

# Earth Day 2020

Earth Day is a worldwide event that happens every year on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Around the world, people come together to celebrate the beauty and importance of nature and to raise awareness of how important it is to look after our planet. This year is Earth Day's 50th anniversary.

## What Is the Aim of Earth Day?

The theme for Earth Day 2020 is Climate Action against climate change, which is starting to cause many problems around the world. This means that people are thinking about different ways in which they can help to care for the planet and are meeting other people who want to do the same thing. A big clean-up of towns and the countryside is being organised and many people all around the world are taking part. It is hoped that this will encourage others to try to protect our environment and make changes to their lifestyles. Even just one small change can make a difference.

## Our Plastic Problem

Every year in the UK, we throw away around 295 billion pieces of plastic. Plastic does not disappear over time and lots of it can't be recycled. That means that it will stay in the ground for hundreds, even thousands, of years.



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Plastics can also cause problems for humans and animals because as they break down, tiny pieces can end up in some food and water, which is then swallowed. By using less plastic in our houses and choosing plastic that can be recycled, we can help reduce the amount we have to throw away.

Why don't you try one of these ideas to help the fight against plastic?

- Take the same plastic bag to the supermarket every time you go
- Use a reusable water bottle for your drinks
- Recycle plastic food packets, like chocolate wrappers and cereal boxes.

## Green Fingers

Looking after the plants in our gardens is a practical way to contribute to caring for our planet. Plants and trees are very important for many different reasons. They help take some of the warming gases out of the air, provide food for important insects such as bees, and make sure there is a safe home for lots of different types of wildlife. Try planting some bee-friendly plants and trees in your garden. You could even have a go at growing your own vegetables. You don't need to have a garden to grow plants. Plant seeds in pots on your windowsill and watch them grow. Just don't forget to water them!



### Eat Less Meat

Many people believe that one way to help our planet is by eating more food made from plants rather than animals. This is because animals take up lots of space and need lots of food and water to keep them healthy. To find this space to farm animals, people are cutting down forests and woodland, which is destroying habitats for many species of wildlife. Even their poo is bad for the environment because it gives off a warming gas. See if you can have a meal without meat once a week. You could look for a meat-free version of your favourite foods like burgers, chilli and even sausages. Or, you could make a dish where plants are the star. Try it and see!

As you can see, there are lots of ways we can all take action and help the planet this Earth Day. What will you choose?



## Questions

1. What is special about this year's Earth Day? Tick **one**.

- ☐ It is the first Earth Day
- ☐ It is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day
- ☐ It is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day
- ☐ It is the last Earth Day

2. What is the theme of this year's Earth Day? Tick **one**.

- ☐ Climate Action
- ☐ Protect Our Species
- ☐ Plastic Pollution
- ☐ Save Our Water

3. What happens to the plastic we throw away? Tick **one**.

- ☐ It breaks down quickly and disappears
- ☐ It stays in the ground for many years
- ☐ It is used by animals to make their homes
- ☐ It becomes food for insects

4. Join the boxes together to complete the sentence. One has been done for you.

There are many ways that we can look after the Earth

Every year in the UK

Try planting some bee friendly

Many people believe that one way to help our planet

is by eating more food made from plants rather than animals.

plants and trees in your garden.

we throw away around 295 billion pieces of plastic.

and help make it a cleaner, safer place for everyone.



5. **Find** and **copy** one word which means the same as **useful**.

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6. Why is animal poo bad for the environment?

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7. **'Or, you could make a dish where plants are the star'**

Why do you think the author has chosen to use the word 'star' in this sentence?

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8. What would you do to take action this Earth Day? Explain your reason using evidence from the text.

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# The Queen's Birthdays

## Why Does the Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?

The tradition of two royal birthdays was started by George II in 1748. He was born in November and he felt that the weather would be too cold for his annual birthday parade on his actual birthday. A solution to this was to celebrate his birthday with a military parade, called Trooping the Colour, held every spring. This tradition has continued ever since – no matter what month the King or Queen was born. This is the monarch's official birthday.



Earlier on in her reign, our Queen celebrated her official birthday on a Thursday, but it was later changed to the second Saturday in June. Other countries of the Commonwealth (nations in the world that The Queen reigns over) celebrate at different times too, but mostly during the months of May and June.

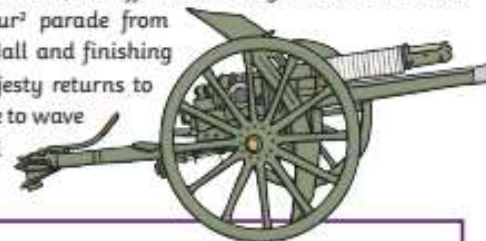
### Royal Facts

1. **Name:** Elizabeth Alexandra Mary
2. **Born:** 21st April, 1926
3. **Job:** Queen Elizabeth II reigns as The Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and many of the Commonwealth countries.
4. The Queen celebrates two birthdays every year; one on April 21st (her actual birthday) and one on the second Saturday in June (her official birthday).
5. Since September 2015, Her Majesty is the United Kingdom's longest reigning monarch (king or queen). The Queen entered the record books as Britain's longest-reigning monarch after surpassing the reign of her great-great grandmother, Queen Victoria.



## Birthday Traditions and Ceremonies

April 21st (The Queen's actual birthday) is usually spent privately with her family and close friends. But the occasion is marked by a 41 gun salute<sup>1</sup> in Hyde Park, a 21 gun salute in Windsor Great Park and a 62 gun salute at the Tower of London. On the second Saturday in June, her official birthday is celebrated with the colourful Trooping the Colour<sup>2</sup> parade from Buckingham Palace, down The Mall and finishing at Horse Guards Parade. Her majesty returns to the balcony of Buckingham Palace to wave to the crowds that have gathered to wish her well.



### Glossary

1. **A gun salute<sup>1</sup>.** A gun salute is a mark of respect for special royal celebrations. The number of rounds (or blasts) depends on the place and the occasion. The basic salute is 21 rounds; in Hyde Park and Green Park an extra 20 rounds are added because they are royal parks. There is a 62 gun salute at the Tower of London because it is a royal palace and fortress. Gun salutes are usually fired at midday.
2. **Trooping the Colour<sup>2</sup>.** During the ceremony, The Queen inspects the troops who have paraded for her. The bands play and the soldiers march, along with horses and the Regimental Colour (banner). It is a colourful celebration and thousands of people line the pavements of The Mall to enjoy the sight. For many years, The Queen rode her horse, Burmese, with her troops, but more recently she has ridden in a carriage. During the parade in 1981, Marcus Serjeant aimed a pistol at Her Majesty as she rode from Buckingham Palace down Horse Guards Parade for the beginning of the Trooping the Colour ceremony. Six blank cartridges were fired before he was tackled by a guardsman and police. The Queen continued with the parade.



# Questions

1. On what date was Queen Elizabeth born?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Which month is The Queen's actual birthday and which month is The Queen's official birthday?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Which queen did Queen Elizabeth II pass as longest reigning British monarch in September 2015? What relation was that queen to Queen Elizabeth II?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why does The Queen celebrate two birthdays?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Why do you think The Queen's birthday celebrations were changed from a Thursday to a Saturday?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What are the three main locations for the Trooping the Colour parade? List them here.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you think there would be any disadvantages to having two birthdays? Give reasons for your answers.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Why do you think The Queen continued with the parade after she was shot at in 1981?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What are the titles called that separate each part of the fact file?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. If you had to organise The Queen's birthday celebrations, plan three activities that she may enjoy. Give reasons for your choices.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Rainforests

## What is a Rainforest?

Rainforests are huge forests that have a large amount of precipitation. They are found in all continents of the world apart from Antarctica (due to the temperature). There are two types of rainforest: tropical (in the tropical, warm zone near the Equator) and temperate (in the temperate zone further away from the Equator). Most rainforests are tropical, with tall trees, warm climates and lots of rain. It can rain one inch of rain per day in some! The largest rainforest is the Amazon Rainforest in South America.



### Fact File in Numbers

- 2% of the Earth's surface is covered in rainforest.
- 50% of the plants and animals of the world live in rainforests.
- $\frac{1}{3}$  of our fresh water is found in a rainforest in the Amazon Basin.
- $\frac{1}{3}$  of natural medicines have been found in rainforests.
- 70% + of the plants that are used to treat cancer are found **only** in the tropical rainforests.

## The Canopy

The rainforest trees are in such close proximity, that the branches and leaves at the top of the trees touch each other and form what is referred to as 'The Canopy', which acts a bit like a roof for the forest. The canopy can be approximately 30m above the ground. The canopy is hotter and drier during the day than other parts of the rainforest so animals that live there have adapted. Some have loud calls in order to communicate in the thick foliage and some are able to jump from tree to tree.

## The Forest Floor

This is dark and humid because of the canopy, but still is a very important part of the ecosystem. The floor is where dead animals and plants decompose and all of the nutrients and materials are recycled. Also, the larger animals are found here including tapirs, elephants, tigers and jaguars.

## Why are they so important?

Rainforests do a few things that are critical to our life on Earth. One important thing that rainforests do is they use photosynthesis to take in carbon dioxide and make oxygen which we need to breathe and survive. This is why they are called 'The Lungs of The Earth'.

They also help keep our weather system stable by absorbing carbon dioxide, creating rainfall and keeping temperature stable. They also affect the water cycle as they hold so much water which condenses into the atmosphere.

So, how can we manage without them?

# Questions about Rainforests

1. Name the two types of rainforest.

2. In the fact file, the author mentions 'fresh water'. What do you think fresh water is?

3. Near the end of the text, why does the author say rainforests are like the 'Lungs of the Earth'?

4. In 'The Canopy' section, what does the author mean by 'close proximity'?

5. A rainforest is an 'ecosystem'. What is an ecosystem?

6. It is very crowded and leafy in the canopy. How do some animals communicate because of this when they cannot see each other?

7. Why is the forest floor dark?

8. Name one way that the rainforests affect our life on Earth.

9. In the Fact File in Numbers, why has the author emphasised the word 'only'?

10. Read the last line...what is your opinion and why?

# St. George's Day

Saint George is the patron saint of many countries around the world, including England.

St. George's Day is celebrated on 23<sup>rd</sup> April every year. The symbol of Saint George is a red cross on a white background, which is also the flag of England and a part of the flag of Great Britain.



## Who Was the Real Saint George?

Saint George was a soldier who was born in the year AD 270 in Cappadocia, which is now in Eastern Turkey. He and his family were Christian and lived their lives following Christian values. When he was 17 years old, following the deaths of his father and mother, he joined the Roman army just as his father had before him.

By the age of thirty, Saint George was promoted to a higher rank and became an imperial guard of the Emperor, Diocletian. In AD 303, the emperor began to **persecute** Christian people, forcing them to give up all of their possessions and jobs. He also stated that all Roman soldiers must worship Roman gods. Saint George pleaded with him to stop but Diocletian refused and even tried to bribe Saint George to give up his Christian beliefs. Saint George was imprisoned and tortured but didn't deny his faith and carried on spreading the word of Christianity until his death on 23<sup>rd</sup> April in AD 303. His body was returned to Lydda where it was buried - Christians soon came to honour him as a **martyr**.

23<sup>rd</sup> April was named St. George's Day in 1415 when it became a national feast day.

## What Is the Legend of Saint George?

There is a famous legend about Saint George slaying a dragon to rescue a princess, although these stories were only told for the first time in the 11<sup>th</sup> century - seven hundred years after Saint George's death. The legend describes Saint George travelling to Libya, where a poison-spewing dragon was living in a lake, terrorising the local people, taking young girls chosen by lottery as sacrifices. When it fell upon the king's daughter to be sacrificed, Saint George arrived, saved her and killed the dragon.

Many people believe this legend to be symbolic of Saint George's triumph over evil (the dragon) by refusing to give up his Christian faith despite facing punishment.



## St. George's Day

### Did You Know...?

Saint George is also the patron saint of scouts, farmers, shepherds, soldiers and archers.

## St. George's Day around the World

### England

One custom, which many people no longer observe, is to wear a red rose on your **lapel**. Church services are held during which the hymn Jerusalem is usually sung. Morris Dancers are often seen at celebrations.

### Catalonia, Spain

In Catalonia, Spain, there is a similar legend about Saint George (Sant Jordi) slaying a dragon. From the blood that flowed from the lifeless body of the dragon, a red rose appeared, which Saint George handed to the princess he had saved. A public holiday, with similarities to Valentine's Day, is held - roses are given to loved ones.

### Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, St. George's Day is celebrated on 6<sup>th</sup> May and is also known as Army Day. Many people walk in the early morning, washing their faces in the fresh dew, which has been blessed by Saint George at the beginning of spring.

### Croatia

Saint George is one of the most important saints in Croatia as the patron saint of the military. This holiday (known as Durdevdan) is also a time to celebrate the return of spring, decorating homes with twigs and flowers, lighting fires and girls dressing as goddesses, singing for locals.

### Glossary

**lapel:** The part on each side of a jacket immediately below the collar which is folded back on either side of the front opening.

**martyr:** A person who is killed because of their religious or other beliefs.

**persecute:** Subject someone to ill-treatment, especially because of their race or political or religious beliefs.



## Questions

1. Which of these are **facts** about Saint George? Tick two.

- ☐ He slayed a dragon.
- ☐ He was a soldier.
- ☐ He was a Christian.
- ☐ He rescued a princess.

2. Draw a line to match the activity with the country it takes place within.

Morris Dancers perform on St. George's Day.

Croatia

People wash their faces in the early morning dew.

Bulgaria

Girls dress as goddesses and sing for locals.

England

3. When was St. George's Day first celebrated?

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:  
Many people see the legend of Saint George \_\_\_\_\_ the dragon as symbolic of his \_\_\_\_\_ when he refused to give up his \_\_\_\_\_ despite facing punishment.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text which tells you that **the emperor treated Christian people badly**.

6. Why is 23<sup>rd</sup> April named as St. George's Day?

7. Why do you think that Saint George decided to join the army?

## Questions

8. Why did Christians honour Saint George after his death?

9. Why do you think the legend of Saint George slaying the dragon has been told for centuries? Explain your answer.