



Pre-Reading

Think about the following questions.

1. Do you remember losing your teeth as a child? How did it happen?
2. What did you do with your baby teeth? Did you keep them?
3. What do people in other countries do with their baby teeth?

Vocabulary Preview

Write the letter of the word or phrase with the same meaning as the underlined word or phrase.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. has the duty of | d. think of; believe |
| b. specific; accurate | e. rather than; in the place of |
| c. think highly of | f. usual thing to do by tradition |

1. ___ It is a custom for children to put lost teeth under their pillows.
2. ___ A bird is responsible for taking the lost tooth away.
3. ___ People in Mongolia respect dogs a lot, so they take good care of them.
4. ___ Koreans consider one kind of bird very lucky.
5. ___ She hopes to get money instead of a gift.
6. ___ This is the exact place where I put the lost tooth last night.

Who Took That Tooth?



Different cultures follow their own special customs when a child's baby teeth fall out. In Korea, for example, they have the custom of throwing lost teeth up on the **roof** of a house. According to tradition, a **magpie** will come and take the tooth. Later, the magpie will return with a new tooth for the child. In other Asian countries, such as Japan and Vietnam, children follow a similar tradition of throwing lost teeth onto the roofs of houses.

Birds aren't the only animals thought to take lost teeth. In Mexico and Spain, tradition says a mouse takes a lost tooth and leaves some money. However, in Mongolia, instead of mice, dogs are responsible for taking teeth away. Dogs are highly respected in Mongolian culture and are considered **guardian angels** of the people. Tradition says that the new tooth will grow in good and strong if the baby tooth is fed to a guardian angel. Accordingly, parents in Mongolia will put their child's lost tooth in the **fat** of a piece of meat and feed it to a dog.

The idea of giving lost teeth to an angel or **fairy** is also a tradition in the West. Many children in **Western** countries count on the Tooth Fairy to leave money or **presents** in **exchange** for a tooth. The exact origins of the Tooth Fairy are a mystery, although the story probably began in England or Ireland **centuries** ago. According to tradition, a child puts a lost tooth under his or her **pillow** before going to bed. In the wee hours, while the child is sleeping, the Tooth Fairy takes the tooth and leaves something else under the pillow. In France, the Tooth Fairy leaves a small gift or candy. In the United States, however, the Tooth Fairy usually leaves money. These days, the rate is \$1 to \$5 per tooth. That can add up to a lot of money from the Tooth Fairy!

Reading Time _____ minutes _____ seconds

324 words



- ³ *roof*: the top or covering over a house
- ³ *magpie*: a black and white bird
- ¹⁰ *guardian angel*: a spirit protecting a person
- ¹² *fat*: the part of meat with a lot of oil
- ¹⁴ *fairy*: a tiny mythical creature with magical powers

- ¹⁵ *Western*: related to Europe and North America
- ¹⁵ *present*: a gift
- ¹⁶ *exchange*: trade
- ¹⁷ *century*: a hundred years
- ¹⁹ *pillow*: a soft thing to support one's head

Choose the best answer.

1. What is the main idea of this reading?
 - a. The Tooth Fairy leaves money for teeth.
 - b. Different cultures have different traditions about teeth.
 - c. Many Asian countries have similar traditions concerning teeth.
 - d. Some tooth customs involve animals.
2. Why do some people throw a tooth on the roof?
 - a. To get rich
 - b. To get a larger house
 - c. To have a long life
 - d. To get a new tooth
3. Where did the story of the Tooth Fairy probably come from?
 - a. North America
 - b. Eastern Asia
 - c. Western Africa
 - d. Northern Europe
4. What is NOT traditionally put under a pillow in exchange for a tooth?
 - a. A new tooth
 - b. Money
 - c. A gift
 - d. Candy
5. Which meaning can define "lost" as used in line 7?
 - a. Misplaced
 - b. Not won
 - c. Wasted
 - d. Fallen out

Idiomatic Expressions

Find these idioms in the reading.

- **count on** [to expect; to rely on]
I **counted on** you to help me, but you disappointed me.
- **the wee hours** [between midnight and 4:00 or 5:00 a.m.]
Because I drank coffee, I couldn't get to sleep until **the wee hours** of the morning.
- **add up** [to make sense; to equal]
Two and two **adds up** to four.

Fill in the blank with one of the above idioms. Change its form if necessary.

1. All of the results we found in the experiment don't _____.
2. I'm your friend. You can always _____ me.
3. The house was completely still and quiet during _____.

Summary

Scan the passage and complete the chart with the correct information.

fairy and leaves a gift and leaves money Mongolia bird takes the tooth		
Where	Who	What
• Asian countries	• 1 _____	• Throw teeth on the roof for it.
• Mexico/Spain	• Mouse	• It takes the tooth 2 _____.
• 3 _____	• Dog	• It eats the tooth.
• France	• 4 _____	• It takes the tooth 5 _____.
• United States	• Fairy	• It 6 _____ and leaves money.

Listening

Tooth Traditions in Nigeria



Listen to the dialog and complete each sentence.

- The man explains a custom about teeth in _____.
- If a person is _____ a baby's first tooth, he or she has to give the child a gift.
- The gift should be something like _____.



Discuss the following questions.

1. What did you or your parents do with your baby teeth?
2. Would you prefer to keep your baby teeth or follow your culture's custom about teeth?
3. What is a special custom that your parents followed while you were growing up?

Grammar

Transitive Verbs

A transitive verb takes a direct object, which can be a noun, a pronoun, a phrase, or a clause.

Different cultures (follow / follow after) their own special customs when a child's baby teeth fall out. In France, the Tooth Fairy (leaves / leaves after) a small gift or candy.

Writing

Write your own short paragraph by answering the questions below.

A Custom in My Family

(1) What is a custom your family followed? (2) When did your family do this? (3) What did your family do? (4) How did that custom make you feel? (5) Will you follow that custom with your children?

Example

My family followed the custom of sending each child on a trip alone. My parents sent each of us on a trip when we were seven years old. They sent us to stay for one week with my grandmother in another state. I really enjoyed this time with my grandmother. I hope to follow this custom with my own children someday.

Vocabulary and Idiom Review

A. Choose the best word or phrase to fill in the blank.

1. Do you think we can _____ the package arriving tomorrow?
a. add up b. count on c. fill out d. end up
2. I think it is a good _____ to take your shoes off in the house.
a. custom b. fairy c. mystery d. pillow
3. People have been following that _____ tradition for centuries.
a. ancient b. new c. lost d. strong
4. Please put the sauce on the side _____ on top of the chicken.
a. according to b. although c. instead of d. usually
5. The new computer program works much better. The company _____ the program a lot.
a. considered b. included c. improved d. respected
6. There are many other _____ of art other than just painting and sculpture.
a. centuries b. forms c. origins d. presents
7. You cannot _____ that shirt if you don't have the receipt.
a. consider b. encourage c. exchange d. respect

B. Choose the correct form of the word to fill in the blank.

8. No one knows _____ where Joe lives.
a. exact b. exactly c. exactness
9. The plane _____ disappeared over the Pacific Ocean.
a. mystery b. mysterious c. mysteriously
10. You should _____ the beliefs of others even if you disagree with them.
a. respect b. respected c. respectful