Reading Ex. > Superstitions

KNOCK ON WOOD!



If you knock on wood, you'll keep bad luck away.

You'll get a good grade on the test if you wear your shirt inside out.

You'll get a bad grade unless you use your lucky pen.



Superstitions sound silly, but millions of people all over the world believe in their power to bring good luck or prevent bad luck. Many cultures share similar superstitions:

- **If you break a mirror, you'll have seven years of bad luck.**
- **If the palm of your hand itches, you're going to get some money.**
- **If it rains when you move to a new house, you'll get rich.**

All superstitions are based on a cause and effect relationship: **If X happens, then Y will also happen**. However, in superstitions, the cause is magical and unrelated to the effect. In our scientific age, why are these beliefs so powerful and widespread? The Luck Project, an online survey of superstitious behaviors, gives us some fascinating insight. Here are some of the findings:



- Emotions can influence superstitions, especially in uncertain situations where people do not have control. **People will react more superstitiously if they are worried. They will feel less superstitious if they aren't feeling a strong need for control.**
- We make our own luck. **If you believe you're lucky, you will carry out superstitions that make you feel good** (crossing your fingers for luck, for example). You probably won't fear bad luck superstitions. In contrast, **you will expect the worst if you think you're unlucky.**
- More people than you might think believe in superstitions. Of the 4,000 people surveyed, 84 percent knocked on wood for good luck. Almost half feared walking under a ladder. And 15 percent of the people who studied or worked in the sciences feared the number 13.



Clearly, education doesn't "cure" superstition—college students are among the most superstitious people. Other superstitious groups are performers, athletes, gamblers, and stock traders. People in these groups often have personal good luck rituals.

Deanna McBrearty, a New York City Ballet member, has lucky hair bands. **"If I have a good performance when I'm wearing one, I'll keep wearing it,"** she says. Brett Gallagher, a stock trader, believes **he'll be more successful if he owns pet fish.** "I had fish for a while, and after they died the market didn't do so well," he points out.

Will you do better on the test if you use your lucky pen? Maybe. **If the pen makes you feel more confident, you might improve your score.** So go ahead and use it. But don't forget—**your lucky pen will be powerless unless you study.** The harder you work, the luckier you'll get.

A. Based on the text, match the sentences (1-9) with their complement (A-I).

1. When people act anxiously, ___

2. If people feel lucky, ___

3. Some of those who study science ___

4. If using a lucky pen on a test brings confidence, ___

5. If a person gambles or trades stocks, ___

6. Unless you don't believe, ___

7. Emotions may trigger superstitions, ___

8. Superstitions are carried out ___

9. According to the author, if people work hard, ___

A. *a better score might be gotten.*

B. *they will believe in more superstitions.*

C. *they will probably perform rituals to bring luck.*

D. *seem to be superstitious.*

E. *strong feelings may have an impact on superstitions.*

F. *they'll perform 'acts' to feel well.*

G. *their success will increase.*

H. *when people want to make themselves feel good.*

I. *when things seem to be not controlled.*

Level B1

Text taken from Fuchs, M. & Bonner, M. (2006) Focus on Grammar 4 - An Integrated Skills Approach. 3rd Ed. Pearson Longman. US
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