

TED-Ed "Where do superstitions come from?"

Before watching:

Ex. 1. Complete each gap with an appropriate form of the root word in brackets. You may need to add a prefix or suffix or use a plural form to fit the sentence.



1. This place has such great _____ for me. I remember the wonderful holidays we used to have here when I was a child. (*associate*)
2. My parents were really happy when my sister got engaged. They gave her their _____. (*bless*)
3. Henry? Is that you? I can't believe you're on holiday in the same hotel as we are, during the same week. What a _____! (*incident*)
4. I'm sorry, but I've got an _____ fear of dogs. I don't know why I feel this way, but I just can't be near them. (*rational*)
5. She uses _____ from the fashion industry to make beautiful handbags. (*remain*)
6. You think we know what we're doing? I'm afraid not - it's all an _____. (*illusory*)
7. Few of the town's fine buildings _____ the earthquake of 1755. (*date*)

While watching:

Ex. 2. Watch the video. Complete each gap in the notes with three words from the video.

1. Many superstitions have _____ origins.
2. Because of the Last Supper, having 13 people _____ was seen to be bad luck.
3. Today some buildings miss out _____.
4. In Indo-European folklore, you could receive _____ from wood spirits by touching a tree.
5. While some superstitions are religious, others are based on _____.
6. Italians associate the number 17 with the phrase "my _____."
7. _____ reminds Chinese speakers of the phrase "must die."
8. In the past, whistling backstage at a theatre could _____.
9. _____ from the same match could be dangerous for soldiers during war.
10. If you have learned to avoid walking under a ladder, doing this will _____ even if you know it's not logical.
11. Knocking on wood doesn't _____ so people carry on doing it.
12. Believing that your lucky socks make you play better gives you the illusion of _____ over events.

After watching:

Ex. 3. Read these sentences from the talk and complete the gaps with a suitable discourse marker from the list. Then listen again to the talk to check your ideas.

After all	Besides	So
Along the same lines	Of course	Somehow
Believe it or not	Similarly	Well

1. _____ how did it happen that people all over the world knock on wood, or avoid stepping on sidewalk cracks?
2. _____, although they have no basis in science, many of these weirdly specific beliefs and practices do have equally weird and specific origins.
3. _____, many people consider the story of the Last Supper to be true but other superstitions come from religious traditions that few people believe in or even remember.
4. And _____, this tradition survived long after belief in these spirits had faded away.
5. _____, the word for the number four sounds almost identical to the word for death in Cantonese ...
6. And _____, some superstitions actually make sense, or at least they did until we forgot their original purpose.
7. _____, lighting three cigarettes from the same match really could cause bad luck if you were a soldier in a foxhole...
8. _____, no one is born knowing to avoid walking under ladders or whistling indoors...
9. _____, superstitions often do seem to work.

<https://youtu.be/quOdF1CAPXs>