

Informational text passage written at two reading levels!

Name: _____

Friday the 13th

There are many things that people consider to be a source of bad luck. Some people believe that a broken mirror can cause years of bad luck and others are disquieted when their path is crossed by a black cat because they feel it is a bad sign. Friday the 13th is a day that causes many people apprehension because they feel that the day is unlucky.

The history behind the superstition is unclear. People have long considered the number thirteen to be unlucky. That fear is so common that there is an official name for it: triskaidekaphobia. Fear of the number thirteen is pervasive in the United States, Canada and parts of Europe. Many tall buildings do not have a 13th floor, and many airports do not use the number thirteen in their gate or flight numbers.

While the fear of Friday the 13th was popular before the 1900s, a book titled *Friday, the Thirteenth*, which was published in 1907, may have made the fear more commonly known. In the novel, a stockbroker used the fear of Friday the 13th to cause a financial panic on Wall Street. This novel may have caused the fear of Friday the 13th to become even more prevalent.

The fear of Friday the 13th is far from universal. In countries that are mostly Spanish speaking, more people are afraid of Tuesday the 13th because Tuesday is considered an unlucky day instead of Friday. In Italy, Friday the 17th is considered unlucky, although some younger Italians have been influenced by the American fear of Friday the 13th.

There are some people that don't give the day much thought, but other people are truly afraid of the day because they fear that something serious might happen to them. A research institute showed that nearly 20 million Americans consider the day to be unlucky. Some people are so afraid of the day that they refuse to work or even leave their house. One report suggests that there is around 900 million dollars in lost business on Friday the 13th because some people are too afraid to make big purchases on that day.

There is no definitive evidence that proves that Friday the 13th is truly unlucky. Some studies have shown that there are more traffic accidents on Friday the 13th, but other studies showed that there was no actual increase in accidents. Research that shows that there is no increase in accidents on Friday the 13th has likely caused some people to no longer fear the day. There are people that will always be extra cautious on that day.

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Name: _____

Friday the 13th

There are many things that people consider to be bad luck. Some people believe that a broken mirror can cause years of bad luck. Others are disquieted when their path is crossed by a black cat because they feel it is a bad sign. Friday the 13th is a day that causes many people apprehension because they feel that the day is unlucky.

The history behind the fear is not clear. People have believed the number thirteen is unlucky for centuries. That fear is so common that there is a name for it: triskaidekaphobia. Fear of the number thirteen is pervasive in the United States, Canada and parts of Europe. Many tall buildings do not have a 13th floor, and many airports do not use the number thirteen in their gate or flight numbers.

A book titled *Friday, the Thirteenth*, which was published in 1907, may have made the fear more commonly known. In the book, a stockbroker used the fear of Friday the 13th to cause a financial panic on Wall Street. This book may have caused the fear of Friday the 13th to become even more prevalent.

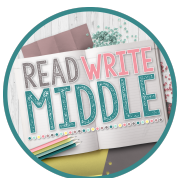
The fear of Friday the 13th is not universal. In some countries, people are afraid of Tuesday the 13th because Tuesday is considered an unlucky day instead of Friday. In Italy, Friday the 17th is considered unlucky. Some younger Italians have been influenced by the American fear of Friday the 13th.

There are some people that don't give the day much thought. There are other people who are truly afraid of the day because they fear that something serious might happen to them. One report showed that nearly 20 million Americans feel the day is unlucky. Some people are so afraid of the day that they refuse to work or leave their house. One report shows that there is around 900 million dollars in lost business on Friday the 13th.

There is no definitive evidence that proves that Friday the 13th is truly unlucky. Some studies have shown that there are more traffic accidents on Friday the 13th, but other studies showed that there were not. Research that shows that there is no increase in accidents on Friday the 13th has likely caused some people to no longer fear the day. There are people that will always be extra cautious on that day.

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Differentiated context clues activity!

Name: _____

Context Clues

Look back in the passage and use context clues to determine the meaning of each word. Circle the answer and then write down the context clues from the text that helped you determine the answer.

- disquieted
a. excited b. bored c. annoyed
context clues: _____
- apprehension
a. calmness b. anxiety c. random
context clues: _____
- phobia
a. happiness b. fear c. persuade
context clues: _____
- pervasive
a. widespread b. unknown c. contained
context clues: _____
- prevalent
a. rare b. common c. powerful
context clues: _____
- universal
a. statewide b. worldwide c. nationwide
context clues: _____
- definitive
a. uncertain b. false c. reliable
context clues: _____

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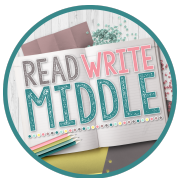
Name: _____

Context Clues

Look back in the passage and use context clues to determine the meaning of each word. Determine what each word means based on the way it is used in the passage and then write down the context clues from the text that helped you.

- disquieted: _____
context clues: _____
- apprehension: _____
context clues: _____
- phobia: _____
context clues: _____
- pervasive: _____
context clues: _____
- prevalent: _____
context clues: _____
- universal: _____
context clues: _____
- definitive: _____
context clues: _____

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Writing assignment and comprehension questions also included!!

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Comprehension Questions

Answer the following questions using evidence from the text to support your answer.

1. What is one reason that people may be afraid of Friday the 13th?

2. What evidence in the text implies that the fear of the number 13 is common?

3. Do people all over the world fear Friday the 13th?

4. Why would the author include information about how much money is lost on Friday the 13th?

5. How could research influence whether or not someone believes that Friday the 13th is unlucky?

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Writing Assignment

The fear of Friday the 13th is only common in some parts of the world. Different cultures have different fears and superstitions. Imagine that you are writing to someone that does not understand why people consider Friday the 13th to be unlucky. You need to explain your own prior knowledge about Friday the 13th, including any rumors you may have heard about that day. Also include information from the passage to help your reader understand the issue. Make sure you:

- explain your own prior knowledge about Friday the 13th
- use evidence from the text
- make sure you proofread your writing for correct spelling and grammar issues

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