**The Seven-Day Week**

**The Babylonians marked time with lunar months. They proscribed some activities during several days of the month, particularly the**

first -- the first visible crescent  
seventh -- the waxing half-moon  
fourteenth -- the full moon  
nineteenth -- dedicated to an offended goddess  
twenty-first -- the waning half-moon  
twenty-eighth -- the last visible crescent  
twenty-ninth -- the invisible moon, and  
thirtieth (possibly) -- the invisible moon

**The major periods are seven days, 1/4 month, long. This seven-day period was later regularized and disassociated from the lunar month to become our seven-day week.**

**The Naming of the Days**

The Greeks named the days week after the sun, the moon and the five known planets, which were in turn named after the gods Ares, Hermes, Zeus, Aphrodite, and Cronus. The Greeks called the days of the week the *Theon hemerai* "days of the Gods". The Romans substituted their equivalent gods for the Greek gods, Mars, Mercury, Jove (Jupiter), Venus, and Saturn. (The two pantheons are very similar.) The Germanic peoples generally substituted roughly similar gods for the Roman gods, Tiu (Twia), Woden, Thor, Freya (Fria), but did not substitute Saturn.

**Sunday -- Sun's day**

Middle English *sone(n)day* or *sun(nen)day*  
Old English *sunnandæg* "day of the sun"  
Germanic *sunnon-dagaz* "day of the sun"  
Latin *dies solis* "day of the sun"  
Ancient Greek *hemera heli(o)u*, "day of the sun"

**Monday -- Moon's day**

Middle English *monday* or *mone(n)day*  
Old English *mon(an)dæg* "day of the moon"  
Latin *dies lunae* "day of the moon"  
Ancient Greek *hemera selenes* "day of the moon"

**Tuesday -- Tiu's day**

Middle English *tiwesday* or *tewesday*  
Old English *tiwesdæg* "Tiw's (Tiu's) day"  
Latin *dies Martis* "day of Mars"  
Ancient Greek *hemera Areos* "day of Ares"

**Tiu (Twia) is the English/Germanic god of war and the sky. He is identified with the Norse god**[**Tyr**](http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~cherryne/list.html)**.**

**Mars is the Roman god of war.**

[**Ares**](http://info.desy.de/gna/interpedia/greek_myth/olympian.html#Ares)**is the Greek god of war.**

**Wednesday -- Woden's (Odin) day**

Middle English *wodnesday*, *wednesday*, or *wednesdai*  
Old English *wodnesdæg* "Woden's day"  
Latin *dies Mercurii* "day of Mercury"  
Ancient Greek *hemera Hermu* "day of Hermes"

**Woden is the chief Anglo-Saxon/Teutonic god. Woden is the leader of the Wild Hunt. Woden is from *wod* "violently insane" + -*en* "headship". He is identified with the Norse**[**Odin**](http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~cherryne/list.html#odin)**.**

**Mercury is the Roman god of commerce, travel, thievery, eloquence and science. He is the messenger of the other gods.**

[**Hermes**](http://info.desy.de/gna/interpedia/greek_myth/olympian.html#Hermes)**is the Greek god of commerce, invention, cunning, and theft. He is the messenger and herald of the other gods. He serves as patron of travelers and rogues, and as the conductor of the dead to Hades.**

**Thursday -- Thor's day**

Middle English *thur(e)sday*  
Old English *thursdæg*  
Old Norse *thorsdagr* "Thor's day"  
Old English *thunresdæg* "thunder's day"  
Latin *dies Jovis* "day of Jupiter"  
Ancient Greek *hemera Dios* "day of Zeus".

[**Thor**](http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~cherryne/list.html#thor)**is the Norse god of thunder. He is represented as riding a chariot drawn by goats and wielding the hammer Miölnir. He is the defender of the Aesir, destined to kill and be killed by the Midgard Serpent.**

**Jupiter (Jove) is the supreme Roman god and patron of the Roman state. He is noted for creating thunder and lightning.** [**Zeus**](http://info.desy.de/gna/interpedia/greek_myth/olympian.html#Zeus)**is Greek god of the heavens and the supreme Greek god.**

**Friday -- Freya's day**

Middle English *fridai*  
Old English *frigedæg* "Freya's day"  
composed of *Frige* (genetive singular of *Freo*) + *dæg* "day" (most likely)  
or composed of *Frig* "Frigg" + *dæg* "day" (least likely)  
Germanic *frije-dagaz* "Freya's (or Frigg's) day"  
Latin *dies Veneris* "Venus's day"  
Ancient Greek *hemera Aphrodites* "day of Aphrodite"

***Freo* is identical with *freo*, meaning free. It is from the Germanic *frijaz* meaning "beloved, belonging to the loved ones, not in bondage, free".**

**Freya (Fria) is the Teutonic goddess of love, beauty, and fecundity (prolific procreation). She is identified with the Norse god**[**Freya**](http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~cherryne/list.html)**. She is leader of the Valkyries and one of the Vanir. She is confused in Germany with Frigg.**

**Frigg (Frigga) is the Teutonic goddess of clouds, the sky, and conjugal (married) love. She is identified with**[**Frigg**](http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~cherryne/list.html#frigg)**, the Norse goddess of love and the heavens and the wife of**[**Odin**](http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~cherryne/list.html#odin)**. She is one of the Aesir. She is confused in Germany with**[**Freya**](http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~cherryne/list.html)**.**

**Venus is the Roman goddess of love and beauty.**

[**Aphrodite**](http://info.desy.de/gna/interpedia/greek_myth/olympian.html#Aphrodite)**(Cytherea) is the Greek goddess of love and beauty.**

**Saturday -- Saturn's day**

Middle English *saterday*  
Old English *sæter(nes)dæg* "Saturn's day"  
Latin *dies Saturni* "day of Saturn"  
Ancient Greek *hemera Khronu* "day of Cronus"

**Saturn is the Roman and Italic god of agriculture and the consort of Ops. He is believed to have ruled the earth during an age of happiness and virtue.**

[**Cronus**](http://info.desy.de/gna/interpedia/greek_myth/titan.html#Cronus)**(Kronos, Cronos) is the Greek god (Titan) who ruled the universe until dethroned by his son**[**Zeus**](http://info.desy.de/gna/interpedia/greek_myth/olympian.html#Zeus)**.**

**Sunday**

What types of things happen during this day? Is it appropriately named for what happens at this point in the week? Why/Why not?

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**Monday**

What types of things happen during this day? Is it appropriately named for what happens at this point in the week? Why/Why not?

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**Tuesday**

What types of things happen during this day? Is it appropriately named for what happens at this point in the week? Why/Why not? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Wednesday**

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**Thursday**

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**Friday**

What types of things happen during this day? Is it appropriately named for what happens at this point in the week? Why/Why not? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Saturday**

What types of things happen during this day? Is it appropriately named for what happens at this point in the week? Why/Why not? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Would things be better or worse if there were more or less days of the week? Why/Why not?

**A History of the Months**

The original Roman year had 10 months named *Martius* "March", *Aprilis* "April", *Maius* "May", *Junius* "June", *Quintilis* "July", *Sextilis* "August", *September* "September", *October* "October", *November* "November", *December* "December", and probably two unnamed months in the dead of winter when not much happened in agriculture. The year began with *Martius* "March". Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome circa 700 BC, added the two months *Januarius* "January" and *Februarius* "February". He also moved the beginning of the year from *Marius* to *Januarius* and changed the number of days in several months to be odd, a lucky number. After *Februarius* there was occasionally an additional month of *Intercalaris* "intercalendar". This is the origin of the leap-year day being in February. In 46 BC, Julius Caesar reformed the Roman calendar (hence the Julian calendar) changing the number of days in many months and removing *Intercalaris*.

**January -- Janus's month**

Middle English *Januarie*  
Latin *Januarius* "of Janus"  
Latin *Janu(s)* "Janus" + -*arius* "ary (pertaining to)"  
Latin *Januarius mensis* "month of Janus"

***Janus is the Roman god of gates and doorways, depicted with two faces looking in opposite directions. His festival month is January.***

Januarius had 29 days, until Julius when it became 31 days long.

**February -- month of Februa**

Middle English *Februarius*  
Latin *Februarius* "of Februa"  
Latin *Februa(s)* "Februa" + -*arius* "ary (pertaining to)"  
Latin *Februarius mensis* "month of Februa"  
Latin *dies februatus* "day of purification"

***Februa is the Roman festival of purification, held on February fifteenth***. It is possibly of Sabine origin.

*Februarius* had 28 days, until circa 450 BC when it had 23 or 24 days on some of every second year, until Julius when it had 29 days on every fourth year and 28 days otherwise.

**Intercalaris -- inter-calendar month**

Latin *Intercalaris* "inter-calendar"  
Latin *Mercedonius* (popular name) "?"

*Intercalaris* had 27 days until the month was abolished by Julius.

**March -- Mars' month**

Middle English *March(e)*  
Anglo-French *March(e)*  
Old English *Martius*  
Latin *Martius* "of Mars"  
Latin *Marti(s)* "Mars" + -*us* (adj. suffix)  
Latin *Martius mensis* "month of Mars"

***March was the original beginning of the year, and the time for the resumption of war.***

***Mars is the Roman god of war. He is identified with the Greek god [Ares](http://info.desy.de/gna/interpedia/greek_myth/olympian.html" \l "Ares).***

*Martius* has always had 31 days.

**April -- Aphrodite's month**

Old English *April(is)*  
Latin *Aprilis*  
Etruscan *Apru*  
Greek *Aphro*, short for *Aphrodite*.

[**Aphrodite**](http://info.desy.de/gna/interpedia/greek_myth/olympian.html#Aphrodite)**is the Greek goddess of love and beauty. She is identified with the Roman goddess Venus. This was the time of year when it was believed that the world opened herself up and was ready for fertilization.**

*Aprilis* had 30 days, until Numa when it had 29 days, until Julius when it became 30 days long.

**May -- Maia's month**

Old French *Mai*  
Old English *Maius*  
Latin *Maius* "of Maia"  
Latin *Maius mensis* "month of Maia"

***Maia (meaning "the great one") is the Italic goddess of spring, the daughter of Faunus, and wife of Vulcan.*** ***This month was named for Maia, the Roman female deity of growth or increase.***

*Maius* has always had 31 days.

**June -- Juno's month**

Middle English *jun(e)*  
Old French *juin*  
Old English *junius*  
Latin *Junius* "of Juno"  
Latin *Junius mensis* "month of Juno"

***Juno is the principle goddess of the Roman Pantheon. She is the goddess of marriage and the well-being of women. She is the wife and sister of Jupiter. She is identified with the Greek goddess***[***Hera***](http://info.desy.de/gna/interpedia/greek_myth/olympian.html#Hera)***.***

*Junius* had 30 days, until Numa when it had 29 days, until Julius when it became 30 days long.

**July -- Julius Caesar's month**

Middle English *Julie*  
Latin *Julius* "Julius"  
Latin *Julius mensis* "month of Julius"  
Latin *quintilis mensis* "fifth month"

***Julius Caesar reformed the Roman calendar (hence the Julian calendar) in 46 BC. In the process, he renamed this month after himself.***

*Quintilis* (and later *Julius*) has always had 31 days.

**August -- Augustus Caesar's month**

Latin *Augustus* "Augustus"  
Latin *Augustus mensis* "month of Augustus"  
Latin *sextilis mensis* "sixth month"

***Augustus Caesar clarified and completed the calendar reform of Julius Caesar. In the process, he also renamed this month after himself.*** ***The name was originally from augure, which means, "to increase."***

*Sextilis* had 30 days, until Numa when it had 29 days, until Julius when it became 31 days long.

**September -- the seventh month**

Middle English *septembre*  
Latin *September*  
Latin *septem* "seven" + *-ber* (adj. suffix)  
Latin *september mensis* "seventh month"

*September* had 30 days, until Numa when it had 29 days, until Julius when it became 30 days long.

**October -- the eighth month**

Middle English *octobre*  
Latin *October*  
Latin *octo* "eight" + *-ber* (adj. suffix)  
Latin *october mensis* "eighth month"

*October* has always had 31 days.

**November -- the ninth month**

Middle English *Novembre*  
Latin *November*  
Latin *Novembris mensis* "nineth month"

*Novembris* had 30 days, until Numa when it had 29 days, until Julius when it became 30 days long.

**December -- the tenth month**

Middle English *decembre*  
Old French *decembre*  
Latin *december* "tenth month"  
Latin *decem* "ten" + *-ber* (adj. suffix)

*December* had 30 days, until Numa when it had 29 days, until Julius when it became 31 days long.

**January**

What types of things happen during this month? Is it appropriately named for what happens this time of year? Why/Why not?

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**February**

What types of things happen during this month? Is it appropriately named for what happens this time of year? Why/Why not?

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**March**

What types of things happen during this month? Is it appropriately named for what happens this time of year? Why/Why not?

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**April**

What types of things happen during this month? Is it appropriately named for what happens this time of year? Why/Why not?

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**May**

What types of things happen during this month? Is it appropriately named for what happens this time of year? Why/Why not?

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**June**

What types of things happen during this month? Is it appropriately named for what happens this time of year? Why/Why not?

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**July**

What types of things happen during this month? Is it appropriately named for what happens this time of year? Why/Why not?

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**August**

What types of things happen during this month? Is it appropriately named for what happens this time of year? Why/Why not?

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**September**

What types of things happen during this month? Is it appropriately named for what happens this time of year? Why/Why not?

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**October**

What types of things happen during this month? Is it appropriately named for what happens this time of year? Why/Why not? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**November**

What types of things happen during this month? Is it appropriately named for what happens this time of year? Why/Why not?

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**December**

What types of things happen during this month? Is it appropriately named for what happens this time of year? Why/Why not?

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**Would things be better or worse if there were more or less months in the year? Why/Why not?**

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