

Happy Valentine's Day

Valentine is just around the corner, ready to shower us with flowers, heart shaped sweets, chocolates, cards and other presents from a secret admirer, a boyfriend or girlfriend, or simply a friend. Displays in shop windows are filled with gifts to choose from.

St. Valentine

This special day finds its origins in the third century AD. The Roman Emperor Claudius II had banned marriage since he felt that it turned men into poor soldiers. Valentine, a Christian priest in Rome, disagreed with this law, believing it important that men and women be married, instead of living in sin. He secretly and illegally wed couples so that they could live together honestly by the Church.

Imprisoned

Unfortunately, Valentine was discovered and put into prison for breaking the law and practicing Christian beliefs. While he was in jail, he fell in love with the blind daughter of his jailer. Valentine healed her of her blindness. Before he was executed on February 14, 269 AD, he sent her a letter telling her he loved her and signed it 'Your Valentine'.

Valentine's Day

By the 1700's in England, Valentine's Day began to resemble how we celebrate it at present. All those years ago, lovers began to express their love with gifts of flowers, sweets and cards, known as 'valentines'. To this day, we celebrate Valentine's Day in the same way.



A commercial success

There are many valentines you can give to a loved one. In the 1800's, two ideas took hold and have both become huge economic successes. First of all, Mrs Howland produced cards that people could buy and send to their admirer. As a result, Valentine's Day is the second most popular day of the year for sending cards, second only to Christmas. A few years later, Mr Cadbury designed the chocolate heart-shaped box filled with delicious chocolates for your 'sweetheart'. Now, on Valentine's Day, there are at least 36 million heart-shaped boxes of chocolates sold every year.

Tips for Valentine's Day

Aside from chocolates or a card, you can choose from flowers – traditionally roses –, balloons, teddy bears, sweets, or jewellery. The most popular rose to give is of course, the red rose, symbolising love and romance. However, a pink rose simply says 'thank you', while a yellow rose signifies friendship. At school you can often order your rose and have it delivered, anonymously if needed. Of course, an out of the ordinary valentine may be even more successful. Why not bake some heart-shaped cupcakes or put together a special music playlist? On the other hand, you could remain traditional and write a *Roses are red, violets are blue* poem.

Source: www.abcteach.com; www.softschool.com