

How Did Valentines Day Come to Be?

There are a great many beliefs to what started the tradition of Valentines Day, but one thing remains the same in all of the theories. Valentines Day is a day of love. Today, it is common for people to send things like cards, flowers, candy or gifts to the person that they love in their life and many people each year choose Valentines Day to get married. Centuries ago, Valentines Day was not quite as romantic and often involved dramatic situations.



One early theory of what started Valentines Day involves an evil Emperor named Claudius of Rome. When he was trying to recruit men for his army, he was disappointed that so many refused to join because they had wives and children. In order to correct this, he outlawed marriage! At the time Saint Valentine was a special priest in Rome and as a protest to the Emperor's law, he continued to marry people. When the emperor found out he had him jailed and later sentenced him to death. Legend says that Saint Valentine fell in love with the guard's daughter while he was in jail and right before he was executed, wrote her a letter and signed it, "*from your Valentine!*" In 496 AD, Pope Gelasius determined that February 14th would be called Saint Valentines Day as a way to honor the heroic actions of Saint Valentine.

The second legend says that Valentines Day was celebrated in ancient Rome on February 14th as a way to honor Queen Juno and prepare for the upcoming festival called Lupercalia. Juno was the Queen of the Gods and Goddesses and was also the Goddess of

women and marriage. On February 15th, a festival called Lupercalia took place, which allowed young boys and girls to spend time together. Normally, this was strictly forbidden. To prepare, on February 14th, boys would pick one slip of paper from a jar that had the name of one of the girls in their village on it. Whomever they picked, they were allowed to spend the day with on February 15th during the festival of Lupercalia. The young children that were paired together often fell in love and got married.

In the United States, Valentines Day began being celebrated in 1860. A British immigrant named Esther Howland is credited for designing and sending out the first Valentines Day greeting cards. Since then, Valentines Day began steadily gaining popularity and exposure and in 1936 became an "unofficial" holiday on American calendars.

Valentines Day is not a religious holiday like many of the other celebrated throughout the year. Even so, stores sell just as many greeting cards on Valentines Day as they do during other holidays such as Christmas. It is estimated that 6 million pounds of chocolate are bought and sold and that each year 450,000 people are engaged on Valentines Day. Valentines Day is a holiday to celebrate friendship and love and is enjoyed by billions of people across the world.

Name _____ Date _____

How Did Valentines Day Come to Be? Quiz

1. Which would best indicate "centuries ago?"
 - a. 1700's
 - b. 1990's
 - c. 2000
 - d. 600 AD

2. Who is credited for bringing Valentines Day to the United States
 - a. Claudius of Rome
 - b. Juno
 - c. Saint Valentine
 - d. Esther Howland

3. When was the festival of Lupercalia celebrated?
 - a. February 13
 - b. February 15
 - c. February 14
 - d. February 12

4. Queen Juno was the Queen of:
 - a. Gods
 - b. Goddesses
 - c. Women
 - d. Marriage
 - e. All of the above

5. What is a synonym for the word executed?
 - a. killed
 - b. sent away
 - c. released from jail
 - d. made a hero

Name _____ Date _____

How Did Valentines Day Come to Be? Free Response Quiz

- 1. Do you think that Saint Valentine the priest did the right thing or the wrong thing by continuing to marry people in private? Explain.**
- 2. Centuries ago, boys and girls were often separated until they were 14 or 15 years of age. Is this a good thing to do or not? Why or why not?**
- 3. Is Valentines an important holiday? Explain your answer.**
- 4. Who is your Valentine and what will you do to show them you care during Valentines Day?**
- 5. Valentines Day is often called one of the "Hallmark" holidays. What do you think is meant by this?**
- 6. How do you think that computers will change the greeting card business on Valentines Day?**
- 7. Valentines Day is considered an official "unofficial" holiday. What does this mean to you?**
- 8. Do you think that Valentines Day is a good time or a bad time to be engaged or married? Why or why not?**

How Did Valentines Day Come to Be? Answer Key

- 1. a**
- 2. d**
- 3. b**
- 4. e**
- 5. a**