

Read the text and choose the right options to complete the sentences.

Friday the 13th

Today is Friday the 13th. While to most of us it signifies the start of another carefree weekend, there are some people that consider this day to be extremely unlucky. As you probably know, number 13 has a bad reputation to begin with. This is the reason many office and residential towers often skip the 13th floor altogether. However, when that date falls on a Friday, the fear factor seems to escalate to a whole new level. So how bad is it? About 20 million Americans and probably scores more worldwide, are believed to suffer from an irrational fear of this day. Their symptoms range from mild anxiety to fear of something bad is about to happen, to full-blown panic attacks.

Many that suffer from this phobia happen to be employed in professions like construction or ship building, which are fraught with injury risk. That may explain the reason they get nervous and fear that their chances of getting hurt increase when the 13th happens to fall on a Friday. While nobody is sure why the combination of this date and day causes such fear, there are a few theories. Some believe that it begins with the irrational fear of the number 13 regardless of what day it falls on. Again, the reason behind that totally puzzles researchers. According to Thomas Fernsler, an associate policy scientist at the University of Delaware, it could be because people think 12 to be a complete number - there are 12 months in a year, 12 zodiac signs, 12 tribes of Israel, 12 apostles of Jesus ... so on and so forth. Hence, the number right after that seems incomplete and therefore, considered unlucky.

Folklore historian Donald Dorsey, traces the fear all the way back to ancient times, when the Vikings inhabited Scandinavia. Twelve gods were having a dinner party at Valhalla, the Vikings' mythological heaven. Suddenly, an uninvited "13th" guest, the mischievous god Loki walked in and provoked Hoder, the blind god of darkness to shoot Balder, the god of joy and gladness.

As for Friday? That happens to be rooted in ancient mythology and religion. According to the Bible, Jesus was crucified on a Friday. Though the date is not believed to be the 13th, it was following the *Last Supper*, which happened to be attended by 13 men that included Judas, the apostle that betrayed Jesus. Other biblical scholars maintain that this was the day when Eve tempted Adam with the forbidden fruit. Again, the date is not clearly remembered. The one bad event that is believed to have happened on Friday the 13th was the killing of Abel by his brother Cain (*the sons of Adam* and Eve).

Experts estimate that businesses lose about \$800 - \$900 million on this day because people avoid travelling, going to work and even, shopping!

Unfortunately, since there is no logical reason behind this fear, not much can be done to help it. However, Dr. Donald Dossey at North Carolina's Stress Management Center/Phobia institute believes she may have found a solution.

She recommends people living with this fear to learn how to pronounce the word "paraskevidekatriaphobia", the other term for the ailment. In her expert opinion, they will be cured the minute they are able to say it out loud, correctly. So go ahead, give it a try and let us know if it works.

1. **Number 13 is thought to _____.**
 1. bring luck
 2. be frightening
 3. call misfortune
 4. mean a new start
2. **The fear of number 13 is typical of people who .**
 1. often worry
 2. suffer from phobias
 3. are mentally ill
 4. are irritable
3. **The majority of people prefer never to _____.**
 1. be born on the 13th
 2. have 13 friends
 3. buy 13 flowers
 4. live on the 13th floor

4. Usually people who suffer from the fear of this number _____.
1. are very old
2. are builders
3. have a risky job
4. are not educated
5. The fear of the date 13th _____.
1. has a scientific foundation
2. appeared due to some accidents
3. cannot be explained at all
4. is an inborn quality
6. The opinion that number 13 is unlucky is supported by _____.
1. astrology
2. folklore
3. medicine
4. psychology
7. People believe that Friday is also unlucky because _____.
1. of some dramatic happenings in the past
2. it is mentioned in the Bible
3. scientists prove it
4. it often coincides with number 13
8. Some doctors think they can cure the phobia by making the person _____.
1. recite poems
2. perform risky actions on Friday 13th
3. say the difficult medical term for this fear
4. say aloud difficult tongue twisters

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