



With all
my love

VALENTINE'S DAY

FEBRUARY 14

VALENTINE'S DAY has roots in several different legends that have found their way to us through the ages. One of the earliest popular symbols of the day is Cupid, the Roman god of Love, who is represented by the image of a young cherub with bow and arrow.

Valentine's Day is named after a Roman martyr named Valentine. Actually, there are two Valentines in the history of Roman martyrs. One was a Christian priest, who lived around 300 AD. He had been thrown in prison for his teachings, and for refusing to worship the Roman gods. He also supposedly cured the jailer's daughter of her blindness. On February 14, this Valentine was beheaded. As the story goes, the night before he was executed, he wrote the jailer's daughter a farewell letter, signing it, "From Your Valentine."

The other Valentine was an Italian bishop who lived at about the same time. It is believed that he was imprisoned because he secretly married couples, contrary to the laws of the Roman emperor. Young men were forbidden to marry until they had served as soldiers. This Valentine was also reportedly beheaded, becoming a martyr for the cause of love.

Around February 14 there was a yearly Roman holiday, "Lupercalia," held near the caves of Lupercal—the place where the mythical founders of Rome—Romulus and

Remus—were nursed as infants by a wolf. The date of this holiday, the association with fertility, and the belief that young men randomly chose the name of a young girl to escort to the festivities, may link the ancient festival with Valentine's Day.

The custom of choosing a sweetheart on this date spread through Europe in the Middle Ages, and then to the early American colonies. During the 1700s, on Valentine's Day young men wrote the name of their sweetheart on their sleeve, a practice that is probably the origin of the saying, "wearing his heart on his sleeve." Throughout the ages, people also believed that birds picked their mates on February 14!

Whatever the odd mixture of origins, Valentine's Day is now a day for sweethearts. It is the day that you show your friend or loved one that you care. You can send candy to someone you think is special. Or you can send flowers, particularly red roses, which are the flowers of love. Most people send their "valentines" a greeting card. These greeting cards are also called "valentines" after the notes that one St. Valentine wrote from jail. Valentine's Day cards can be sentimental, romantic, and heartfelt. They can be funny and friendly. If the sender is shy, the valentine can be anonymous, or signed "Your Secret Admirer."

Americans of all ages love to send and receive valentines. Valen-



PREVIOUS PAGE: A box of chocolates and red roses are traditional Valentine's Day gifts.

ABOVE: Cupid, the God of Love, is often shown as a boy with wings and a bow and arrow.



tines are often heart-shaped, or have drawings of hearts or Cupid, the symbols of love, on them. In some elementary schools, children bring or make valentines for all their classmates and put them in a large decorated box, similar to a mailbox. On February 14, the teacher opens the box and distributes the valentines to each student. After the students read their valentines, they have a small party with **refreshments**. Handmade valentines, often created by cutting hearts out of colored paper and decorating them with lace, ribbon, or other material, show that a lot of thought was put into making them personal.

People often write a short rhyme inside a homemade valentine, such as:

*Roses are red,
Violets are blue
Sugar is sweet
And so are you!*

For people of all ages, newspapers throughout the country have a

Valentine's Day offer. Anyone can send in a message **destined** for a **would-be** sweetheart, a good friend, a son or daughter, a parent, an **acquaintance**, or even a **spouse** of fifty years. For a small **fee**, the message is printed in a special section of the newspaper on February 14. Even if no one writes one for you, these messages are fun and heart-warming to read. They often include **pet names** such as "sugar lump," "teddy bear," "sweetie pie," or "honey." People sometimes abbreviate words such as writing "4-ever" for "forever."



**To my Sugar Lump,
Luv U 4-Ever.
Your Teddy Bear**

ABOVE: Homemade valentines are fun to make out of red paper, lace, and ribbon.

Glossary

legend(s): *n.* a popular story, perhaps untrue, that is passed down through history

cherub: *n.* a type of angel appearing as a young boy with wings

martyr: *n.* a person who is killed, chooses to die, or suffer greatly for a cause or belief

supposedly: *adv.* according to some people; it is assumed to be true

behead(ed): *v.* to execute by having one's head cut off

execute(d): *v.* to put to death by an official order

mythical: *adj.* based on a traditional story or myth, or imagination

nurse(d): *v.* to care for; to nourish or feed from the breast

randomly: *adv.* by chance; not in any order

escort: *v.* to accompany; to go with or take to an event

sleeve: *n.* the part of a shirt that covers the arms

origin: *n.* beginning; source

mate(s): *n.* male or female member of a pair

sentimental: *adj.* emotional; full of feeling

heartfelt: *adj.* sincere

anonymous: *adj.* without the sender's or author's name

refreshment(s): *n.* light food and drink

destine(d): *v.* to be intended for; to be received by a specific person or at a specific destination

would-be: *adj.* possible; hoped to be

acquaintance: *n.* a friend, but not a close friend

spouse: *n.* husband or wife

fee: *n.* a payment required for a service

pet name(s): *n. phrase.* sweet or endearing nickname; special name given to a loved one

Name _____ Date _____

Do you know why we celebrate Valentine's Day? Now it is mainly so that we can tell people that we care about them, give and receive cards, and enjoy chocolate and candy.

But according to one legend, St. Valentine's Day is meant for people to remember a brave man, a martyr* whose name was Valentine.

The Story of St. Valentine

The Roman Emperor Claudius II was fighting many wars. He wanted a strong army, but many men did not want to be soldiers. Claudius thought the men wanted to stay home to be with their wives and children instead of leaving to fight wars.

Claudius thought of an awful solution to his problem. He decided to cancel all marriages! No one in all of Rome could get married. Claudius thought that if the men couldn't get married, the men would ignore the women and want to be soldiers.

Valentine, who was a priest, believed that people needed to get married. He thought that if they were not married, they would be tempted to sin by living together without being married. So he secretly and illegally married couples anyway! He performed the weddings in secret places, so the Roman soldiers would not find out.

But they did find out. Valentine was arrested and brought before the Emperor. The Emperor thought Valentine was a well spoken and wise young man, and encouraged him to stop being a Christian and become a loyal Roman. Valentine would not deny his beliefs, and he refused. He was sent to prison until he could be executed. While he was in prison, he sent out letters to his friends and asked to be prayed for by writing *Remember your Valentine*.

Valentine was killed on the 14th or the 24th of February in the year 269 or 270. We celebrate Valentine's Day on February 14th in honor of St. Valentine.

Although it is not known whether this legend is factually true, it is a good story anyway. It is nice to think of someone who believed in marriage and was willing to risk death to do what he believed was right.

**martyr comes from the Greek work martus, which means "witness". A martyr is a person who would rather suffer, and even die, than give up the things he or she believes in.*

Name _____ Date _____

Answer the following:

1. Name the Emperor who ruled during Valentine's lifetime.
 - a. Claudius I
 - b. Claudius II
 - c. Nero
 - d. Augustus

2. The Emperor wanted men to:
 - a. live at home and work for the empire.
 - b. raise children and be loyal Roman citizens.
 - c. go to other countries and raise families.
 - d. go fight wars in other lands.

3. Valentine disobeyed the Emperor's orders twice. What TWO things did he refuse to do?
 - a. stop performing marriages
 - b. kneel to the Emperor
 - c. stop being a Christian
 - d. read the Bible

Match the words to the correct meaning.

- | | | | |
|---------|-----------|----|--|
| 1. ___ | wedding | a. | a tasty treat of sugar and cocoa |
| 2. ___ | executed | b. | a place to keep criminals away from regular citizens |
| 3. ___ | martyr | c. | to take a criminal away to jail or prison |
| 4. ___ | prison | d. | ruler of the Roman Empire |
| 5. ___ | secretly | e. | the second month of the year |
| 6. ___ | chocolate | f. | done in hiding, privately |
| 7. ___ | Emperor | g. | a ceremony where two people who love each other join together officially |
| 8. ___ | war | h. | from a word meaning <i>witness</i> |
| 9. ___ | arrest | i. | to be killed for a crime or a belief |
| 10. ___ | February | j. | when groups of people, or countries, fight each other |

Name _____ Date _____

Answer Key

1. b
2. d
3. a and c

1. g
2. i
3. h
4. b
5. f
6. a
7. d
8. j
9. c
10. e

Answers will vary and there are MANY words to make. Some words include:

rob	man	brat	mental	metal
every	mantle	rove	run	love
ran	rat	rub	memory	late
yet	beer	bear	brain	rain
rob	not	nut	bone	enter
mob	bent	mom	rent	rumble
marble	ember	malt	mobile	rant

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