



The Ancient “Julian Calendar”—A Simple Scheduling and Tracking Tool

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Learning Objective: The student shall be able to recognize the value of, and implement, the Julian calendar as it relates to curriculum development or any schedule management plan.

Introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C., the Julian calendar is simply a continuous count of days, with almost 2.5 million occurring since its inception. It can be used as a handy planning and management tool for a variety of training projects.

Although the Julian calendar was replaced for everyday use by the Gregorian calendar, Julian dates still are widely used as time variables within astronomical software and by institutions that need a quick and easy method of tracking—by dates—appointments, meetings, or milestones. A “Day of Year” version will start on day 1 and end on day 365, providing a number for each month and day, simplifying all scheduling processes.



The Julian calendar is named for the ancient Roman emperor Julius Caesar.

When planning projects or course developments, there is usually a series of meetings to plan, organize, and complete the effort. Often, a schedule must be kept due to contractual obligations, performance requirements, or facilities or personnel availability. Involved parties typically break out their desk blotter calendars, desktop computer, or mobile device calendars and attempt to schedule a series of meetings that may bridge lengthy periods of time, sometimes over the course of a year or longer. The same process occurs when any training agency needs to schedule dates for training offerings or facility usage.

Those involved usually select a date for the first event and then attempt to count the appropriate number of days on their calendar to the next event, and so on, but it's far easier to convert all the quantities in question to Julian day numbers and simply add or subtract. For example, if a kickoff meeting occurs on the 24th day of the first month of January and the project team meeting is mandated to take place within 45 days, simply add 45 to 24, which equals 69. You then use the 69th day (March 10) to schedule the mandated meeting. Similarly, if a project pilot is required 235 days after signing the contract on January 19, a quick look at your Julian calendar will reveal a deadline date of 254 (September 11).

If you provide a copy of your yearlong Julian calendar to all parties involved in your development or training program, you simplify what is normally a tedious scheduling process.

Julian calendars simply enumerate the days—an ideal system for storing dates in computer programs—and are readily transformed into other calendar systems.

Printer-friendly versions of the Julian calendar (including leap year versions) are available at www.lundberg.com/Info/Julian_Calendar.aspx or www.timeanddate.com/calendar/print.html?year=2013&country=1&cols=3&doy=1&df=1

For archived downloads, go to:

www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/coffee-break/