

DO YOU BELIEVE IN IT?

READING

Read the text. Which topic is not mentioned?

politics relationships business food sport

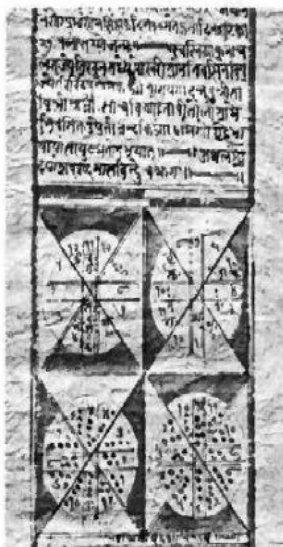
INDIA

The dream destination for astrology addicts

While in Britain the general belief in astrology is limited to **glancing** at horoscopes in newspapers and magazines, in India people take their star signs very seriously indeed.

Astrology programmes are shown on many of India's 320 television channels, and at least a dozen stations are **devoted entirely to** astrology 24 hours a day. Kolkata housewife Lata Banerji always starts her day by turning on the astrology channel, Shristi, to find out what the day holds for her and whether she will have to face any kind of **domestic crisis**. She also receives information on what food she should eat to avoid illness. 'It gives me the confidence I need to face the day,' she says. 'Americans go to a therapist every week to cope with life. I get my sense of wellbeing from the advice I get from astrologers.'

Astrology is important in India in all **walks of life**, but especially when it comes to choosing a marriage partner. Some astrological combinations are considered unfavourable, for example when the planet Mars is in a certain position on a person's



birth chart. In this case, people believe that the couple will not get on and that their marriage will end badly. The only way around this is for the person with the unlucky combination to 'marry' something symbolic before their real wedding. This is exactly what Bollywood actress and former Miss World, Aishwarya Rai did some years ago when she 'married' a banana tree in the hope of avoiding problems in her marriage with the actor Abhishek Bachchan.

Read the text again and choose the right answer.

- 1 ...radio stations are only about astrology.
a 320 b 12 c 24
- 2 Lata Banerji watches an astrology channel...
a to help her in her daily life.
b because she is very worried about getting ill.
c because she can't afford a therapist.
- 3 The actress Aishwarya Rai married a tree...
a to make sure it produced a lot of bananas.
b to bring her luck in the search for a husband.
c to ensure her marriage was successful.
- 4 According to the text, Indians ask astrologers...
a how they should vote in the election.
b where they can get a good job.
c for advice about many things.
- 5 Sunita Menon works as...
a an adviser for a well-known company.
b a tarot card reader.
c a flight attendant.

some programmes on TV that specialize in medical astrology, with callers asking about health issues. Others provide investment and business advice. Astrology is even important in politics with prime ministers asking their astrologers for a 'promising' date before announcing a general election.

Nowadays it is almost obligatory for Indian parents to have a horoscope drawn up when a baby is born. Two people taking advantage of the **boom** in business are Kalidas Sriram and Vishi Babi who have put up their tents complete with laptop computer and printer, right outside Kolkata's main hospital. They either visit the **maternity wards** or wait outside until new parents leave to offer the services. For the equivalent of €3 they use the baby's time and date of birth to print out a horoscope for the delighted parents.

Many Indians have no doubt that astrology can change people's lives for the better. The glamorous Sunita Menon, India's most famous fortune-teller, was an air hostess until a tarot reader predicted that she would change jobs. Now she is the presenter of a hugely popular television programme and was recently hired by India's most famous



LISTENING

Listen to a radio programme about superstitions and complete the chart.

Superstition	When or where?	Why?
	Originated in the Middle ¹ _____	People thought black cats possessed evil ² _____
	Originated in ancient ³ _____	People thought it broke the ⁴ _____ of the triangle
	Originated in the ⁵ _____	People knocked on ⁶ _____ to call the good spirits
	Originated at the time of the ⁷ _____	The Pope passed a law obliging people to bless the person who was ⁸ _____

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

Learn these words and phrases.

binoculars /bi'nɒkjələz/

breeze /bri:z/

carry on (doing sth) /'kæri ɒn/

curtains /'kɜ:tɪnz/

dome /dɒm/

drag (sth across the floor) /dræg/

estate agent /ɪs'teɪt ,eɪdʒənt/

glide /ɡlaɪd/

hallucinate /hə'lʊ:sɪneɪt/

terraced houses /'terəst 'haʊzɪz/