

## 1 Answer the question in a group.

What do you know about San Francisco? Think about these things:

- location
- history
- what it's famous for
- geography
- size

## 2 Read the text.

## A

San Francisco ('Saint Francis' in Spanish) is a coastal city in northern California, USA. It is located on a peninsula, and is surrounded by water on three sides. The San Francisco Bay is famous for its cool and often foggy weather. An American author once said, 'The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco.' Residents often have to commute across the bay for work, and there are two giant highways which have iconic bridges. The Golden Gate Bridge (pictured) was opened in 1937 and is the city's most well-known landmark.

## B

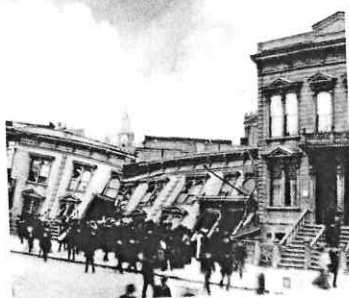
San Francisco is around 170 years old. People have lived in this area for thousands of years, but it changed almost overnight from a small settlement to a city at the start of the California Gold Rush in 1849. When gold was found in California, a huge number of people settled in the area, and San Francisco's population went from 1,000 to 25,000 in just one year. By the 1870s, around 150,000 people



were living there. Gold brought wealth to California, and many banks were set up in the San Francisco area. Silicon Valley, near San Francisco, is famous as a centre of new technology and social media businesses.

## C

In 1906, the city was almost completely destroyed by an earthquake and the terrible fires which followed. The rebuilding project was quick and successful, however, and modern buildings in San Francisco are some of the safest in the world against earth movement.



## D

As an important port on the Pacific Ocean, San Francisco has seen a lot of immigration from the South and East. Today, the population is around 15% Hispanic people, and over 30% of residents are of Asian origin. San Francisco's Chinatown area is the oldest and one of the largest in the USA, and is extremely popular with tourists. It's packed with shops selling rich fabrics, beautiful wooden furniture, fantastic Asian food, and the ingredients for Chinese medicines.



## E

Today, San Francisco is still not a large city, with just 865,000 residents all crowded into a very small area. Even so, it's one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world, with over 16 million visitors a year.

## F

Visitors come to enjoy its stylish architecture and the lovely views from its many famous hills. The hills are so steep that San Francisco has one of the world's most crooked roads, Lombard Street, and cable cars are the most popular form of public transport. San Francisco offers visitors a real variety of exciting things to see and do. Particularly popular are the Fisherman's Wharf area and Pier 39 down by the bay, where interesting marine life can be seen. The city has lively street entertainment, a vibrant culture, and the shopping is fantastic. Over one million people every year also make the trip out to the island of Alcatraz. Here, they can see the terrible conditions in America's most notorious offshore prison, which has appeared in many films and computer games.



4

# April Fool's Day

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## 1 Discuss the questions with a partner.

- Are there any days of the year with special meanings in your country?
- How are they celebrated?
- Do you have any traditions involving playing tricks or jokes on people?

## 2 Read the text.

## A FUNNY TRADITION



**A** The first of April is known in Britain as a day for tricks and pranks. Traditionally, people play jokes on each other on this day, or make up hoax stories and try to persuade others to believe them. The custom isn't unique to the UK. In France, for instance, people traditionally attempt to pin a paper fish on someone else's back. If they are successful, the victim of the joke is called an 'April Fish'. In Britain, the term is 'April Fool'.



**B** The origin of April Fool's Day is unknown. Some suggest that it started in the 17th century, when the celebration of 'New Year' moved from early spring to 1st January. It is said that people made fun of people who were still celebrating the old springtime festival. However, this can't explain examples of tricks and jokes played in literature which was written much earlier. The earliest example in English appears in *The Canterbury Tales* by Chaucer in 1392. No matter how the tradition began, it is certainly still popular today. In fact, many April Fool's hoaxes have gone down in history. Here are a few of the most well-known:

## C The spaghetti trees

In the UK in 1957, a serious BBC TV documentary programme reported that the spaghetti harvest in Switzerland was particularly good that year. They even showed a film of the pasta hanging from trees and local people struggling to collect it all! Hundreds of people contacted the BBC to ask how they could grow their own spaghetti trees at home. 'Put a bit of spaghetti into a tin of tomato sauce and hope for the best,' they were told.

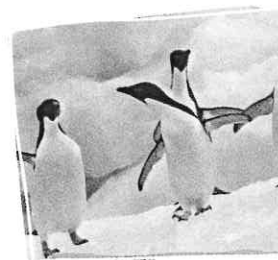
## D The left-handed burger

In 1988, a fast food company caused excitement among some of their customers when they announced they were making 'left-handed' burgers. Their advertisements explained that the salad, cheese, and sauce inside the burger were rotated by 180°, 'to make the burger easier to eat for left-handed people'. Thousands of people requested the new burger, while many others asked for their own right-handed version.



## E Flying penguins

In 2008, the BBC made another short programme for April Fool's Day. This time, they used a mix of real film and computer animations to create the *Flying Penguins* programme. The programme said that some penguins had learned to fly because of the very cold winters. The programme showed the penguins flying to South America for a warmer winter. Two newspapers helped the BBC to play this trick by putting the story on their front page for the day.



## F YouTube closing

The video sharing site, YouTube, played an April Fool's Day joke on its viewers in 2013. YouTube employees released a video called 'YouTube's ready to select a winner' which told people that it was going to run a competition to find the best video on the internet. The video told people to watch as many videos as they could before midnight, as YouTube was going to close until 2023 so that staff could watch all its videos and choose a winner.

## 1 Answer the questions.

- Are there many countries in the world where your language is spoken?
- Can you think of any cultural differences between the countries? Think about these things:
  - meeting people
  - business
  - eating
  - what's polite and rude

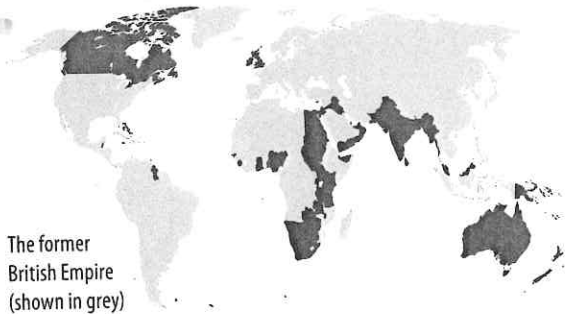
## 2 Read the texts.

## The language of empire

For centuries, Britain was the most powerful country in the world. It achieved this mostly by colonizing, or taking control of, other countries. Just one hundred years ago, the British Empire spread so far across the world that people said 'the sun never set on it,' meaning that it was always daytime in one of the British colonies.

At its biggest, around a quarter of the world's population was under British control. Today, the majority of these nations are now independent. Even so, it's not surprising that there are still English-speaking countries in very different parts of the world. These include some of the world's largest countries and populations, such as India, the USA, Canada, and Australia.

It would of course be a huge mistake to imagine that, just because they speak a common language, these countries have the same ideas or manners. In fact, linguistic similarities can often mask major cultural differences.



The former British Empire (shown in grey)



## Manners around the world

One of the easiest ways to assess cultural differences is to see how people greet each other. Of course, this varies, depending on the context. Is it a business meeting? Are they old friends? If in doubt, one of the safest and most universal gestures is shaking hands. This is appropriate in many countries, for both business and less formal situations.

The first greeting signals the amount of touching that is acceptable. Personal space (the distance between people that feels comfortable) is also important. In a few cultures, people don't touch each other at all when greeting.

In Japan, for example, it's customary to make a bow. In India, it's polite to put your hands together, nod your head and say 'Namaste' ('I bow to you'). In many other places, by contrast, hugging and kissing are common, although this is often only for friends and family.

Easier to miss, though perhaps more important, is what happens after first greetings. How directly people speak to each other, and whether they make eye contact, are both important signals of respect. Sometimes, unfortunately, an action can mean opposite things in different countries. Consider these differences, for example.

## Punctuality

In Jamaica and India, there is a relaxed attitude to time compared to other countries. If you arrive early, you might be kept waiting for a long time. Being late in Britain or the USA, however, is terribly rude.

## Directness

This is valued in Australia, Ireland, and especially the USA, where people like to get down to business immediately. In India, on the other hand, don't expect to actually talk about the reason for your meeting at all the first time you meet! Bargaining is the norm in Jamaica, where people enjoy arguing for the best deal. But be careful in India, where people may say only what they think you want to hear. In Britain, meanwhile, the message isn't always in the words that people say — tone of voice and body language are just as important.

## Canada's two cultures

With a mix of English and French tradition, Canada often has two cultural norms. Among the French population, for example, it's much more common to kiss when meeting. Manners in the street, however, are much stricter, and it's rude to be seen eating outside on the street.

## Some of the rudest things you can do

Unsurprisingly, this varies from country to country. In Britain, it's failing to wait your turn in a queue, while in India it's eating or offering gifts with your left hand (which is considered to be unclean). In the USA, be careful not to ask people what they earn. Australians abroad hate it when someone asks if they're British, and a terrible insult you can give a Canadian is to assume they're American!





## 1 Answer the questions.

- 1 What dishes do you think of as 'typically British'? Have you tried them, and if so, did you like them?
- 2 What do you think influences the way people of a country cook? Think about these things:
  - weather
  - travel
  - history
  - culture

## 2 Read the texts.

## Food culture

Many people think of British food as unadventurous, unhealthy, and unattractive. Britain is famous, after all, for takeaway food such as fish and chips, and the fried full English breakfast.

Does modern British cuisine really deserve such a bad reputation? Some people would disagree.



It's certainly true that food culture in the UK has changed dramatically in recent years. Increased international travel, living in a multicultural society, and the influence of celebrity chefs have all contributed to the changing face of the British diet.

As flying became cheaper in the 1980s and '90s, many British people travelled abroad for the first time. They brought home a taste for European dishes such as Spanish paella, Greek feta cheese, French cheeses and wines, and Italian pasta. In recent years, delicacies like Mexican

burritos or Japanese sushi have also become popular in Britain.

But the UK's love of international food started long before this. It was centuries of empire which first brought dishes like Indian curry back to Britain. As the British Empire was reduced in the 20th century, millions of

people immigrated from colonies to the UK, and British society became much more multicultural. There is still a large British Asian community today, and curry is one of the best-selling takeaway foods.



## Celebrity chefs

Nowadays, cookery is a common theme for British television programmes. Top chefs earn millions and become very famous celebrities by appearing on TV. Inviting friends to dinner at home is very popular in the UK, and people use TV programmes and the internet to find recipes so they can impress their friends with high-quality, home-cooked food.

A celebrity chef, Jamie Oliver, became known for creating simple food that anyone can make in their own kitchen. He used his fame in 2005 to lead a campaign to provide better food education and healthier meals for UK school children.

The range of TV programmes has grown to suit the variety of chefs. You can see prize-winning chefs judging TV cookery competitions, or travelling around the UK coast, watching fishermen catch seafood for a recipe. One chef, Gordon Ramsay, goes into restaurants which are failing and tries to make their business work well again. Often he succeeds, but only after shouting at the restaurant owner and all of the staff!



*MasterChef* and *The Great British Bake Off* are both very popular British cookery programmes. People compete against other cooks, and their dishes are judged by professional chefs. *MasterChef* has helped many British families try new food, while *The Great British Bake Off* has encouraged people to do more home baking.

TV viewers love some of the chefs and dislike others. Whatever your opinion of them, they're certainly successful. Many own restaurants which are so popular that you have to book a table months in advance if you want to experience their cooking. In recent years, celebrity chefs have educated the British public about food, and introduced them to new flavours. As a result, British tastes are more adventurous and international than ever before.

