



# Valentine's Day



## Love, love, love!

In the UK Valentine's Day is a day for lovers. Or for people who want to be lovers. People send cards to the person they love but they don't put their own names inside. Many people guess who sent the card: it's from my boyfriend, it's from my wife. Others spend the whole day wondering who sent the mystery card: maybe it's from that Romeo I met at the disco, maybe it's from that idiot next-door.

So... if you've spent months admiring someone's charm but have never been able to tell them, Valentine's Day is your big chance! You look up their address in the phone book. You write down all those passionate feelings - loads of love and kisses, you handsome beast! And then you can hide behind the question mark - from your secret admirer ... ? If the person likes you they'll certainly try to find out whether the card was from you. Then, it's up to you how secret you want your love to be.

## Valentine poems

Inside many cards are poems like these:

*I bet you a cuddle  
I bet you a kiss  
I bet you'll never guess  
Who sent you this!*

*Dear Valentine  
I feel so blue  
Why am I always  
Thinking of you?*

*If As No Our  
you I knife love  
love love can in  
me you cut two*

*This is my poem  
It's simple and true  
Dear \_\_\_\_\_  
I love you!*

*Our love is pure and simple  
I'm pure and you're simple*



## Long, long ago .... Valentine's Day has a history of sex and violence.

*First the violence.* In Rome AD 270 the mad emperor, Claudius, had problems getting soldiers. Married men didn't want to leave their families and go to war, so Claudius banned marriage. But a bishop called Valentine invited young lovers to visit him so they could be married secretly. Claudius was furious when he found out and the bishop was clubbed, then stoned, then beheaded.

*And the sex?* 400 years later the Pope wanted to stop a Roman festival called Lupercus. This was a kind of lottery. The names of teenage girls were put into a box and teenage boys took out names-randomly. And

the name they took out of the box was their partner for the year. The next year there was a new lottery and a new partner. Naturally, the church wasn't happy about this festival so they banned it and invented a new one called St Valentine's Day. Now the lottery box contained the names of saints and both men and women drew out cards. Then they had to spend the year following the example of the saint on their card.

*It's no surprise* that nowadays the love element has come back. But the name is still the Pope's choice - St Valentine's Day.



## A Valentine memory

I remember hating Valentine's Day. Every year everybody at school got cards except for me. My friends were always asking me, "How many did you get, Gavin?" and I always lied, "Oh, a couple, what about you?". They always seemed to have loads of cards. Now I'm older I know they were probably lying. But I didn't then.

Anyway, one year I got one. I couldn't believe it! I could smell the perfume coming off it before I opened the envelope. I took it up to my room and opened it. I still remember what was on it: two pears and a slogan inside "Wouldn't we make a lovely pear!" I was really excited. I spent all day at school in a daydream wondering who had sent it. I suppose everyone likes to have a secret admirer. Of course I showed the card to all my mates and asked if they could recognise the handwriting. Somebody thought it was from one of the girls in the year above us so I was walking on air when I came home.

I still wish my mum had never told me that she had sent the card.

She said she had wanted to cheer me up. I was always so disappointed on Valentine's Day so she had posted the card from work. I never told my friends the truth - they would have died laughing!

(GAVIN, 24)



## What is love?

Here are some thoughts from American kids:

*"Love is the most important thing in the world, but baseball is pretty good too."* STEPHANIE, AGE 8

*"It isn't always how you look. Look at me, I'm as handsome as anything and nobody has asked to marry me yet."* BRIAN, AGE 7

*"Why lovers often hold hands: They want to make sure their rings don't fall off because they paid good money for them."* RACHEL, AGE 8

*"I think you're supposed to get shot with an arrow or something, but the rest of it isn't supposed to be so painful."*

MANUEL, AGE 8

*"I'm not rushing into love. I'm finding fourth grade hard enough."*

REGINA, AGE 10

