



Months - Why do different months of the year have different numbers of days?

Fact

- The months have different numbers of days because that's the way the Roman ruler Julius Caesar decided to divide up the 365 days of a year into 12 months
- Before Julius Caesar's calendar was invented people used to count the months down by the full moon.
- People decided that they needed a calendar so they could work out which month they were in – very handy when you're preparing to plant a garden or set out in a boat because the different months are in different seasons and each season has different weather conditions.

Do you know

- There are actually 365.242199 days in a year. That's why some years we have a leap year – an extra day that makes up for the extra time.
- There's a full moon once every 29 – 30 days so that's about 12 full moons every year, but not exactly. If we used a calendar based on the full moon then after a few years it would all be confused and the New Zealand January would be in winter not summer!
- In Roman times the months were named Januarius, Februarius, Aprilis, Maius, Junius, Quintilis, Sextilis, September, October, November and December
- When Julius Caesar died the Roman's changed the name of the month Quintilis to July in his honour.
- August is named after the Roman Emperor Augustus.

Experiments you can do

How many days old are you?

A year is 365 (and a bit) days. How many years old are you? Times the number of years by 365 days and you'll find out how many days old you are.

How many leap years have there been since you were born. Once every 4 years there are 29 days in February not 28. The last leap year was in 2000. Work out how many leap years there have been since you were born.

Time is measured in different ways. A day is 24 hours, an hour is 60 minutes and a minute is 60 seconds.

Use a stop watch or a watch with a second hand to time how long you can do something like stand on one leg or balance a book on your head.

Other Investigations

The Maori Calendar has 12 months but it is based around the full moon. See if you can find out what the names are of the different months.

The Maori year doesn't start in January either it starts in Pipiri - June

Jokes

Which two days of the week are the strongest?

Saturday & Sunday because the rest of the days are weak days! (weak - week)

From Lorna Rossington