

**Intermediate 2**  
**Unit 2 Reading**  
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## Good Luck, Bad Luck

### A. Breaking a Mirror

The superstition that if you break a mirror, you will have seven years' bad luck, comes from the belief in ancient times that a person's reflection was part of their soul. As a result, people used to think that if you broke anything with this reflection on it, such as a mirror, you would harm the soul.

**superstition** (n.) = a wrong belief held by many people

**superstitious** (adj.) = believing in superstitions

**seven year's bad luck** = bad luck for 7 years

**believe** (v.) = firmly think that something is true

**belief** (n.) = what a person believes in

**ancient** = very old

**reflect** (v.) = show back

**reflection** (n.) = what has been shown back

#### **Soul vs. Ghost**

➤ **soul** = the spirit of a living person

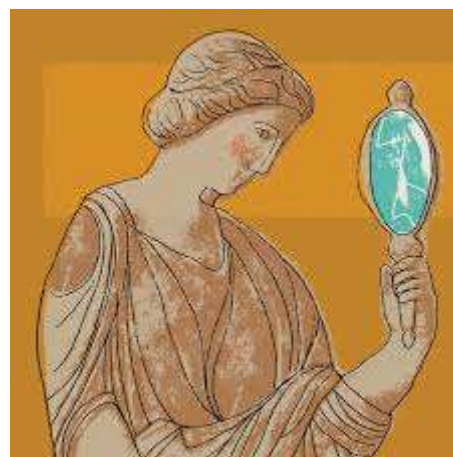
➤ **ghost** = the spirit of a dead person

**as a result** = therefore

**used to** → shows a habit in the past

*Tom used to smoke.* = In the past, he smoked. But now he doesn't.

**such as** = like, for example



### B. thirteen

In most hotels all over the world, you will not find a room with the number thirteen, and if the hotel is a skyscraper, it will go from floor twelve to floor fourteen. The superstition that thirteen is unlucky can be traced back to a Scandinavian myth. There were originally only twelve gods and then along came the god Loki to make thirteen. Loki was a mischievous god who brought suffering to people. Nowadays, people avoid planning important events on Friday 13th (or Tuesday 13th in some cultures), and if things go wrong on that day, like the loss of a wallet or a key, they blame it on the date.

**skyscraper** = a high-rising building

**Scandinavia** = a peninsula in Europe including Denmark, Sweden, and Norway

**peninsula** = an area of land that is almost surrounded by water but is joined to a larger piece of land

**myth** = an ancient religious belief

**come along** = arrive

**mischievous** = naughty

*They blame it on the date.* = They hold the date responsible.





**Scandinavia**



**Loki**

### C. Cats

Cats have always been surrounded by superstitions. In ancient Egypt cats were considered sacred but in medieval Europe many people believed cats were witches in disguise. A popular superstition about cats is that a black cat, crossing your path from left to right, will bring you bad luck. However, in some cultures a black cat is thought to be a good omen rather than a bad one.

**sacred** = holy

**medieval** = Related to the Middle Ages

**Medieval Europe** = Europe of Middle Ages

**witch** = a female wizard, a woman with magical powers

**in disguise** = hiding one's true identity

**path** = way

**omen** = a sign of good/bad luck



### D. Rice

In certain primitive tribes, the act of eating rice together was the way people got married. This was probably because eating together symbolized living together, and rice happened to be the local food. In some cultures rice is thrown at weddings to protect the couple from evil spirits. It was believed that evil spirits appeared at weddings and had to be fed to keep them from doing harm to the newlyweds. Rice is also thrown at weddings because it represents fertility and is a symbolic way of wishing the couple many children.

**primitive** = belonging to a very simple society with no industry, etc.

**tribe** = Clan = a group of families living in the same area

**symbolize** = stand for

**couple** = two people especially a husband and a wife

**evil** (adj.) = related to Devil

**Devil** (n.) = Satan or one of his agents

**evil spirits** = ghosts which try to harm living people

**newlyweds** = people who have recently gotten married

**represent** = stand for; symbolize

**fertility** (n.) = the ability to produce children

**symbol** (n.) = a person, an object, an event, etc. that represents a more general quality or situation

**symbolic** (adj.) = containing symbols, or being used as a symbol

### E. The Evil Eye

In some Mediterranean countries, the "evil eye" refers to the fact that if you say something good about someone, you might bring them bad luck. This probably began when people believed that if you praise someone a lot and give them pleasure, the Devil becomes envious

and finds ways of spoiling that pleasure. Saying a baby is beautiful may bring bad luck, so superstitious people often pretend to be spitting and say to the child, "Let me not give you the evil eye." People also think they can protect themselves from the evil eye by not boasting about their success.

**Mediterranean Countries** = the countries around the Mediterranean Sea

**praise** = admire

**Satan** = the greatest of all devils

**envy** (n.) = jealousy

**envy** (v.) = feel envious of sb

**envious** (adj.) = full of envy => *They were envious of his success.*

**spoil** = ruin, destroy

**spit** = to force out the contents of the mouth, especially saliva=> *She spat in his face and went out.*

**boast** = show off



## F. Touching Wood

In many Christian countries, "Touch wood." is a superstitious expression that is supposed to prevent bad luck. Often people actually touch wood as they say it, and if there is nothing made of wood within reach, they touch their head or someone else's head instead. If someone asks "Have you ever had a car accident?", you might reply "No, touch wood." meaning "I hope it never happens." The origin of this custom dates almost certainly from the time when people wore a crucifix made of wood and touched it as if to say "May Christ protect me."

**Touch wood** **British** = **Knock on wood** **American**

**Christ** = a prophet of God

**Christian** = a follower of Christianity; related to Christianity

**Christianity** = the religion of Jesus Christ

**within reach** = accessible = on hand

**custom** = tradition

**date back (to...)** | **date from...** | **date to...** = to have existed since a particular time in the past or for the length of time mentioned

*The college dates back to medieval times.*

*The custom dates back hundreds of years.*

*This law dates from the seventeenth century.*



**crucifix** = cross

**as if** = as though

**Source:**

<https://www.anglophone.ir>