

Poisson d'avril

April Fool's Day

Background information

In France, on the 1st of April, pupils stick paper fish to the backs of other people for a joke. When the fish is discovered, they shout '*Poisson d'avril!*' (April fish). They also play practical jokes, like we do in the United Kingdom.

Some believe that April Fool's Day originated in France. April 1st was the beginning of the new year according to the pre-Gregorian calendar. When the Gregorian calendar was introduced, the new year's celebrations changed to January 1st. Those people who resisted the date change and still celebrated on the first of April were known as '*Poisson d'avril*' and people would play practical jokes on them.

Here are some French 'toc, toc' (knock, knock) jokes.

Toc, toc,	<i>Knock, knock</i>
Qui est là?	<i>Who's there?</i>
Anni	<i>Anni</i>
Anni qui?	<i>Anni who?</i>
Anniversaire.	<i>Anniversaire</i> <i>(birthday)</i>

Toc, toc	<i>Knock, knock</i>
Qui est là?	<i>Who's there?</i>
Sam.	<i>Sam</i>
Sam qui?	<i>Sam who?</i>
Samedi.	<i>Samedi (Saturday)</i>

Teaching ideas

- ◆ Make up your own 'Toc, toc' joke.
- ◆ Make a poster of your 'Toc, toc' joke.
- ◆ Make some paper fish to stick on people and write some key vocabulary for '*Poisson d'avril*' on them.
- ◆ Investigate the significance of using 'fish' for April Fool's Day.

Vocabulaire

le poisson d'avril	April Fish (Fools)
un poisson	a fish
toc, toc	knock, knock
Qui est là?	Who's there?
l'anniversaire	birthday
samedi	Saturday

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Pupil Task Sheet



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Nom:

Date:

In pairs, make up your own 'Toc, toc' joke in French and practise with your partner.

In groups, write a short play in French, where an April Fool's Day trick is played and act it out.



**And now for some
RESEARCH!**

Use the Internet to investigate how April Fool's Day is celebrated in different countries.

Quick quiz

- ◆ How do French children celebrate *Poisson d'avril*?
- ◆ What does 'Toc, toc ...' mean?