

MAY - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Mother Goose Day

Mother Goose Day is celebrated on May 1st each year. The holiday was founded in 1987 by Gloria T. Delamar in conjunction with the publication of her book *Mother Goose, from Nursery to Literature*. Its purpose is to generate a renewed appreciation for the old nursery rhymes. A variety of community and business organizations plan special Mother Goose events each year, especially schools and libraries. These festivities primarily target children in kindergarten through primary grades, but older children and adults enjoy reminiscing about their favorite nursery rhymes, as well.

2, 3. National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month is observed in May each year because it's a peak season for asthma and allergy sufferers. It was created by the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) and is an ideal opportunity to educate patients, family, friends, co-workers, and others about these health conditions. There is no place in America free from allergies, and the occurrence of asthma and allergy-related illnesses is on the rise. For this reason, each year, the AAFA asks the President of the United States to officially declare May as "National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month." The AAFA encourages participation in the observance by providing educational materials and helpful tools for people to use in the community, in schools, at work, and at home.

4. Cinco de Mayo

Cinco de Mayo is celebrated on May 5 each year in the United States. It commemorates the surprise victory of the outnumbered Mexican army over French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. At that time in its history, Mexico was battling against unwelcomed French occupation. The victory at Puebla invigorated the Mexican people, boosted their morale, and sparked a surge in patriotism and national pride. Some mistakenly assume that Cinco de Mayo celebrates Mexico's declaration of independence from Spain, but that took place on September 15, 1810, and has nothing to do with Cinco de Mayo. Mexico's Independence Day is that nation's most important patriotic holiday, while Cinco de Mayo receives relatively little attention there. It is observed in the United States, however, as a celebration of Mexican heritage and pride.

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5. Florence Nightingale and International Nurses Day

The daughter of wealthy British citizens, Florence Nightingale, was born on May 12, 1820, in Florence, Italy, and was named for the city of her birth. Nightingale believed she was called by God to be a nurse and entered the profession in 1844, much to the distress of her mother and sister, who felt nursing was beneath their social status. She first became well-known while serving as a nurse during the Crimean War. She tended to the soldiers and was dubbed “The Lady with the Lamp” because she made her rounds at night. Nightingale wrote the book *Notes on Nursing*, first published in 1859. It would later serve as the cornerstone for the curriculum at her Nightingale School of Nursing. Her book also sold well to the general reading public and was considered a classic introduction to nursing. Nightingale established the first secular nursing school in the world in 1860 at St. Thomas Hospital in London, which laid the foundation for professional nursing. “The Nightingale Pledge” taken by new nurses was named in her honor, and International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world each year on her birthday.

6. Mother's Day

Mother's Day is observed in the United States on the second Sunday in May. It is an opportunity for people to recognize the important and positive contributions mothers make to society and express appreciation for motherhood and maternal bonds. Mother's Day celebrations around the world have very different origins and traditions. However, many of them have been influenced by American customs associated with the holiday, such as giving gifts, sending cards, and gathering for family dinners with mother as the guest of honor.

7. National Bike Month

May is National Bike Month. This annual event is sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists. The League, founded in 1880, was originally called the League of American Wheelmen. Cyclists at that time were challenged by rutted roads of gravel and dirt, and they faced harassment from horsemen, wagon drivers, and pedestrians. Because they wanted to improve riding conditions and better enjoy their sport, more than 100,000 cyclists from across the United States joined together and formed a league to advocate for paved roads. The success of their efforts played a role in the early development of our national highway system. National Bike Month is designed to increase awareness of the pleasures, practical uses, and health benefits of bicycling. Annually, cycling groups across the nation plan and coordinate events, encouraging families, schools, organizations, and communities to participate.

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8. Better Hearing and Speech Month

Better Hearing and Speech Month is held in May of each year. It is sponsored by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Millions of Americans have speech, language, and hearing disorders. The association is committed to ensuring that they receive the services needed to help them communicate effectively. To this end, an annual nationwide public information campaign is conducted to promote awareness about communication disorders and treatments that can improve the quality of life for those who have them. Many resources are made available to families, schools, and communities.

9. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Arthur Conan Doyle was born on May 22, 1859, in Edinburgh, Scotland. He studied medicine under Dr. Joseph Bell, became a physician, and had his own practice until 1891. He later served as a physician during the Boer War (1899-1902). Doyle became famous, however, for his creation of the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes. It is believed that Doyle's medical mentor, Dr. Bell, was the model for his keen-eyed and extremely logical Holmes character. The first Sherlock Holmes tale was "A Study in Scarlet" and was published in 1887. Over the next 40 years, Doyle published an additional 56 short stories and four novels that featured Sherlock Holmes and his assistant Dr. Watson. These tales have been gathered into collections and are still beloved today. Doyle became Sir Arthur Conan Doyle when he was knighted for his medical work in the second South African War.

10. Climbing Mount Everest

Mount Everest in the country of Nepal is the tallest mountain in the world. There have been more than 4,100 recorded successful climbs to its summit. People will pay professional mountain guides large sums of money to lead their climbing expeditions. The country of Nepal makes a great deal of tourism revenue from the climbers. Individuals pay as much as \$25,000 to obtain a climbing permit. Even though Mount Everest is not the most challenging mountain to climb in terms of technical difficulty, it has many inherent dangers, including altitude sickness, weather, and wind. The summit of Mount Everest was first reached at 11:30 a.m. on May 29, 1953, by the team of Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tenzing Norgay of Nepal. While at the top, they took photographs and buried some sweets and a small cross in the snow. Norgay and Hillary insisted it was a team effort to reach the summit. After two years of public speculation and debate, Norgay revealed that Hillary was the first human to step foot onto the summit of the great Mount Everest.