

NATIONAL CUSTOMES

Read the text and highlight the words you do not understand

TEXT 1. Customs about Money

In the Czech Republic, some people believe the custom of placing fish scales under the dinner plates or table cloth at the Christmas dinner table is said to bring wealth to the home. Some people apparently carry a fish scale in the wallet to generate money. Some Turkish people believe that if the first customer throws silver coins onto the floor of a business, it will attract more people. Some Indian shop-owners will not let the first window-shopper of the day leave without buying something, even if it is only a button or a pin, as it is considered unlucky for the rest of the day. Other people in India and Pakistan kiss money and press it against their eyes for good luck.

TEXT 2. Birthday Celebrations

Different countries around the world celebrate birthdays in a variety of ways. Birthday cakes have increasingly become popular across the world with many bakers producing brilliant works of art. There are many customs unique to different cultures which are also fun. In China, long noodles signify longevity and the person celebrating their birthday needs to slurp a super-long noodle before biting into it. In many countries in Europe, people often have two birthdays – one for the name of the saint they are named after and their own. In Mexico, the piñata is popular at birthdays. A piñata is a form made of papier-mâché filled with sweets and chocolates, moved around to be chased and broken open by guests using a stick. In Vietnam, everyone celebrates their birthday on the New Year as it is considered unlucky to celebrate the actual birthday.

TEXT 3. Wedding Customs

There are a great number of traditional wedding customs across the world and they are all equally fascinating. Of course, not everyone follows them nowadays but it is interesting to learn about them. In England, brides traditionally wear a white or ivory-coloured dress. There is a little saying that they should also wear 'something borrowed, something blue, something old and something new.' In the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent, the female relatives and friends from both the bride's and groom's families decorate their hands and feet with beautiful intricate designs using deep red henna paste. In India, the bride and groom exchange garlands of flowers after the religious ceremony to cement their relationship. In Germany, when a little girl is born, several trees are planted which are later sold to pay for the wedding. One of the customs in Greece is to bring old crockery and smash it to attract good luck. In China, auspicious dates are set by expert astrologers to ensure the union remains secure. Brides do not see the grooms before the actual wedding day as it is seen as bad luck.

2. Which text refers to:

- A. customs in some businesses
- B. traditions about nuptial ceremonies
- C. different attitudes to personal anniversaries
- D. colours for a special occasion

3. Complete with T (True) or F (False):

- A. In some countries, people celebrate birthdays on one day.
- B. Parts of a fish are considered to be good luck by some people.
- D. Some people celebrate two birthdays in the year.
- E. In Greece, guests bring old plates and cups to smash at weddings.
- F. Flowers are not needed at Indian weddings.
- G. Some British brides like to wear someone else's jewellery on their special day.
- H. Indian shopkeepers are determined to sell to their last customer.

4. Complete with the suitable word:

Wedding and birthday customs:

In England, brides usually wear a white or (1) _____ dress. In the Middle East and Indian Sub-continent, brides and female guests decorate their hands and feet with (2) _____ henna tattoos. In Germany, trees are planted when baby girls are born and sold to raise money for weddings. In China, long noodles mean (3) _____.

5. Find synonyms from the texts for these words:

- 1. very fine
- 2. elaborate
- 3. extra important
- 4. long life
- 5. create
- 6. casual observer
- 7. stop