

FRIDAY the 13th

- 1 Does Friday the Thirteenth worry you? Do you think something awful could happen to you on this day? Millions of people do. Some people won't even get out of bed on this day. Records show that there are more car crashes on Friday the Thirteenth. Yet, less people drive on this day. Why is this so? Is Friday the Thirteenth really unlucky or is it just a superstition? We should take a look at beliefs about 'Friday' and 'thirteen' separately.
- 2 For hundreds of years, people have taken extra care on Fridays. To these people Friday is the most unlucky day. Some people say you should not start a trip on a Friday and many couples will not get married on this day. It is said you shouldn't start a new job on a Friday. If you do, you may not be there for much longer.

3 Why is Friday believed to be so unlucky? Many believe it goes back to the death of Jesus Christ. He was placed on the cross on a Friday. I'm sure some people don't find Friday too bad. It means that the weekend is just around the corner.

4 The number thirteen is also believed to be unlucky by some. A group of thirteen people is thought to have very bad luck. If this is really true, we should change the number of players in a rugby league team! Also, some people believe that thirteen at a meal is not a good thing. The first of the thirteen to leave the table will die within a year. This superstition goes back to the time of the Last Supper. Judas, the first of the thirteen to leave the meal, died soon afterwards.

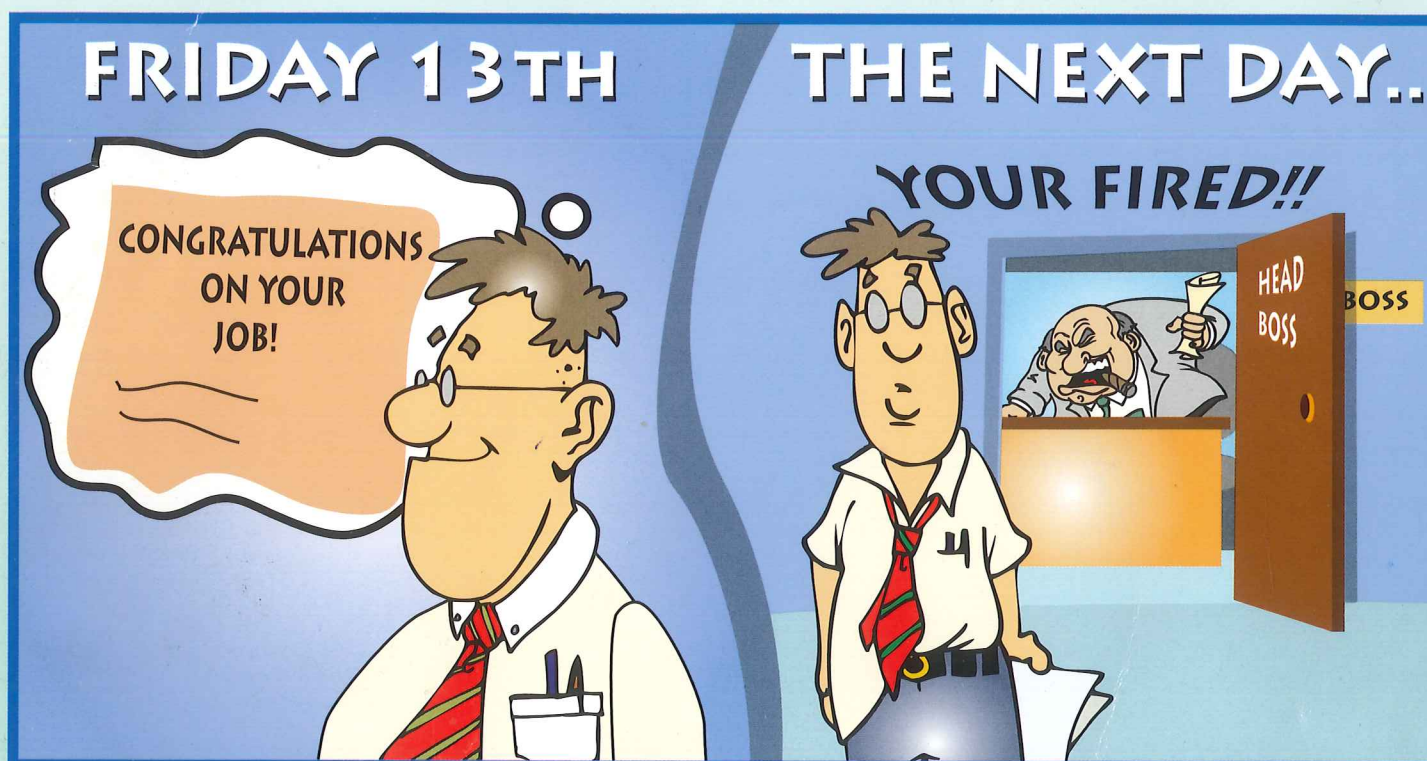
5 Have you ever noticed that some tall buildings

miss the 13th floor? They go from the 12th to the 14th floor. Many hotels don't have a room number thirteen. How silly!

6 It should now be clear why superstitious people think Friday the Thirteenth means double trouble. But, this fear is a fairly new one. The first mention of it is less than a hundred years ago. I don't believe any of this of course...but just the same, I might keep my fingers crossed.

7 Different cultures seem to have a range of views about this so-called unlucky day. It is mainly English- and German-speaking groups that have a problem with Friday the 13th. Spanish and Greek speakers are more concerned about Tuesday the 13th. Try to work that one out.

8 In Japan and Korea the number thirteen isn't a problem at all. In these places it's the number four that has to be avoided. In these countries their word for "four" sounds like their word for death. Perhaps you can guess which floor number they like to skip over in their tall buildings...



Questions

- Millions of people
 - have car crashes on Friday the Thirteenth.
 - stay in bed on Friday the Thirteenth.
 - believe that Friday the Thirteenth is unlucky.
- What is believed to happen to the first person to leave the table at a dinner with thirteen guests?
 - They will die.
 - Nothing will happen to them.
 - They will lose their job.
- A fear of Fridays is believed to have started
 - with the death of Jesus Christ.
 - at the Last Supper.
 - less than a hundred years ago.
- In Greece, people are superstitious about
 - Friday the Thirteenth.
 - Tuesday the Fourth.
 - Tuesday the Thirteenth.
- Who doesn't seem to be afraid of the number thirteen?
 - Owners of tall buildings
 - Hotel owners
 - Rugby League players
- Some people are afraid of the number thirteen. Others are afraid of the number four. What might this mean?
 - Numbers are always unlucky.
 - People can believe that any number is unlucky.
 - That someone is wrong — there's only one unlucky number.

Vocabulary

Match the words from the text to the clues.

The brackets show the text sections ().

records unlucky weekend mention avoided

- 7 Saturday and Sunday are called this (3)
- 8 To have no luck (1)
- 9 Stayed away from (8)
- 10 To speak about (6)
- 11 Documents about history (1)

Grammar

A **proper noun** is used to name people, places, days of the week etc. They must start with a capital letter.

Find the **proper nouns** in these sentences from the text.

- 12 People have taken extra care on Fridays.
- 13 Many believe it goes back to the death of Jesus Christ.
- 14 In Japan and Korea the number thirteen isn't a problem.
- 15 Some are more concerned with Tuesday the 13th.

Think About This

- 16 Koreans have a problem with the number
 - a four.
 - b thirteen.
- 17 What would be a good sub-heading for section 5?
 - a Missing Floors
 - b Missing Hotels
- 18 The purpose of this text is
 - a to recount.
 - b to inform.

- 19 The illustration on the front of the card is meant to show that
 - a everyone was woken suddenly by the alarm.
 - b everyone was alarmed by the date that is showing.
 - c everyone was scared by what they saw in front of them.
- 20 Look at the illustration on page 3. What has confused the man?
 - a He can't find the elevator.
 - b He can't see Room 13 listed.
 - c He can't see the stairs.
- 21 The illustrator has used black for the words in the title to
 - a brighten the page.
 - b make it look more sinister.
- 22 Why has the writer used the words "how silly" in section 5 and "I might keep my fingers crossed" in section 6?
 - a These are things you do on Friday the 13th.
 - b To lighten the mood of the text.
 - c They are very worried about Friday the 13th.
- 23 The writer uses the term "double trouble" in section 6. What does this mean?
 - a When combined they rhyme nicely.
 - b When combined they create twice the problem.

Challenge Option

Writing: Write about a superstition you know of that's not mentioned in the text.

