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# ELI STUDENT VOICES

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## Superstitions

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*Mike Alzérreca--Bolivia*

In my country there are a lot of superstitions; I will tell you about some of them.

- ◆ It's considered bad luck to cross under the stairs.
- ◆ Like here in the USA, in my country the number 13 is a bad lucky number, but we have 13<sup>th</sup> floors on our buildings.
- ◆ If you are walking or driving your car and a black cat crosses in front of you, that is bad luck.
- ◆ It's considered bad luck to break a mirror and if you do it you have 7 years of bad luck.
- ◆ On the other hand, it is considered good luck if you kill a frog with your car.

*Niall Oh-Uiginn--Bolivia*

One of the most famous superstitions in my country is that one that you will have bad luck if you pass under the stairs.

Another is when you see a black cat you will have bad luck.

And another is when you break a mirror you will have seven years of bad luck.

One curious superstition is when somebody died in a room and there is a clock there, you must stop the clock.

*Daniel Scognamillo--Argentina*

Probably a universal superstition is to open an umbrella into a room. I know a lot of people that avoid to do this.

Another superstition is if a black cat crosses in front of you. The meanings of this superstition is different in the US and England. I think that in the US the meaning is bad luck, but in England it means good luck (the reverse).

In Argentina, in the country if you found a horseshoe, you have to bring it to your home, and nail it to the main door with the tips looking at the ceiling. This means good luck and prosperity for the family.

*Juan Lombardo--Venezuela*

- ◆ One of the most famous superstitions in my country is when you open an umbrella inside a house. If you do that, you are going to have bad luck.
- ◆ Another superstition in my country is when a black cat crosses in front of you, that is bad luck.
- ◆ When you wake up with the left leg, you are going to have a bad day.

*Carla Albuquerque--Brazil*

Brazil is a very big country in which each region has different superstitions. For example, in Amazonas area, many birds are often considered to be a warning about something. If a bird called "ticotico" sings a certain kind of song, it means that someone is coming to visit.

If another bird crosses over someone while singing, it means that someone nearby will be sick or die. Some people try to avoid the doves singing on the roof. They believe that this song brings a course of sickness on significant others.

Some people try to stop the involuntary trembling in the left side eye because it is considered to bring sadness. The same in the opposite eye is considered to bring happiness and, of course, people don't try to stop this trembling.

*Musbah Sumainah--Syria*

In my country, some people still believe in superstitions. For example:

1. If someone would like to start something (work, new job, etc.), he will be optimistic if it's raining a little bit before he starts.
2. If a pigeon stands up outside someone's window, that means a happy event will happen.
3. But if someone sees a blackbird, he will have a pessimistic feeling.

*Jorge Carranza--Peru*

### SUPERSTITIONS OF GOOD LUCK

Some of the more common superstitions of good luck are to eat 12 grapes according to 12 rings of a bell, or to dress in yellow cloth, as the new year is coming. To do that means to get good luck for the next year. Also, another superstition is to make a wish as the first star of the night appears.

### SUPERSTITIONS OF BAD LUCK

Walk under ladders is considered to get bad luck for that day. Also, if a person breaks a mirror, that person will get bad luck for 7 years. Another superstition is to sit at the corner of a table; that means that person will be married.

*Adi Assaf--Israel*

### Unlucky Events

In Israel we believe that if a person kills a spider it will give him bad luck. If we see a black cat, it will bring us bad luck. If a person breaks a mirror it will give him bad 7 years. If your shoes are upside down you need to return them because it will bring bad luck.

### Lucky Events

If you are going to a new place like your new apartment, a new car, or you get married, you need to walk inside with the right leg. When you see a falling star you can ask for a wish and it will come true. We believe the blue color is the lucky color. We believe 5 fingers (hand) is for luck. And if you do something bad to take this out you need to knock 3 times on wood.

*Marcelo Palacios--Ecuador*

Our superstitions say a lot about who we are, how we feel and think about our world. Superstition is also a good example of a type of belief that we can choose. Those who choose to believe find their world delivering what they expect and those who don't are not affected. I am going to talk about some superstitions in my country. Ecuador

has too much superstition, but one of the funniest and strangest that I have heard is in the New Year time. For example, women believe that they use yellow underwear exactly at midnight, they will have a really good year. Other people at midnight usually take their traveling bags and they run around their neighborhood. They do this because they want to travel in the New Year. But the most common is when people are burning all of the bad things that they have lived in the last year and it does not happen in the new year again.

*Fabiola Baez--Colombia*

If I need to write about superstition, I can see that in each country you find these beliefs. Also, I think that we have the same superstition, like the number 13, black cats, don't pass under a stairs, break a mirror, be careful with the broom when someone is sweeping that they don't pass over your feet. All of these superstitions are just beliefs that come from generation to generation. In addition, each one could happen or not, and when some of them happen to you, then you say it is true or not. While it is just a belief, everybody and every country has superstitions and some are universal, but you find people that believe and others who do not.

*Diego Arevalo--Bolivia*

In my country there's a lot of superstition, like for the New Year the people wear red underwear to have a successful year of love, or they eat 12 grapes and before you eat one you have to make a wish. An old tradition is to "challar" a new house or business with many mixed ashes, and this gives the house or the enterprise good luck and scares the bad spirits. One old tradition and superstition is to burn messages that people write to you and if you burn it it means that this message is going to come true.

*Selma Velanes--Brazil*

I think that superstition is a belief and a religious conviction. It may be cultural or personal. I grew up hearing about superstitions from my parents, relatives, and other neighbors. Here are some well-known superstitions:

1. It is a superstition not to leave a shoe upside down. It's said that to leave a shoe upside down is to leave the door open for death.
2. To leave a broom behind the door when you want a boring visitor to leave the house.
3. Not to sweep the dirt out the front door of your home because it is said that you will sweep the luck away, too.

*Ludhiana Bertocello--Brazil*

Particularly I don't believe in superstition. However, in Brazil there are many traditional superstitions.

A black cat crossing your path brings bad luck. Likewise, some people avoid walking under a ladder because it can bring bad luck. There are people who are afraid of breaking a mirror. They think it brings seven years of bad luck.

When the people are looking for good luck, they make a wish on a falling star or cross their fingers. When the people say something bad,

they try to knock on some piece of wood to send out the bad luck and bring good luck.

In Brazil, there's a singular superstition. I guess it only has in Brazil. If you want your guests to go out of your home, you need to put a broom behind the entrance door. Believe it or not, some people say that it is true. Anyway, these superstitions are in people's minds. That is what I believe.

## **Student Composition**

*R/W 31*

*Zorina Montiel*

### An Eclipse in my City

Last year, I had the opportunity to live and enjoy a beautiful natural phenomenon, a complete solar eclipse. I remember very well that day because all the city was waiting for it excited.

The phenomenon happened on January 29 and only could be seen in Maracaibo, my city. This was the last time that a total eclipse will be seen in this century. Probably in the next forty or fifty years, we can see something similar, for important scientists from different countries visited the city. Everybody was ready at home to live that wonderful experience.

That day I got up early like every day in my life because I had to go to work, and there ally my colleagues were hurrying up trying to finish quickly. They did not want to be busy in the afternoon.

At 12pm, I decided to go home. When I was driving my car, I felt the different atmosphere and a special energy involved everything and everyone. I thought that the other people also could feel the strange energy, although they were not so hurried that they did not pay attention to what was happening in that moment.

After that, I arrived home, and my family was met talking a lot about the importance of the event. They were in the family room watching the news on TV.

At 2:55pm, everybody ran to the garden for the eclipse would happen at 3pm. My father ran looking for the video camera, my mother ran also, but looking for me, my brothers and my sisters. After a while, all the sky got dark, the temperature went down and a fresh breeze filled the atmosphere. We saw the stars and two planets clearly, one of them was Venus. I could see an energy, a special energy like mist, around my body and the environment.

Finally the sun appeared, and that was beautiful, because the birds were singing and flying like every morning. It was a sunset and a sunrise in the middle of the day. Probably in the next years, I will see a similar phenomenon, but this will always be in my memory. Perhaps because it was the first time or for a special occasion with my family.