



Episode 19: Superstitions

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In today's episode Donielle and Khrystyna discuss superstitions that are common in the U.S., and Khrystyna shares some unique Ukrainian superstitions.

Here are a few words and phrases about the topic that you may find useful:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| superstition | A superstition is a belief or practice that isn't entirely based on facts or reality, but is said to be connected to good or bad luck. |
| omen | something that is believed to be a sign or warning of something that will happen in the future |
| jinx | someone or something that causes bad luck |
| lucky charm | an object (such as a ring or stone) that is believed to have magic powers and to cause good things to happen to the person who has it |
| talisman | another word for lucky charm |
| amulet | a small object worn to protect the person wearing it against bad things (such as illness, bad luck, etc.) |
| curse | words or action that brings trouble or bad luck to someone or something |
| old wives' tale | a common belief about something, especially related to health and well being, that is not based on facts and that is usually false (e.g. eating carrots will improve your eyesight.) |
| legend | a traditional story sometimes popularly regarded as historical but cannot be proven to be true. |

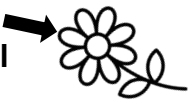

NEW! You can read the [transcript](#) for this episode.

*Note: you don't need an account to access the podcast; just click "listen now" on the Buzzsprout page to take you to the podcast episode.


See the following pages for vocabulary and language focus from this episode.



Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation

| | |
|--|---|
| cool down | decrease in intensity of heat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's been a very hot summer, but it's finally starting to <u>cool down</u>. |
| same | Used to express agreement with a stated opinion, or that you had the same experience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I wouldn't consider myself superstitious, but there are some things that I do unconsciously that might be considered superstitious. - <u>Same</u>. |
| prevalent | done, or happening often or over a large area at a particular time: common or widespread <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I don't know how <u>prevalent</u> this superstition is around the world. |
| every single __ | used for emphasis to say every instance of something, without exception. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I unconsciously do this <u>every single</u> time. |
| pagan | referring to religious traditions centered around many gods, earth, nature, etc. |
| stick around | to remain in a place; not leave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of superstitions are old pagan beliefs that have just <u>stuck around</u>. |
| sneak | to move quietly and secretly in order to avoid being noticed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The bad spirits outside can <u>sneak</u> into your house. |
| catch [oneself] doing [something] | suddenly realize you are doing something; it was not intended, but just happened naturally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any superstitious actions that you <u>catch yourself doing</u>? |
| adamant | not willing to change an opinion or decision; very determined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> She was <u>adamant</u> that I not put my purse on the floor to avoid bad luck. |
| come up with [something] | think of something: ideas, examples, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I <u>came up with</u> a few things for good luck superstitions. |
| goof off | informal: spend time engaging in idle recreation, especially when you should be doing something else. |
| a ton (of) [something] | informal: a large amount or number of something <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are <u>a ton of</u> superstitions about money. |
| every once in a while | sometimes, but not often; occasionally |
| come across | find or discover something by accident, without specifically looking for it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every once in a while, you'll <u>come across</u> a lilac with 5 petals instead of 4. |
| petal  | one of the soft, colorful parts of a flower |
| bloom | Noun: the flower of a plant; Verb: to produce flowers |
| fern  | a type of plant that has large, delicate leaves and no flowers |

Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation

| | |
|--|---|
| unattainable | a goal or desire that is unable to be reached or achieved. |
| right off the bat | from the very beginning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's like you're set up for failure <u>right off the bat</u>. |
| be in a rush rush | Rush: Do something in a hurry. Be in a rush: be in a hurry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you're <u>in a rush</u>, you might let the good spirits out of the house. You're not supposed to <u>rush</u> out of somebody's house. |
| poop | informal, most common when talking about animals. (Noun) solid waste when going to the bathroom or (Verb) the action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A bird <u>pooped</u> on my head. |
| 'cause | Informal, only spoken: Short form of "because" and pronounced "cuz" |
| gasp | to breathe in suddenly and loudly with your mouth open because of surprise, shock, or pain |
| be worth it | sufficiently good, enjoyable, or successful to overcome any effort, trouble, or expense. |
| get into it | talk about the details about something <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm not going to <u>get into it</u>, but it was a very difficult time in my life. |
| freaking/freakin' | used for emphasis, or to express annoyance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> And I remembered that <u>freakin'</u> ladder. |
| coincidence | a remarkable concurrence of events or circumstances without apparent causal connection. |
| quarrel | an angry argument or disagreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you spill salt, you will have some sort of <u>quarrel</u> with a loved one. |
| in my book | in my opinion; as far as I am concerned; according to my belief <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If any cat crosses my path, that's good luck <u>in my book</u>. |
| so-and-so | used to refer to a person when you are speaking generally. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whenever I told my mom, "Oh, we're going to celebrate <u>so-and-so's</u> birthday" she would say it's bad luck because their birthday is not until later. |
| tempt fate | take a silly risk or depend too much on good luck. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm not going to <u>tempt fate</u> and walk under the ladder. |
| mess around | behave foolishly or in a careless manner. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When it comes to airplanes, I'm not going to <u>mess around</u>. |
| baker's dozen | a group of 13 items |
| toast/make a toast  | drink to the health and happiness of a specified person (Note that in the story, Khrystyna was referring to the specific action after the toast where you touch glasses. We don't often refer to this action specifically, but when we do, we sometimes say "clink glasses") [<i>clink</i> = short, sharp sound made when glass or metal objects hit each other] |

Common Superstitions

Lucky charms and things associated with good luck:



4-leaf clover



horseshoe

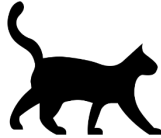


crossing fingers



itchy palm

Things associated with bad luck:



black cat crossing your path



Friday the 13th








walking under a ladder



opening an umbrella indoors

Pronunciation: Homophones

In English, there are many homophones: words that are spelled differently and have different meanings, but are pronounced the exact same way. Sometimes it can be helpful to remember the pronunciation of certain words when you pair them with their homophones. Here are a few words from the discussion that have homophone pairs.

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| <p>so sew</p> <p>conjunction</p>  | <p>petal pedal</p>  | <p>ladder latter</p>  <p>the last item mentioned in a series</p> | <p>wood would</p>  <p>modal verb</p> | <p>flower flour</p>  |
|---|---|--|---|--|

Join the Conversation

- What were some of the superstitions discussed in the episode? Which ones are common in your culture?
- Are you superstitious? Are there any superstitions that you sometimes follow even if you don't consider yourself a superstitious person?
- Have you or someone you know ever had a superstition influence behavior or a decision?
- What are some objects that relate to good luck or bad luck in your culture? (lucky charms, amulets, etc.)
- What are some superstitions in your country related to numbers or days of the year?
- Do you have an example of a superstition unique to your culture that you think is funny?

Thanks for checking out our podcast!

We are enjoying these discussions, and we hope that you are finding them helpful!



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