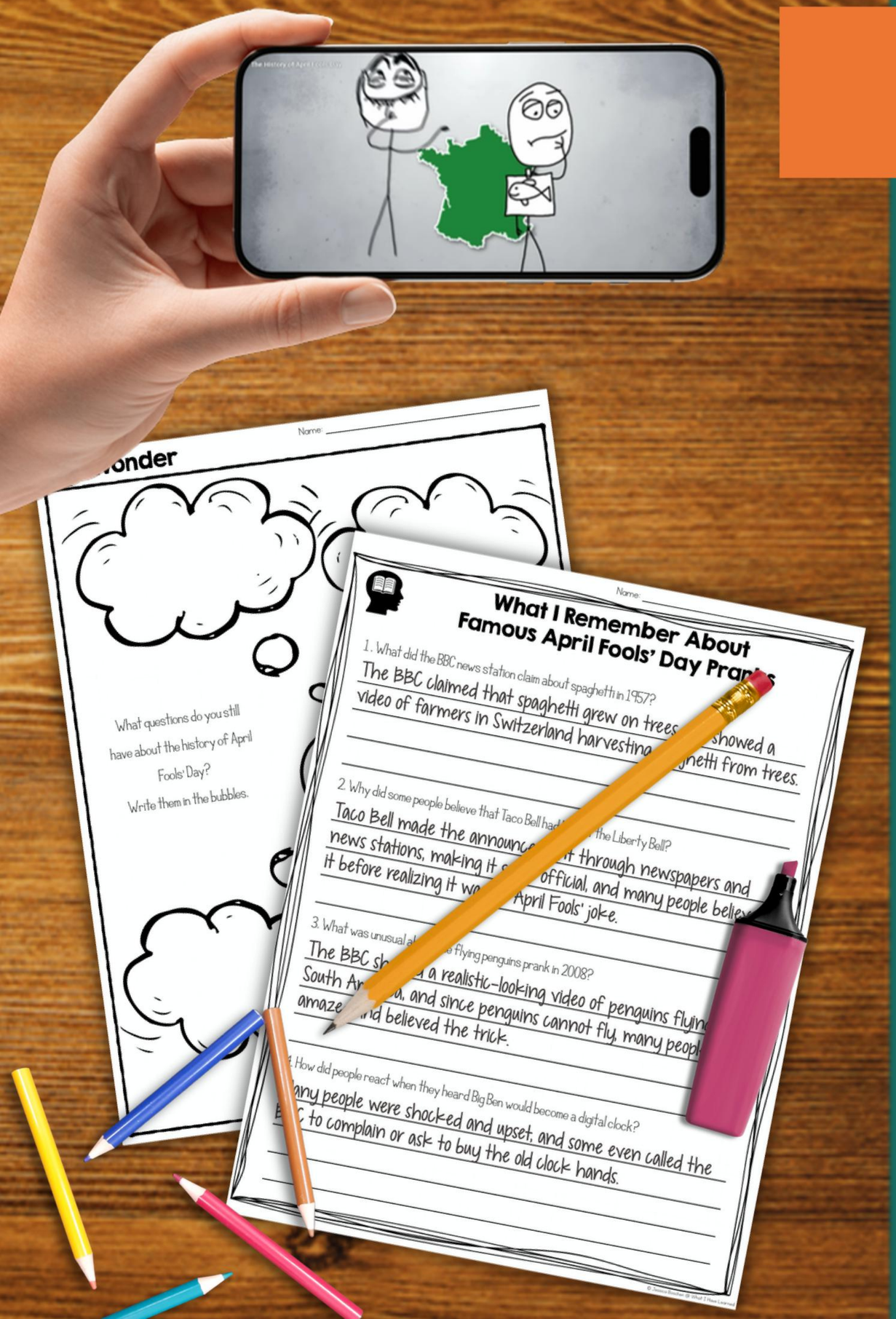
The second day is called Taily Day, and it is all about playing jokes on people's backs, like pinning a silly sign to someone's shirt.	A long time ago in Rome, people celebrated a festival called Hilaria.	There are a few different ideas about how April Fools' Day started.
A long time ago, people used a different [illegible] started the new year on April 1st.	[illegible] to have fun and share a good [illegible]	Some people think April Fools' [illegible] started because spring [illegible] weather can be [illegible]able, just like a prank.
In the U.S., people love playing pranks all [illegible]	[illegible] exactly [illegible]	[illegible]ompanies and news [illegible]in in by creating fake [illegible]s to trick people.
Springtime weather can [illegible] very trick[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] Gregory XIII [illegible]ne calendar so that new year would begin on January 1st instead.
Some people d[illegible] about this change or [illegible] to follow it, so others [illegible] of them and called them "April fools."	[illegible]rries celebrate it in [illegible]eir own special ways.	Children try to stick paper fish on their friends' backs without them noticing.
In France, people celebrate Poisson d'Avril, which means "April Fish."	In Scotland, April Fools' Day lasts for two days!	During the Roman holiday, people dressed in costumes and played tricks on each other.

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FACT SORT

SAMPLE PROJECT FOR FACT SORT





WAYS TO USE IN THE CLASSROOM

📖 **Whole-Group Reading –** Read passages aloud and discuss key ideas

📚 **Small Groups –** Use vocabulary cards and graphic organizers

📝 **Independent Work –** Comprehension pages and writing prompts

💻 **Research Extension –** QR codes for videos and websites

🏫 **Sub Plans or Homework –** Ready-to-use, no prep required

YOU WILL LOVE THIS BECAUSE

High-Interest Topic Students Love

April Fools' pranks grab attention, making nonfiction reading engaging and motivating for upper elementary students.

Perfect for April Lesson Planning

Seasonal content keeps learning fun while reinforcing essential reading comprehension standards.

Engages All Learners

Visuals, QR codes, graphic organizers, and varied response formats support diverse learning styles and reading levels.

TEACHERS LOVE IT!

This was a fun way for my students to work on reading comprehension.

STEPHANIE C.

This was a great activity to do in April just for fun but included reading skills as well. Thank you!

The Positive Poodle



My passion is making learning accessible to all students. I love scaffolding learning, breaking down the concepts and building them up so that students can see the connections. I love figuring out the small components that build up to the big ideas and helping students see it all.



What I have LEARNED