

Are you Superstitious?

(CD 2 TRACK 12) ♦ [FULL TEXT 180]

Introduction ✿

A superstition is an illogical belief that some action will affect something that is unrelated to the action. For example, many people believe that breaking a mirror will result in seven years of bad luck. They also believe that knocking on wood will insure good luck to continue. They carry good-luck charms with them to keep themselves safe. Many people will say that they are definitely not superstitious. Their behavior, however, will show that they occasionally are. What about you? Are you superstitious?

Pair Dictation ✿ Student A

In the following dictation you will work in pairs and dictate to each other. Student A will have half of the paragraph and will read their lines to Student B, who has the other half. (Student A dictates and Student B writes.) Then student B dictates and A writes, until the paragraph is complete. When you are finished, check what you have written with your partner.

A young Japanese woman _____ was being wheeled _____
 _____ when she noticed the number over the door. _____
 _____ softly. _____
 _____ and asked what was wrong. _____, but
 explained that the Japanese character _____ is pronounced
 the same _____ "_____."
 Already concerned about her health, _____ to be wheeled
 _____ "_____." Although she said _____
 _____, Keiko was unable
 _____.

The surgery went well despite the room number, _____
 _____. Had the hospital personnel _____
 _____ that she was being scheduled _____, her feelings
 might have become known _____
 _____ into a different room. _____
 _____, would have been appropriate _____ "_____"
 _____ also means "life."

Pair Dictation ❁ Student B

In the following dictation you will work in pairs and dictate to each other. Student A will have half of the paragraph and will read their lines to Student B, who has the other half. (Student A dictates and B writes. Then Student B dictates and A writes, until the paragraph is complete. When you are finished, check what you have written with your partner.)



_____ named Keiko _____
 _____ into operating room four _____
 _____. She began to cry _____. The nurse
 became concerned _____. Keiko
 was embarrassed, _____
 _____ for the number four _____ as
 the character for the word "death." _____
 _____, Keiko was disturbed _____ into a room labeled "death."
 _____ it was just a silly superstition, _____
 _____ to let go of her fear.

 _____, but the patient suffered needless anxiety. _____
 _____ mentioned to Keiko _____
 _____ for room four, _____
 _____ in time to reschedule her surgery
 _____. Room number three, for example,
 _____ because "three" in Japanese
 characters _____ "_____."

Discussion ✿ *Discuss these questions with your partner. Share your ideas with the class.*

1. Do you believe in some superstitions?
2. Do you practice any superstitions? Why?
3. In the pair dictation, the numbers three and four both had some meaning. Are there numbers in your culture that are either lucky or unlucky? What are they? Do you know why they're lucky or unlucky? Can you understand how Keiko felt?
4. Athletes often have lucky clothing or lucky jewelry that they wear when they're playing, because they connect these items with victory. Do you have a lucky number, a lucky color, a lucky piece of clothing, or a lucky piece of jewelry?
5. Here are some common superstitions; are you familiar with any of them?
 - a. Placing a bed so that it faces south and north brings misfortune.
 - b. If you blow out all the candles on your birthday cake with the first puff, you will get your wish.
 - c. If your cheeks suddenly feel on fire, someone is talking about you.
 - d. It's bad luck to cut your fingernails at night.
 - e. If the palm of your right hand itches, it means you will soon get money.
 - f. Never open up an umbrella in your house. It will bring bad luck.
 - g. Never have thirteen people around a dinner table, because one will die.
6. Share a superstition from your culture.

Follow up ✿ *Write about **one** of the following.*

1. In your culture, what do people think causes bad luck?
2. Where do people learn about superstitions? Think back to your childhood and write about where you learned about good luck and bad luck.
3. Why are you not superstitious?

Are You Superstitious?

Pair Dictation ❁ page 73 (*CD 2, track 12*)

A young Japanese woman named Keiko was being wheeled into operating room four when she noticed the number over the door. She began to cry softly. The nurse became concerned and asked what was wrong. Keiko was embarrassed, but explained that the Japanese character for the number four is pronounced the same as the character for the word “death.” Already concerned about her health, Keiko was disturbed to be wheeled into a room labeled “death.” Although she said it was just a silly superstition, Keiko was unable to let go of her fear.

The surgery went well despite the room number, but the patient suffered needless anxiety. Had the hospital personnel mentioned to Keiko that she was being scheduled for room four, her feelings might have become known in time to reschedule her surgery into a different room. Room number three, for example, would have been appropriate because “three” in Japanese characters also means “life.”