By their very definition, according to Merriam-Webster, superstitions are nonsensical: "A belief or practice resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, trust in magic or chance, or a false conception of causation." In other words, a superstition is "an action that is inconsistent with science," Stuart Vyse, a psychologist and professor at Connecticut College, told CBS.

Still, for a set of supposedly irrational beliefs, superstitions have a surprisingly large following. An estimated 17 to 21 million people in America. are afraid of Friday the 13th, 74 percent of those in the U.K. say they knock on wood to avoid bad luck, and 13 percent of Americans cringe at the sight of a black cat.

So why does more than 50 percent of the country, as per a recent Gallop poll, consider themselves superstitious? And why, even when people don't truly believe superstitions can impact our fate, do they continue to participate in them?

For one, superstitions have been ingrained in our lives since the very beginning. "People teach them to us when we're young," Vyse, the author of Believing in Magic: The Psychology of Superstition, told LifeHacker. Secondly, they can be a soothing control mechanism. "We live in a world where you can't always control the outcome," says Vyse. "Superstitions tend to emerge in those contexts. You do everything you possibly can to ensure that things will work out." Together, those two factors have made a very real impact.

1. Superstitions are also a result of people's "false conception of causation." What does the phrase "false conception of causation" mean?

a) a misconception of certain words

b) wrong idea about what causes things to happen

c) wrong understanding of some superstitious beliefs

d) an error in some concepts

2. Superstitious beliefs can be explained by logic and scientific explanations.

a) True

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b) False

c) Maybe

3. The word “Cringe” in paragraph 2 is also synonymous to which of the following words?

a) Shy

b) Angry

c) Creep

d) Tremble

4. Why are people afraid of Friday the 13th?

a) Something bad always happens during Friday the 13th

b) The weather is always rough during Friday the 13th

c) People get depressed during Friday the 13th

d) People don’t get enough salary during that day

5. People still believe in superstitions because .

a) it’s a part of who they are

b) it's part of their culture

c) it’s their way to control strange situations

d) All of the above

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