



BBC WORLD SERVICE LEARNING ENGLISH

February 29th 闰年的二月二十九

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2008 Leap Year 2008 谈闰年

Read the text below and do the activity that follows.

阅读下面的短文，然后完成练习：

The year 2008 has one extra day in it – February 29th. This is because it's what we call 'a leap year'.

Every four years, the year has 366 days in it instead of 365 – but why does this happen? Well, it actually takes **the planet Earth** 365 days and six hours to revolve completely around the sun. After four years an extra 24 hours have accumulated so an extra day is added to the calendar.

It is called a leap year because hundreds of years ago in England, the extra day wasn't **legally recognised**. Contracts that were made were apparently not seen as **binding** on that day. The British just **leapt over** that day. Therefore a year with 29 days in February is **consequently** called a leap year and that 29th day is sometimes called Leap Day.

If you are born on 29th February in a leap year, there are difficulties in celebrating your birthday as the day only occurs once every four years. So people **tend to** celebrate on either 28th February or 1st March every year.

There is a well-known tradition in the UK **associated with** 29th February, introduced many centuries ago. Women are allowed to **break with tradition** and **propose** to their boyfriends on this day.

This all started back in the 5th Century, when a famous Irish saint, Bridget, complained to Saint Patrick, another famous Irish saint, that women had to wait too long for men to propose. According to the **legend**, Saint Patrick said any females **yearning** for a proposal could ask their boyfriend to marry them on this **additional** day in February.

This so-called tradition was even written in law in the 13th Century. Scotland **passed a law** allowing women to propose to men in a leap year. It was said that if the men refused, they had to pay a **fine**!

Now in 2008, there are **calls** for 29th February to become a public holiday. Some people believe that it should be an official day off, because no one gets paid extra for working an extra day in a leap year. For the moment though, the British still have to go to work on this day.

Glossary 词汇表

the planet Earth – 行星地球	revolve – 运转
accumulated – 累计	legally recognised – 法律上认可的
binding – 有约束力的	leapt over – 跳过去
consequently – (由...) 导致	occurs – 出现
tend to – 往往	associated with – 与...相关的
to break with tradition – 打破传统	propose – 提出/求婚
saint – 圣人	legend – 传说
yearning – 渴望	additional – 额外的/多余的
so-called – 所谓	passed a law – 通过法律
a fine – 罚款	calls – 呼吁

1. Reading Quiz 阅读测验

Are these sentences true or false? Circle the correct answer.

以下句子哪句是真?哪句是假? 请圈出正确答案。

1. It takes 366 days for the Earth to revolve around the sun. True / False
2. If your birthday is on 29th February, you might celebrate it on 28th February or 1st March when it is not a leap year. True / False
3. On 29th February women can propose to their boyfriends. True / False
4. In the 13th Century, a law was passed to allow women to ask their boyfriends to marry them. True / False
5. In Britain, 29th February is a public holiday. True / False

2. Numbers – When? How many? 数字-何时? 多少?

Put the numbers into the correct column on the table. The first ones have been done for you.

请把正确数字或日期填写到下列句子的空格处，第一个句子已经示范完成。

When?	How many?
1 st March	1

2008

24

1st March

5th century

1

366

Now complete the following sentences using one of the answers from above:

请用以上正确答案来完成下列句子。

1. If your birthday is on February 29th, you might celebrate it more often on _____.
2. A leap year has _____ day extra compared to other years.
3. The tradition of women proposing to men on 29th February started in the _____.
4. A leap year has _____.
5. In _____, some people think that February 29th should be a public holiday.
6. It takes the Earth 365 days and six hours to revolve around the sun, so after four years an extra _____ hours are added to the calendar.

3. Prepositions 介词

Complete the sentences by choosing the correct preposition.

请选出下列句子中的正确介词：

1. A leap year has 366 days on / in / at it, compared with the usual 365 days.

2. It takes the Earth 365 days and six hours to revolve under / through / around the sun.

3. Hundreds of years ago at / on / in England, the extra day in / at / on a leap year wasn't legally recognised.

4. On / In / At 29th February, women can break up / down / with tradition and propose with / to / towards their boyfriends.

5. Saint Bridget complained at / with / to Saint Patrick way back on / at / in the 5th Century that women have to wait too long for men to propose.

6. On / In / At 2008, people think 29th February should be a public holiday, because no one gets paid extra for working an extra day on / at / in a leap year.

4. Wordsearch 单词搜索

Try to find the words associated with February 29th in the puzzle below.

There are ten words to find. Words can be written horizontally (g), vertically (i) or diagonally (m)

请在下面的字谜游戏中，找出与二月二十九日有关的英语单词来。

共有10个单词，其组成方式可能以水平的 (g) 垂直的 (i) 或对角的 (m) 形式出现。

p	r	o	p	o	n	e	h	o	l	i	d
o	n	h	o	l	i	d	a	y	l	e	a
l	i	f	e	l	e	a	n	l	e	a	p
s	a	e	m	a	t	r	l	e	g	a	d
p	q	b	e	t	r	a	d	i	e	k	r
r	t	r	a	d	i	t	i	o	n	d	h
o	s	u	s	a	i	n	h	e	d	e	l
p	s	a	i	l	f	e	b	r	u	a	r
o	e	r	i	e	e	c	e	n	t	s	a
s	h	y	h	n	a	a	h	o	l	i	d
e	w	c	e	n	t	u	r	y	l	e	g
p	r	o	p	s	a	i	f	t	r	e	w

propose	February	leap	year	Earth
tradition	legend	century	saint	holiday

Answers 答案

1. Reading Quiz 阅读测验

Are these sentences true or false? Circle the correct answer.

以下句子哪句是真?哪句是假? 请圈出正确答案。

1. It takes 366 days for the Earth to revolve around the sun. **False**
2. If your birthday is on 29th February, you might celebrate it on 28th February or 1st March when it is not a leap year. **True**
3. On 29th February women can propose to their boyfriends. **True**
4. In the 13th century, a law was passed to allow women to ask their boyfriends to marry them. **True**
5. In Britain, 29th February is a public holiday. **False**

3. Prepositions 介词

Complete the sentences by choosing the correct preposition.

请选出下列句子中的正确介词:

1. A leap year has 366 days **in** it, compared with the usual 365 days.
2. It takes the Earth 365 days and 6 hours to revolve **around** the sun.
3. Hundreds of years **ago in** England, the extra day **in** a leap year wasn't legally recognised.
4. **At** 29th February, women can break **with** tradition and propose **to** their boyfriends.
5. Saint Bridget complained **to** Saint Patrick way back **in** the 5th century that women have to wait too long for men to propose.
6. **In** 2008, people think 29th February should be a public holiday, because no one gets paid extra for working an extra day **in** a leap year.

2. Numbers – When? How many? 数字-何时? 多少?

When?	How many?
1st March	1
2008	366
5th century	24

1. If your birthday is on February 29th, you might celebrate it more often on 1st March.
2. A leap year has 1 day extra compared to other years.
3. The tradition of women proposing to men on 29th February started in the 5th century.
4. A leap year has 366 days.
5. In 2008, some people think that February 29th should be a public holiday.
6. It takes the Earth 365 days and six hours to revolve around the sun, so after four years an extra 24 hours are added to the calendar.

4. Wordsearch 单词搜索

		h	o	l	i	d	a	y	l					
		f							l	e	a	p		
		e								g	a			
p		b								e		r		
r	t	r	a	d	i	t	i	o	n					
o	s	u								d				
p		a												
o		r	i											
s		y		n										
e		c	e	n	t	u	r	y						