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PREFACE

The present “Calendar” is something of a pioneer work. There can be little doubt that in our country where there has always been a keen interest in English as the primary foreign language to be taught in schools and studied in colleges and universities such a calendar will be welcomed. The “English Teacher’s Calendar” is small. It is designed to live on the desk, for quick and frequent references. It is intended not only for the use of teachers or students of English but for all those who are interested in English. In short, the Calendar is aimed at the widest possible audience. One of the greatest problems was to decide what should be included and what omitted. Clearly, those fields (events, holidays, names, births, deaths, etc.) that are peculiarly “English” or “American” must be represented. But the authors also realize that not all aspects of the British or American way of life have been considered and included. Limited to quite a compact edition this work makes no claim to cover all the events. Our intention has been to focus the “Calendar” on the real needs of a student or teacher of English in both classroom and extracurricular work.

JANUARY



JANUARY

January is the month when toes and fingertips tingle and cheeks are rosy from a day spent skating out-of-doors. This is the heart of winter.

January is named after the old Roman god Janus. He was a two-faced god, with one face looking towards the past and the other towards the future. Janus was considered so alert and watchful that images of him stood guard in the doorways of Roman homes.

There is a stillness in the January woods. A carpet of snow hushes the sounds of small animals who do not sleep the winter away. Their footprints make tiny patterns that barely disturb the white carpet.

However, there is a surprise or two for sharp eyes. Here are plants with leaves that show green all through the winter. Several kinds of moss make vivid patches of green in the wintry woods.

The American holly with its clusters of red berries shows up handsomely against the ice and frost. Spruce, hemlock, and pine trees stand like tall soldiers dressed in green uniforms.

Winter is the time to make friends with small animals who live in the woods all year round. The busy grey squirrel is as active in January as in June. The porcupine nibbles on the bark of the hemlock tree, leaving tiny chips of wood on the ground. The swift rabbit bounds over the snow-covered ground in search of food.

New Year's Day, January, 1, is a day for visiting friends or receiving guests at home. This is the day to wish one's friends "A Happy New Year". Some people make worthwhile New Year resolutions at this time — few are able to keep them for the entire year!

Of course, in the Southern Hemisphere, where the seasons are reversed, summer is at its height. The woods are green, and plants are thriving. It's the time of year to be outdoors. Beaches are crowded, and summer sports are great attractions.

January, the start of the New Year, is a hopeful time, and good wishes to all in every language are echoed around the world.

Place in year: 1st month.

Number of days: 31.

Flower: Snowdrop.

Birthstone: Garnet.

Zodiac signs: Capricorn, the Goat (December 22—January 19), and
Aquarius, the Water Bearer (January 20—February 18).

What matter how the night behaved?

What matter how the north wind raved?

Blow high, blow low, not all the snow

Could quench our hearth-fire's ruddy glow.

John Whittier

Historical Firsts

- 7** First American presidential election, 1789. Transatlantic telephone service between New York and London first began, 1927.
- 9** Seeing Eye dogs first trained to guide the blind in Nashville, Tennessee, 1929.
- 10** First great oil discovery in Texas, 1901. First United Nations General Assembly met in London, 1946.
- 21** Nautilus, first atomic submarine, launched, 1954.
- 23** Elizabeth Blackwell, first modern woman physician, graduated from Geneva Medical School of Western New York, 1849.
- 24** Gold first discovered in California, 1848.
- 27** Canadian Great Western Railway first opened, 1854. Thomas Edison granted the first patent for his incandescent light, 1880.
- 29** First players elected to baseball's Hall of Fame, 1936.

Holidays and Events

- 1** **New Year's Day. Bank Holiday.**

One may hear children singing:

*I wish you a merry Christmas
A happy New Year,
A pocket full of money
And a cellar full of beer,
A good fat pig
To last you all the year,
Please to give me a New Year's gift
For this New Year.*

Or reciting:

*Happy New Year! Happy New Year!
I've come to wish you a happy New Year.
I've got a little pocket and it's very thin,
Please give me a penny to put some money in.
If you haven't got a penny, a halfpenny will do,
If you haven't got a halfpenny, well —
God Bless You!*

First foot. Scotland and N. England. Dark haired men carrying bread and coal.

2 Bank Holiday (Scotland)

“The losing horse blames the saddle”

3 **Alaska** became the 49th state of the Union in 1959. It is the largest in area and the smallest in population of all the 50 states.

5 **Edward the Confessor** (d. 1066), king of England (1042—1066) nicknamed for his piety and his foundation of a new Westminster Abbey.

6 **Epiphany or Twelfth Day.** In olden times it was the most popular festival next to Christmas, and Shakespeare's play “Twelfth Night”, produced in 1602, was written to be acted at the Twelfth Night festivals.

Carl Sandburg (b. 1878), poet, novelist, and author of one of the great biographies of modern times, “Abraham Lincoln”. Twice won the Pulitzer

Prize, America's highest literary award. His works include collections of poetry ("The People, Yes"), folk songs and a novel "Remembrance Rock".

"Poetry is the achievement of the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits."

(Poetry Considered)

"I am an idealist. I don't know where I'm going but I'm on my way."

(C. Sandburg)

7 **First Balloon Crossing** of the English Channel in 1785.

"The greatest strokes make not the best music"

10 **Penny Post** — uniform letter postage rates (of one penny), dependent on weight and regardless of distance, were introduced in England in 1840.

11 **Boer War** began in 1899.

12 **Jack London** (b. 1876). US novelist. His novels include "The Call of the Wild", "The Iron Heel" and the autobiographical "Martin Eden".

Agatha Christie (d. 1976). British author of detective fiction. She wrote over 50 popular detective stories, creating well-known fictional detectives Hercule Poirot and Miss Jane Marple. Her works include "The Mysterious Affair at Styles", "Murder on the Orient Express", "Death on the Nile", "The Mousetrap".

"An archaeologist is the best husband any woman can have: the older she gets, the more interested he is in her."

(A. Christie)

13 **Edmund Spenser** (d. 1599). English poet. His major work "The Fairie Queen", a long moral allegory, was dedicated to Elizabeth I and published in 6 books.

Stephen Foster (b. 1826). American poet and composer, is best known for his songs of the Southern Negro of pre-Civil War days: "Old Folks at Home", "Old Black Joe", "Oh! Susanna". Some of his better-known senti-

mental ballads include “Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming”, “Beautiful Dreamer”. Produced more than 200 original songs and compositions.

14 Lewis Carroll (d. 1898). His most popular works were “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland”, “Through the Looking-Glass” and “The Hunting of the Snark”.

“What is the use of a book”, thought Alice, “without pictures or conversations?”

(Alice in Wonderland)

*“He thought he saw a Rattlesnake
Descending from the bus:
He looked again, and found it was
A Hippopotamus:
‘If this should stay to dine’, he said,
‘There won’t be much for us’.”*

(Sylvie and Bruno)

14 Hunting the Mallard in All Souls College, Oxford — every 100 years. Last was in 2001.

*“The Griffin, Bustard, Turkey, Capon,
Let other hungry mortals gape on,
And on their bones with stomachs fall hard,
But let All Souls’ men have their Mallard.”*

(The Mallard Song)

17 Benjamin Franklin (b. 1706). Printer, journalist, philosopher, author, inventor and diplomat, is one of the most versatile figures of the American Revolutionary period. He was an adviser to George Washington and a member of the committee appointed to draft the Declaration of Independence.

“Remember, that time is money.”

(Advice to Young Tradesman, 1748)

“No nation was ever ruined by trade.”

(Essays)

“There was never a good war or a bad peace.”

(Letter to Quincy, 1783)

Robert Scott reached the South Pole in 1912 only to find that Amundsen had preceded him.

19 Edgar Allan Poe (b. 1809), poet, short-story writer, and critic, is best known for his detective stories: “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”, “The Gold Bug”. His well-known poems include “The Raven”, “Annabel Lee”, “Eldorado” and “The Bells”.

*“Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!
Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’”*

(The Raven)

James Watt (b. 1736), British engineer known for his contributions to the development of the steam engine. By 1800 some 500 stationary Watt engines were in use for a variety of purposes.

20 First Assembly of the “Commons” in 1265, summoned by Simon de Montfort — the origin of the House of Common.

“A shady business never yields a sunny life”

22 Lord Bacon (b. 1561). English lawyer and philosopher. His major works include “The Advancement of Learning”, “History of Henry VII” and the “New Atlantis”.

“Reading makes a full man; conference a ready man and writing an exact man.”

(Essays)

Lord Byron (b. 1789). British poet. His great work was “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage”.

*“If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee? —
With silence and tears.”*

(When We Two Parted)

23 Paul Robeson (d. 1970). US black actor and singer. His best-known stage performance was in the title role of “Othello”. He sang Negro spirituals, made several films and actively campaigned for peace and civil rights.

“Don’t have more secrets than you can keep yourself”

24 **William Congreve** (b. 1670). British dramatist. His best-known plays are “Love for love”, “The Way of the World”, “The Mourning Bride”.

The Battle of Dogger Bank between English and German naval forces took place in 1915.

25 **Robert Burns** (b. 1759). Scottish poet, author of “Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect”, which won him immediate fame in 1786. Other works include “Tam o’Shanter”, “Holy Willis’s Prayer”, “The Two Dogs”. He collected and wrote numerous songs.

*“Gin a body meet a body
Coming through the rye;
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need a body cry?”*

(R. Burns)

26 **Rugby Union** founded in 1871.
Australia Day.

27 **Thomas A. Edison** (b. 1847). US inventor, perhaps the most prolific of all time. Patented more than 1330 inventions, including the electric light bulb, the gramophone, and improvements to Bell’s telephone. He constructed one of the first central electric light and power plants in the world.

29 **Thomas Paine** (b. 1737). American Revolutionary writer and pamphleteer. His work “Common Sense” (1776) initiated the American movement towards independence.

“Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one.”

(Common Sense)

30 **Franklin D. Roosevelt** (b. 1882) was the 32nd president of the USA (1933—1945) and the only man to be elected to that office for more than two terms. The first few years of his term as a president were characterized by government programs (generally known as the

“New Deal”) designed to bring about recovery from severe economic depression.

“We have always known that heedless self-interest was bad morals; we know now that it is bad economics”.

(Second Inaugural Address)

“I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished”.

(Ibid)

“In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression — everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way — everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want...

The fourth is freedom from fear...”

(Speech, 6 Jan. 1941)

“Fine words butter no parsnip”

31 **Guy Fawkes** executed 1606. He was discovered (5 Nov., 1605) with the gunpowder in a cellar of the Palace of Westminster (The Gunpowder Plot).

* * *

Weather in January

A sunny treat, but watch for sleet.

Snow flies; rain signs, gray skies.

Cold backs down, sun's in town.

Roads are icy, driving is spicy.

Goosedown uniform keeps you warm.

Icicles drip at a good clip.

* * *

*January brings the snow
Makes our feet and fingers glow.*

* * *

It's Never Fair Weather

*I don't like the winter wind
That whistles from the North.
My upper teeth and those beneath,
They jitter back and forth.
Oh, some are hanged, and some are skinned,
And others face the winter wind.*

(Ogden Nash)

Just for fun

Riddles:

1. What grows in winter, dies in summer, and grows with its roots upwards? (An icicle)
2. What goes up when the rain comes down? (An umbrella)
3. What holds water yet is full of holes? (A sponge)
4. Walks on four feet
On two feet, on three,
The more feet it walks on
The weaker it be. (A man)

Nursery Rhyme

Monday's child is fair of face,
Tuesday's child is full of grace,
Wednesday's child is full of woe,
Thursday's child has far to go,
Friday's child is loving and giving,
Saturday's child works hard for its living,
And a child that is born on the Sabbath day
Is fair and wise and good and gay.

Guess what these are?

Snowy,
Flowy,
Blowy,
Showery,
Flowery,
Bowery,
Hoppy,
Croppy,
Droppy,
Breezy,
Sneezy,
Freezy.

FEBRUARY



FEBRUARY

February is the shortest month of the year. However, in February more famous men were born and more interesting events happened than in any other month.

The name “February” comes from the Latin word *februa*, a ceremonial feast of purification held by the Romans centuries ago every February 15. Later, the early Christians celebrated Candlemas on February 2. On that day the candles were blessed to be burned in the churches during the year. Today many churches still celebrate the solemn ceremony of Candlemas.

In the Northern Hemisphere, February is often a cold month, sometimes the coldest of the year. The trees stand bare, their branches pointing to a leaden sky. The earth is hard, and the hibernating animals are still asleep — except for the groundhog, who is said to act as a weather forecaster. It is said that if he sees his shadow on February 2, there will be 6 more weeks of winter weather. The story is a legend and has no scientific basis.

In the Southern Hemisphere, February is a summer month. The days are warm, the beaches are crowded, and a plunge in the salty ocean is delightfully refreshing. There are flowers blooming everywhere, and the summer season is in full swing.

What February lacks in fine weather in some sections of the Northern Hemisphere, it makes up in holidays. Three United States presidents were born in February: Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and William Henry Harrison.

One of the most pleasant holidays of the year takes place on February 14 — Valentine’s Day. That’s the day for sending colored valentines decorated with gilded cupids.

Mardi Gras, a carnival festivity, usually takes place in February. Mardi Gras occurs on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. The name Mardi Gras means “fat Tuesday”. Mardi Gras is often more than a 1-day holiday. The gaiety is spread over several days before Lent. It takes that long to have all the parades with floats and bands, the dress-up masquerade dances, and

elaborate dinners. For Mardi Gras is the last merry holiday before Lent — the season of fasting in most Christian religions.

There's beauty in February despite its chill, dark days. In the country the bushes, instead of bearing leaves and berries, are bowed down with cottony white snow. There's sleighing, ice skating, and snowball fun, skiing and snowshoe hikes.

Sometimes there comes a day in February when the sun comes burning forth, the breeze feels warmer, and you feel like shedding your jacket. You even look expectantly for the crocus — the first brave flower that announces spring. The early Saxons renamed February *Sol-monath* — “sun month”, for the returning sun. The welcome but faint sound of the earth's stirring starts in February. A not-too-fat red robin, returning home early from its sojourn in the south, can sometimes be seen on a white lawn. February is the leap year month. People born on February 29 celebrate their real birthday once every 4 years!

Winter cannot be too dreary, for February has its own snowy splendor, and the many holidays make the month fun.

Place in year: 2nd month.

Number of days: 28, except in leap year, when it is 29.

Flower: Primrose and violet.

Birthstone: Amethyst.

Zodiac signs: Aquarius, the Water Bearer (January 20—February 18),
and Pisces, the Fishes (February 20—March 20).

Holidays that may occur in either February or March:

Shrove Tuesday, or Mardi Gras; Ash Wednesday; Purim.

Shrove Tuesday has been a day of feasting, cock fighting, a day for football, rowdiness, and rebellion. It is still a special day for children in some parts of England, where “Pancake Day”, as they call it is kept as a school holiday:

*“Pancake Tuesday, mother's busy baking,
We are helping, lovely pancakes making,
Pancake Tuesday, mix them up and fry them,
When they are done you can come and try them”*

Historical Firsts

1 United States Supreme Court met for the first time with Chief Justice John Jay presiding, 1790.

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