

# SUPERSTITIONS

Form 8-B

School 42

Dnipropetrovsk

Do you believe in superstitions?





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# SUPERSTITIONS, WHICH BRING GOOD LUCK

- ❑ Rabbit's feet
  - ❑ four-leaf clovers
  - ❑ knocking on wood
  - ❑ a horseshoe
  - ❑ number seven
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# SUPERSTITIONS, WHICH BRING BAD LUCK

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- Friday The Thirteenth 13
- number 13
- Walking under a ladder
- Spilling salt
- a black cat
- Break a mirror
- Opening an umbrella inside the house

# Halloween Superstitions

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# Wedding Superstitions



# Sporting Superstitions



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# Christmas Superstitions





# Rabbit's feet and four-leaf clovers

Some people carry a rabbit's foot on a key ring.

The four leaves in a four-leaf clover represented good luck in fame, wealth, love, and health. '

That a four-leaf clover means good luck is a common belief-It is not easy to explain why people believe so, but it may just be that since it's unusual people think it must mean something.

Legends claim that the four-leaf clover was the only thing Eve was able to bring with her when she was expelled from the paradise. Cattle are thought to graze best and grow fattest when feeding in a field of clover.

# Knocking on wood

The Americans think that knocking on wood prevents good luck changing to bad, so they often use the expression "knock on wood". Knocking on wood was supposed to keep the evil spirits that lived in the wood from coming out to spoil our good fortune.

The habit of knocking on wood to prevent bad luck was first a Roman custom, to communicate with the dryads, or tree spirits. So when one said something good about oneself or one's luck, one would also knock on the wood of a nearby object because it was also good luck to have the dryads in one's favour.

Most people don't know that you are only supposed to knock twice, not three times. Knocking twice prevents what you say from happening while the demons are preoccupied. Knocking three times gets their attention.

# a horseshoe

The horseshoe is possibly the most common good-luck symbol in use today. If you take a closer look you might just find that some people still put them on or above their front door, and you will also find many greeting cards with horseshoes on.

Horseshoes were originally made of iron, and iron was supposed to give protection against witches, fairies and devils. If you find a horseshoe consider yourself a very lucky person (especially nowadays when they are so hard to find!), but you must follow a ritual to get the good luck. You must pick up the horseshoe with your right hand, spit on one of the ends of the horseshoe and make a wish. Then throw it over your left shoulder, and leave without looking back to see where it landed.

Lucky horseshoes should be hung with the tips up, like a «U» or else the luck drains out.

A yellow pencil with a red eraser and a black band, pointing towards the right.


# Number seven

It took God seven days to create the world, and any association with the number is lucky. The seventh son of the seventh son is the most lucky of men and when people talk about the «seven year itch» they mean that every seven years a person's personality undergoes a complete change.

I have heard that by placing a new baby on someone's bed will ensure that that person will be the next to have a baby.

If you find a coin that tales up, pick it up and give it to someone this will give you both good luck.

I am not sure if this is true but when you enter a car you are supposed to enter it with your right leg for good Luck.

A yellow pencil with a purple eraser and a black band, pointing towards the left.

# Friday The Thirteenth 13

The number 13 is thought to be unlucky because there were 13 people at Christ's Last Supper. Some buildings don't have a thirteenth floor. Instead the numbers jump from 12 to 14. Some people think that they will have a bad day when the 13th day of the month is Friday.

The origins of Friday superstitions are many. One of the best known is that Eve tempted Adam with the apple on Friday. Tradition also has it that the Flood in the Bible, the confusion at the Tower of Babel, and the death of Jesus Christ all took place on Friday.

Those who know about these things, inform us that Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden on Friday and Christ was crucified on a Friday.

Christians also noted that twelve witches plus one devil are present at Satanic ceremonies so Friday and 13 make a deadly combination.

But, as far as I know, Friday the 13th is only bad luck for males. The calendars used to have 13 months for the 13 phases of the moon in a year. Men changed the calendar to 12 months. Women also generally have 13 cycles in a year. Friday is also ruled by Venus which represents women.

Friday the thirteenth is considered the unluckiest of days, unless you were born on Friday the thirteenth. If you were born on this day then Friday the thirteenth is your lucky day. In fact most of Central Europe being mainly Christian it's nothing to them. Tuesday the 13th was the worst day of the year.

In Italy, not only number 13, but also number 17 brings bad luck and/or death.

# Walking under a ladder

Americans believe that it's bad luck to walk under a ladder. This came from the early Christian belief that a leaning ladder formed a triangle with the wall and ground. You must never violate the Holy Trinity by walking through a triangle, lest you be considered in league with the devil. (And you all know what good Christians did to people they suspected of being in league with the devil.)

You should never walk under ladders, and never pass people when going up or downstairs.

But why?

Do you remember a story from Genesis (1. Mosebook) of Jacob's ladder between heaven and earth? People seemed to believe that to climb a ladder or to walk up the stairs means luck because this is the way up fo God. Going under a ladder might therefore mean fhe opposite... if you do have to go under a ladder you can keep your fingers crossed to ovoid bad luck. But you have to make sure fo keep your fingers crossed until you see a dog, for some reason.

If you go up or down the stairs and you have fo pass someone, you can always cross your fingers and this way avoid disaster. If you should stumble on the staircase, that is said to be good omen. It might even indicate a wedding in the household in the future.

It is bad luck to walk under a ladder because they used to be used only by painters, so if you walked under one, paint or anything else could fall on you.



# Spilling salt

Don't spill the salt.

Although some people believe that Judas spilt salt during the last supper.

Salt was a very precious expensive commodity in the middle ages. It was also used for medical purposes. If you spilled any, you must immediately throw it over your left shoulder to strike the nasty spirits in the eye, thus preventing sickness.

## If a black cat crosses in front of you...

*A black cat crossing the road means bad luck in almost all countries except in the British Isles. Cats were believed to consort with witches and warlocks. People thought cats brought evil and bad luck.*

*The most well known superstition is that if a black cat crosses your path you'll have bad luck.*

*In ancient Egypt, the Goddess Bast, was a black female cat. Christian priests wanted to wipe out all traces of other religions so convinced their ignorant followers to destroy the evil demons that were black cats. While they were at it, they destroyed the kindly little old ladies who cared for the cats believing them to be witches.*

*But I know that if a black cat comes to your door - you will soon have a lover in your life.*

*Then if you see a white cat on a full moon it means you'll soon be married !!!*



# Break a mirror

Breaking a mirror gives 7 years of bad luck. I will give you seven years of misfortune.

The reason behind this belief is probably the old idea that a person's soul is in their reflection, so that if you smash your mirror, your soul will be damaged too, dooming them to an early death, and not giving them an entry to heaven.

Are there any ways of making up for this bad luck then? Yes - if you very carefully pick up all the broken pieces and throw them into a river or stream, then the bad luck will be «washed away».

The true reason that breaking a mirror was 7 years bad luck is because when mirrors were first made they were so expensive that if you broke one you would serve 7 years as an indentured servant to the owner of the mirror because not too many people could afford to buy another one to replace it.

## Opening an umbrella inside the house

Did you know that if you open an umbrella indoors it means bad luck? In the old days umbrellas were used just as a sunshade, but today we mostly use them when it rains. Because of the connection with the sun, and because the umbrella has the circular shape of the sun it became very important not to open the umbrella in a dark/shaded area, as for example, inside the house.

One must remember not to give an umbrella as a gift or place it on the top of a table or on top of a bed. One should also try to avoid dropping it on the floor - all this would bring bad luck.

# HALLOWE'EN SUPERSTITIONS

It is celebrated at a time of the year when trees become bare and days become shorter. In other words this is the day when the forces of cold and death return to earth. People used to believe that it was necessary to fight against these forces in order to survive the tough winter months ahead.

They had bonfires, and they used apples and nuts to drive away the witches and spirits that haunted civilization on this particular night. Nuts were used to predict with whom you were going to marry. You had to put two nuts into the fire side by side, then give them names. It was a good sign if they glowed and burned together, but if one or both burst, it meant bad luck. A couple could also place two nuts into the fire to see if they would have a long and happy life together,

Apples were used to foresee luck and fortune.

One would 'bow ones head into a bucket filled with water and some apples, and try to catch an apple, the bigger the better, since a bigger apple would bring you greater fortune.

However, not all people celebrate Halloween for the same reason. Some celebrate it as a day for remembering the dead and others by making merry and seeking guidance for the future.

All sorts of superstition were connected with the celebration of Halloween, and some of them are still alive, even if they don't have the same significance today. Halloween in today's Britain turns out to be a distant echo of the original feast of life and death. 3

1 October is a day for fancy dress parties, hollowed pumpkins and cheerful and messy games. Many children also go round knocking on doors, dancing and singing and asking for sweets or money.

# CHRISTMAS SUPERSTITIONS

"To have good health throughout the next year, eat an apple on Christmas Eve,"

"Eat plum pudding on Christmas and avoid losing a friend before next Christmas."

"The child born on Christmas Day will have a special fortune."

"Wearing new shoes on Christmas Day will bring bad luck."

In Ireland it is believed the gates of Heaven open at midnight on Christmas Eve. Those who die then go straight to Heaven.

If you refuse a mince pie at Christmas dinner, you will have bad luck for the coming day.

If you eat a raw egg before eating anything else on Christmas morning, you will be able to carry heavy weights.

"Snow on Christmas means Easter will be green."

"Good luck will come to the home where a fire is kept burning throughout the Christmas season."

"Place shoes by side on Christmas Eve to prevent a quarreling family,"

"A dear star-filled sky on Christmas Eve will bring good crops in the summer."

"A blowing wind on Christmas Day brings good luck."

In Greece, some people burn their old shoes during the Christmas season to prevent misfortunes in the coming year.

In the Swedish countryside, from cock crow to daybreak on Christmas morning the trolls {wicked elves} roam about.

In Devonshire, England, a girl raps at the henhouse door on Christmas Eve. If a rooster crows, she will marry within the year.

You will have as many happy months in the coming year, as the number of houses you eat mince pies in during Christmastime.

"Shout 'Christmas Gift' to the first person knocking on your door on Christmas Day and expect to receive a gift from the visitor."

## SPORTING SUPERSTITIONS

Many players think that they'll play better if they follow certain rituals before a match.

Some always tie the laces of their right boot first. Others kiss their football shirts before the match. Some people say that double numbers on a player's shirt could bring good luck.

David Beckham wears a new pair of boots for every match!

World-famous racing driver, Michael Scrumacher, is one of many racing drivers who believes that a ritual will help him win. He always gets into his car in the same way before a race. For him the left-hand side of the car is the lucky side but that is not enough: he makes certain that he puts his right foot into the car first! A strong superstition in the racing world is that the colour green is unlucky.

The last person to get the ball in the basket in a pre-match warm up will have a good game. If you wipe the soles of your sneakers, you will definitely have better luck. Michael Jordan always wore blue shorts under his uniform to bring him luck. The famous tennis player Goran Ivanisevich has a strict pre-game ritual. When in London, he books the same table of the same restaurant and orders the same feast of fish soup, lamb and ice cream with chocolate sauce.

British number one, Tim Henman, has a favourite shower cubicle at Wimbledon, which he uses before and after his matches. He refuses to use any other shower cubicle.

# WEDDING SUPERSTITIONS

In the United Kingdom, it is traditional to save the top layer of your wedding cake for the christening of your first child.

A superstition from Mexico has it that the bride cannot wear pearls in her wedding day for the pearls are the tears she will cry in her marriage.

If a bride cries on her wedding day, those shall be the last tears she ever sheds over her marriage. Rain on your wedding day means you will have many children.

Superstition has it that if there is a full moon 1 -2 days before the wedding, then your married life will be filled with luck and good fortune. Chinese superstition says that carrying an open red umbrella over the bride will protect her from evil spirits. In the Chinese culture, the colour red brings good luck. Often the decorations are red, monetary gifts are given in little red envelopes, and the bride dresses red. It is bad luck to use red roses in the bridal bouquet. It will end in the death of a marriage. To lose your wedding ring means to lose your husband.

Married in White, you have chosen right,

Married in Grey, you will go far away,

Married in Black, you will wish yourself back,

Married in Red, you will wish yourself dead,

Married in Green, ashamed to be seen,

Married in Blue, you will always be true,

Married in Pearl, you will live in a whirl,

Married in Yellow, ashamed of your fellow,

Married in Brown, you will live in the town,

Married in Pink, your spirit will sink.

If it is bad luck for any other dress to be longer than the bride's dress. It is bad luck for the bride to try on her wedding gown before the wedding day. If she does, most likely that the wedding ceremony will not go through. In the Italian culture, the groom has to carry a piece of iron in his pocket to keep the evil eye (mal'occhio) away from him and his bride. The iron is supposed to reflect the evil spirits and banish them. In Japanese and Chinese culture, the number "four" is synonymous with "death". The numbers nine (eternity), eight (prosperity), two (harmony), six (prosperity) are lucky.

## SUPERSTITIONS in my family

Our family doesn't believe mostly in all superstitions. But there are some of them we beware.

They are:

- 1) the black cat;
- 2) spilling salt;
- 3) breaking the mirror.

Va/eriy: My mother believes in some superstitions. For example, she tries not to open an umbrella in a house. Frankly speaking, I believe in superstitions, too. And if I see a black cat, I turn and go another way. As to my father, he does not believe in things like these, he thinks that that is very stupid. The number 13 is lucky for us - on this day everything is OK!

When you believe in things that you don't understand I think you suffer. That's why it's interesting and useful for us to learn more about such incomprehensible and strange things as superstitions!

Anna: My family doesn't believe in superstitions. Everybody, except my grandmother, thinks that it's really stupid. Only my grandmother believes in every thing. And I have to say that this annoys all my family.

Andny: We believe in superstitions. And I think that we should take them seriously.

It's very pity that we don't know all of them. This knowledge would help us to prevent worries.

Olena: To my mind some superstitions are stupid: such as Friday the 13th or black cat. I don't mind such superstitions. But I often make a wish when I stand between two people with the same names.

Zhenia: My father believes in superstitions. To his mind the most well-known superstitions are knocking on wood and Friday the 13th. When my father sees a person with empty bucket he knows something will be bad. Frankly speaking my mother believes only in dreams. And as for me I try not to think about this.

Stasya: We don't believe in superstitions. Superstitions are not for us. In our family number 13 is a lucky one.