

Goodies

Leap for an extra day



BIG Dee is still very young. As far as he knows, there has always been 28 days in February. Imagine his surprise when he found out that today is 29 February! How could that possibly be?

He leapt away from the calendar and into the kitchen to ask his mother about it. She told him that this year is a leap year, and therefore today is a leap day.

Editor's Note


Hi! I like Lionel Messi, the current world football player of the year who plays for the Spanish team Barcelona and for his country, Argentina. He is also a nice guy; he recently gave a signed football shirt to a young fan in Afghanistan. This boy's family could not afford one so he got a blue and white plastic bag and wrote Messi's name and number on it so that it would look like an Argentina football shirt. Messi saw pictures of the boy wearing the bag and so sent the boy a real shirt with the footballer's name signed on the front. I hope the boy does not wash that shirt because the signature will then be gone! On G06 is another story about Messi being generous, but this time to his teammate.




Simon


Feb.
29 **When?**

 Mummy, when is it a leap year?


 There are three conditions. First, if the year can be divided by four, it is usually a leap year. That is why this year, 2016, is a leap year. Second, if the year can be divided by 100, but not 400, it is NOT a leap year. Therefore, 1900 and 2100 are both not leap years. Third, if the year can be divided by 400, it is a leap year. For example, 2000 is a leap year.


Feb.
29 **Why?**

 Why is it so **complicated**? Why not simply just have 365 days every year?


 For a simple answer, a year in our modern Gregorian **calendar** (公曆) actually has 365 days, and 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds. In four years, that adds up to almost one whole day, which explains why we have that leap day. The 100 and 400 rules are further **fine-tuning**.


Feb.
29 **Two calendars?**

 What is that Greg-something calendar? Are there other calendars?


 You mean the Gregorian calendar. Before that, we used the Julian calendar, which did not account for the extra day every four years. That created much trouble. That was why it had to be **replaced** by the Gregorian one.

Feb.
29 **30 February?**


 Are there 30 February and 31 February dates then?


 They do not exist now. But there were times when 30 February existed! Sweden (瑞典) added it to its calendar in 1712 because of an error they made. And in 1930 and 1931, the former Soviet Union (蘇聯) introduced 30 February to make the working months more 'regular'.


Feb.
29 **Rare disease**

 No matter what, a leap day is quite **rare**.



 Not too rare actually, because we have it almost every four years. But because of this, 29 February is called Rare Disease Day (國際罕見病日). On this day, we remember those **unfortunate** people who have rare diseases.

 What is a rare disease?

 It simply means a disease that has very few patients. But there is no number that everyone agrees upon for which a disease is regarded as rare.



Now that I know, I will have fun looking forward to the next leap day!

