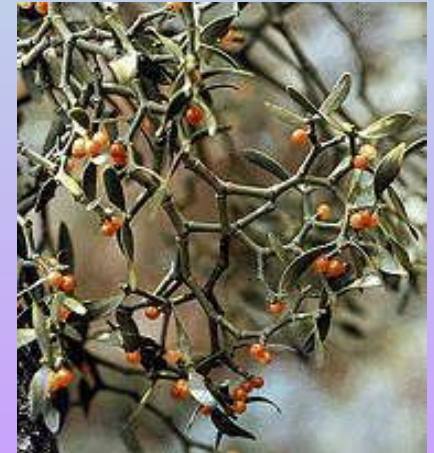




# Superstitions



# ***Dalmatian dog***

(an omen of good luck) –

to meet a spotted dog in the street is lucky. The sight of a spotted dog is supposed to bring luck in exams if you cross your fingers. In Russia it is more common to observe the ritual of eating five-petal lilac flowers before exams.



# ***Crow*** (an omen)

usually brings sorrow.  
But in Britain, they say, when one crow is seen, it's sign of bad luck; two, of good luck; three, of death; and four, of a wedding. In Russia, a crow's cawing is a bad omen.



# *Cuckoo* (a divination)

the observance of successive notes in a cuckoo song is believed to anticipate the number of years you are supposed to live. In Britain, people say,

“Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cherry tree,  
Pretty bird, come to tell me,  
How many years before you fly,  
How many years before I die?”

In Russia, they say,  
“Кукушка, кукушка, сколько лет  
мне жить?”



# ***Cricket*** (an omen)

usually brings  
sorrow. Both in  
Russia and  
Britain, if a cricket  
continues  
chirping, it is a  
sign of death.



# ***Black cat*** (an omen)

is a sign of good luck and bad luck in Britain.

It is lucky to possess and touch a black cat, but if a sailor meets a black cat when on his way to join a ship he will turn back.

In Russia, as in Britain, if a black cat crosses your path it is a very unlucky omen.





# ***Moth*** (an omen)

is a sign of a coming letter. In Britain, it is believed that if a moth persists flying around, you are about to receive a letter. The size of the moth determines the size of the letter. In Russia, it is said that a spider is the sign of a letter coming.





# ***Mirror*** (a divination)

is used to see future spouse, both in Britain and Russia. Here are some instructions how to do it: “Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it, and some tradition say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your future companion will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.”



# ***Mistletoe*** (a protection)

is believed to protect against all injury from either fire or water. It is considered very unlucky for a house unless some mistletoe and holly are brought in at Christmas. It should always be kept hanging till the following Christmas. These plants are not so popular in Russia.



# *Ladybird* (an omen and divination)



is a very lucky, particularly, if it lands on you.

It was a favorite game among little British girls to place a lady-bird on the back of the hand, and then toss it into the air, saying, “Lady-cow, lady-cow, fly away, free! Tell me which way my wedding is to be, up hill, or down hill, or towards the Brown Clee!”

In Russia, little girls say, “Божья коровка, божья коровка, полети на небо, принеси нам хлеба, сушек, плюшек и сладеньких ватрушек”.

# *Knife* (an omen)

is a sign of a newcomer both in Russia and Britain. If a knife falls, it is a sign that a stranger, a man, will come to the house during the day; a small knife means, a short man; a large knife means, a tall man.



# *Horseshoe*

protect, brings luck.

People hang a horseshoe over doors “for lucky”, in Russia and Britain.

It is also lucky to find a horseshoe and pick it.



# ***Umbrella*** (an omen)

is considered unlucky as a gift. An umbrella laid on the table will ensure a quarrel. Opening an umbrella indoors is considered unlucky in Britain. In Russia this domestic belief is not widely observed.

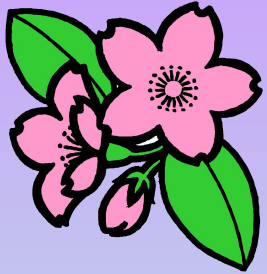


# *Chimney sweep* (an omen)

is one of the luckiest signs widely observed in Britain. Russian people also think it is lucky to meet a chimney sweep in the street, though you can hardly see any today.



# *Divide the superstitions into three groups:*



- 1) *those that coincide;*
- 2) *those that differ very much;*
- 3) *those that are similar but differ slightly.*

- In Britain some people believe that black cats bring good luck , but in the US they are thought to bring bad luck.
- A white lily is often used as a symbol of purity and beauty. Avoid bringing lilies when invited to a British home as they suggest death.
- In British mythology mistletoe is connected with the druids who regarded it as a sacred plant.Mistletoe is often hung in rooms at Christmas because there is a tradition that one may kiss anyone of the opposite sex who is under it.
- Hanging a horseshoe over the door brings good luck.
- Something in the shape of a horseshoe , such as a decorative card , is given at weddings to bring good luck.
- Passing under a ladder brings bad luck.
- Finding a penny brings good luck ( “See a penny, pick it up, all day long you’ll have good “)
- Many British children believe that fairies live at the bottom of their gardens, and British and American children believe that the Tooth Fairy replaces with money any teeth that come out and are put under the pillows.
- If you make a wish on a falling (shooting)star, your wish will come true.
- A four- leaf clover brings good luck..
- Lightning never strikes twice in the same place (= the same piece of bad luck does not happen to a person twice.)
- The number thirteen brings bad luck.
- In the theatre,rather than wish an actor, playwright, etc. “Good luck” one should say “Break a leg”.
- If you break a mirror it will bring bad luck.
- If you spill salt you should take a little and throw it over your left shoulder into the face of the devil.
- In the theatre, Shakespeare’s play “Macbeth” should be spoken of as the “Scottish Play” and not by name.
- Seeing two magpies together brings good luck.
- Seeing one magpie is unlucky.
- Friday when it is the 13-th day of a month is unlucky ( Black Friday.)





Those that coincide

Those that differ very much



Those that are similar but differ slightly

superstitions;

# Match these expressions with their Russian equivalents

## WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

## RUSSIAN EQUIVALENTS

folk beliefs/old wives' tales;  
a good/evil omen;  
evil eye;  
divination;  
magic spell;  
taboo word, "Old Nick" – the devil;  
to have the gift of divination;  
to cross one's fingers;  
to touch wood;  
to be a good omen;  
to invite evil;  
to invite good fortune/to bring luck;  
to practice rituals;  
to ward off catastrophe;  
to foretell one's destiny;  
to protect from evil spirit/witches;  
to believe in witchcraft;  
to make a two finger gesture;  
to hang a horseshoe at the head of the bedstead;  
talk of the Devil and he's bound to appear;  
a cat nine lives;



гадание, пророчество;  
сглаз;  
запретное слово ("Старина Ник" – дьявол);  
бытовые поверья;  
заклинания, колдовство;  
хорошее/плохое предзнаменование, знак;  
суеверие;  
совершать обряды;  
верить в колдовство;  
защищать от злых духов, ведьм;  
делать знак от сглаза;  
постучать по дереву;  
предсказывать судьбу;  
быть знаменем удачи;  
отвратить несчастье, катастрофу;  
"накаркать";  
иметь дар предсказывать что-либо;  
приносить удачу;  
скрещивать пальцы;  
заговори о черте, и он появится;  
вешать подкову у изголовья кровати;  
у кошки девять жизней;

# ***Study the following opinions and chooses the ones which are closest***

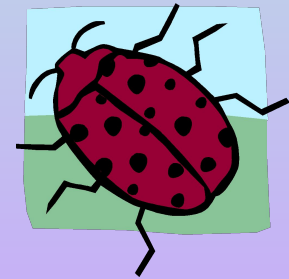
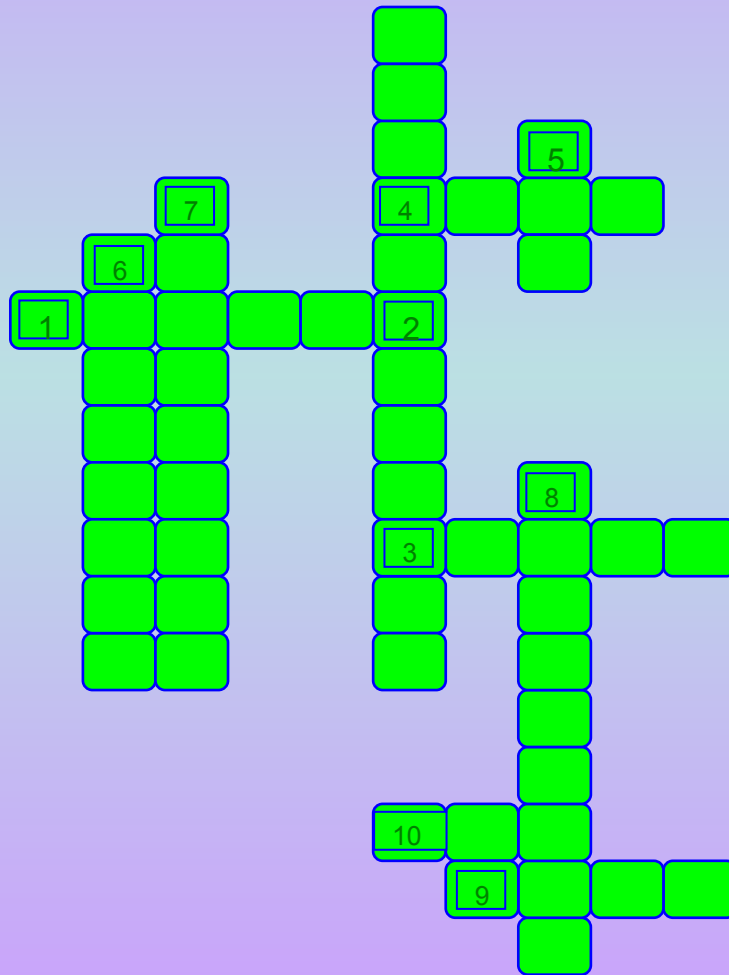
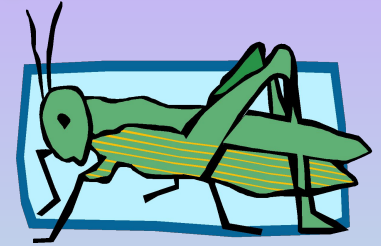
## **PRO**

the belief in omens and witchcraft in universal;  
it's part of our everyday life;  
scientists and the couldn't get superstition observances out of people's minds;  
some people have healing hands, they can help us;  
some rituals are part of folklore;  
it's a lovely tradition to deck houses with holly and ivy;  
superstitions can tell you something about national traits;  
people feel protected when observing such practices;  
some superstitions are so popular that they have become part of our language, we say "Cross fingers" or "Touch wood" without ever putting the words into actions;  
our mothers and grandmothers cherish some superstitions;  
some ritual help you to live in peace and harmony with nature and you yourself;  
important events such as weddings and funerals are always accompanied by superstitious observances.

## **CON**

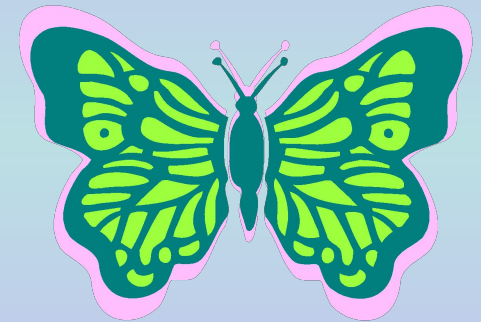
science and the Christian Church curse superstitious practices;  
such folk beliefs are dangerous (e.g.pins, wax fingers), it's an interference that can damage natural defense of your body;  
omens, such as a cat or hare crossing one's way, are dinful and diabolical;  
I agree with Orthodox priests who say that "magic cures" can ruin your health and then it may be too late to ask for a doctor's help;  
it's cheat;  
belief in omens and divinations are based only on coincidences;  
it's impossible for a modern emulated person to believe that such things as comets or stars can forecast our destiny;  
practicing witchcraft should be forbidden and punished by law;  
the so-called white or black magicians cheat you because they want your money;  
if you ask a "magician" for help he or she can gain control over you and destroy your life;  
you can't disarm evil with gifts or gestures.

# Crossword



# Crossword.

1. It is a vegetable that protects from evil.
2. (down)It is an insect which brings sorrow
3. (up) It is a bird. Its song is believed to anticipate the number of years you are supposed to live.
4. It is a sign of a newcomer both in Russia and Britain.
5. This bird usually brings sorrow.
6. Dalmatian is a kind of a .....
7. It is very lucky,particularly, if it lands on you.
8. This plant is a symbol of Christmas.
9. People hang it over doors “for luck” in Russia and Britain.
10. It is a sign of a coming letter in Britain.
11. It is a sign of good luck in Britain and bad luck in Russia.



## **Answers:**

- 1.garlic. 2.(down) cricket. 2 (up) cuckoo. 3.knife. 4. crow. 5. dog. 6. ladybird.  
7. horseshoe 8. mistletoe. 9.moth 10. cat.