

Editor's notes:

There are two schools of thought about how May, once the third month in the Roman calendar, got its name. Some historians believe it derives from "Maia," the Roman goddess who was the daughter of Atlas and mother of Mercury. Others say the name came from "Maiesta," the Roman goddess of honour and reverence who was also the wife of Vulcan.

Some interesting events in May are:

May Day, May 1 -- The first day of May has been observed as a day of celebration since ancient times, when the day marked the transition from the colder to warmer seasons.

Star Wars Day, May 4 -- Unofficial celebration of the Star Wars movies, based on a pun: "May the fourth be with you."

Canadian Tulip Festival, May 6-23 -- This festival started 58 years ago in 1953 after the Dutch royal family gave 100,000 tulip bulbs to Canada in gratitude for sheltering Princess Juliana and her daughter during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands during World War II. Today, the city of Ottawa boasts beds with 3 million tulips and hosts more than half a million visitors when the flowers come into bloom.

Kentucky Derby, May 7 -- The Kentucky Derby -- the first jewel of the Triple Crown thoroughbred stakes -- is run at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky, as it has for nearly 140 years since the first Derby was run in 1875. The race covers one and one-quarter miles and is touted as the "The Most Exciting Two Minutes in Sports" for its approximate time length.

Mother's Day, May 8 -- The British "Mothering Sunday," a precursor to our own Mother's Day, was introduced by King Henry III of England in the 13th century. He called for people to return to their home, or "Mother," church to worship during Lent. These visits often included family reunions. In Victorian times, it was common to give children who had gone to work as domestic servants the day off to visit their mothers and families. Eventually, it became a day to honour all mothers.

Limerick Day, May 12 -- This day recognizes the humorous five-line rhyming verse (named after the Irish town of Limerick) and is celebrated on the birth anniversary of limerick master Edward Lear. Here's a typical example of the form:

*Out dining, a young alligator,
When asked if he'd have coffee later,
Just shook his large head
And pleasantly said,
"I was planning on having the waiter."*

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Victoria Day, May 23 -- England's Queen Victoria, born on May 24, 1837, was the ruling sovereign when Canada's provinces joined together to form a country in 1867. Even before Confederation, Canadians celebrated her birthday. Throughout the years, Victoria Day has also been called Empire Day and Commonwealth Day. After Queen Victoria's death in 1901, parliament made the day a national holiday.



Create the Brand You Were Meant To Be

The concept of personal branding may have been born in 1997, with Tom Peters' article "The Brand Called You" in *Fast Company* magazine. Even if it predates Peters, it's become a legitimate career practice employed by entrepreneurs, CEOs, and even regular workers who want to distinguish themselves from the pack.

Take charge of your career -- and your life -- by constructing your very own personal brand. Just put these steps into action:

- **Identify your passion.** Your brand won't stand the test of time unless it's based on something you feel strongly about and want to do for the rest of your life.

- **Specialize.** Plant your banner in a niche that's narrow enough for you to stand out in. Look at what you already do better than anyone else, and concentrate on keeping your skills sharp in that area.

- **Market yourself.** Position yourself as a service provider. Let your manager and co-workers know what you're capable of and what you want to do. Think of yourself as a CEO, even though you have an employer. Your career is ultimately your responsibility, after all.

- **Keep a scorecard.** You know that setting goals is important to your career progress, right? Decide what you want your brand to accomplish, and establish some milestones -- your next promotion, a new client, a completed project, etc. Track your brand's success over time.

What's in a Name? Plenty, if it's the Right Name.

Companies spend lots of time and energy coming up with edgy names for themselves like Verizon or Accenture. But sometimes the best name is right in front of you.

Hector Boiardi was an Italian immigrant who came to the U.S. in 1914. When he arrived at age 17, he got a job as a chef at New York's Plaza Hotel. After he moved to Cleveland, he perfected his spaghetti and meatballs recipe.

His customers kept requesting bottles of his sauce to take home. He changed the spelling of his name to make it easier to remember, and the "Chef Boyardee" brand was born.

Succeed by Augmenting your vocabulary

The words you use say a lot about you. A strong vocabulary doesn't depend on your ability to use words like "obstreperous" or "conterminous" but simply using language that fully expresses what you're trying to say.

Here are some tips for building a good vocabulary:

- **Read widely.** The best way to learn new words is to expose yourself to them as much as possible. Don't limit yourself to industry journals and popular novels. Read magazines from outside your industry and books that challenge you with their language.

- **Use the dictionary.** When you run across an unfamiliar word, look it up promptly. These days you can find the meaning of unfamiliar words easily on the Internet instead of paging through that massive edition of Webster's sitting on your bookshelf.

- **Practice new words.** Don't just read them silently; speak new words out loud so you're comfortable with them and can pronounce them correctly. Then look for opportunities to use them in conversation -- not to draw attention to yourself, but to get into the habit of expanding your vocabulary.

- **Play word games.** Take the occasional vocabulary quiz; work on crossword puzzles; play Scrabble or Boggle or any other word game you can find. You'll think about words differently and learn new ones as you go.

Brisk Walks Can Improve Memory

We all know that exercise is good for everyone, but recent research indicates it has special benefits for older people. In a study funded by the National Institute on Aging, 120 people aged 55 to 80 were divided into two groups, with half instructed to walk for 40 minutes a day three times a week. The other half did exercises to stretch and tone their muscles.

After six months, and then one year, the scientists measured the size of participants' hippocampus, a section of the brain that tends to shrink with age.

In the walking group, the volume of the hippocampus had increased by 2 percent at the end of the year, while in the other group the hippocampus had decreased by 1.5 percent.

So whatever your age, remember that taking a brisk walk can keep you healthy throughout your life in many different ways.

What's missing?

This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it. It looks so plain you would think nothing was wrong with it. In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is unusual though. Study it, and think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out. Try to do so without any coaching!

Answer Key

It's missing the letter "e." the most commonly used letter in the alphabet.

Tributes to Mom

A man loves his sweetheart the most, his wife the best, but his mother the longest.

-- Irish proverb

God could not be everywhere and therefore he made mothers.

--Jewish proverb

Who's the best Mom?

In honour of Mother's Day, challenge yourself to match up this list of famous TV mothers with their offspring. Some are role models of excellent parent-child relationships. Others, not so much:

1. Kitty Foreman (*That 70s Show*)
2. Marion Cunningham (*Happy Days*)
3. Jill Taylor (*Home Improvement*)
4. Debra Barone (*Everybody Loves Raymond*)
5. Patricia Chase (*My So-Called Life*)
6. Joyce Summers (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*)
7. Nancy Botwin (*Weeds*)
8. Norma Arnold (*The Wonder Years*)
9. Jackie Peyton (*Nurse Jackie*)
10. Elyse Keaton (*Family Ties*)

- a. Buffy, Dawn
- b. Kevin, Karen, Wayne
- c. Angela, Danielle
- d. Richie, Joanie
- e. Brad, Randy, Mark
- f. Alex, Mallory, Jennifer, Andrew
- g. Eric, Laurie
- h. Fiona, Grace
- i. Silas, Shane
- j. Michael, Geoffrey, Ally

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