


**READING** ■ Superstitions

I can understand a text about numbers.

- 1 Look at the photo of the buttons in the lift. What do you notice? Why do you think this happens?
- 2  232 Read the text. Add sentences a–e to the paragraphs. There is one sentence that you do not need. Then listen and check.
  - a Maybe he'll change the number to 12½!
  - b So a building whose top floor is 50 may only have 36 floors.
  - c In 2016 a lot of children will be eight years old in China!
  - d Seven is a lucky number in most cultures.
  - e Eight is also a popular number in phone numbers, addresses and PIN numbers.

- 3 **BUILD YOUR VOCABULARY** Check the meaning of the words in blue in the text. Then complete the sentences.
  - 1 She's happy, healthy and rich. She's \_\_\_\_.
  - 2 Many people have a \_\_\_\_ of the dark.
  - 3 My aunt doesn't like black cats. She's very \_\_\_\_.
  - 4 I never win anything. I'm \_\_\_\_.
  - 5 I think the number 13 is unlucky. It's my \_\_\_\_.
- 4 **ABOUT YOU** Ask and answer the questions.
  - 1 Are you superstitious about any numbers?
  - 2 What superstitions can bring you good or bad fortune?
  - 3 Do you have a fear of anything?
  - 4 Do you have a lucky number?
  - 5 Do you think you are a lucky person or an unlucky person? Why?

# Lucky numbers

At eight minutes past eight on the eighth day of the eighth month of 2008, the Olympic Games started in Beijing. In China eight is a **lucky** number, and people believe that an eight in your date of birth will bring good fortune. Millions of Chinese people tried to have an 'Olympic baby' and in 2008 there were a lot more births than in a normal year. <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_

But why eight? In Mandarin, the pronunciation for eight (*ba*) sounds similar to the word for 'prosperity'. In 1992 someone paid \$640,000 for a car number plate with the single number 8 on it. <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_

In contrast, you won't be lucky in China if you have the number four in your date of birth. The number four in Mandarin (*si*) sounds like the word for 'death', so many people think it is an **unlucky** number, which will bring you bad fortune. In many East Asian countries buildings don't have any floor numbers with a four in them. <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_

In some European countries and in the USA, the unlucky number is thirteen. The **superstition** started because Judas was the thirteenth person at the Last Supper. People with a **fear** of the number thirteen are triskaidekaphobic. Unfortunately the phobia can also affect people who aren't **superstitious**, like the man who was happy to buy house number 13 in his road, but couldn't sell it. <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_



## Workbook

- 1 ★  Read the text. Tick ✓ the correct box.

The text is about ...

- a  the fact that many sports stars have lots of good luck.  
b  the beliefs that sports stars have about what will give them good or bad luck.  
c  the fact that successful sports people are more superstitious than other people.

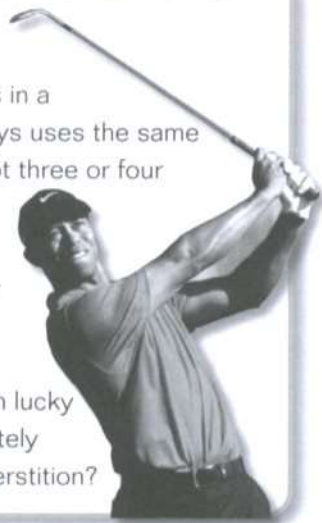
### Sports stars and their superstitions

If you think about famous sports stars, you'll see that they sometimes wear special clothes for important matches. For example, the American golfer Tiger Woods always wears red and black clothes for the last game of a tournament. Why do people do this? They're superstitious, of course. Some players have the fear that if they don't wear their 'lucky' clothes, they won't be so successful.

Many footballers are famous for their superstitions. Spanish star Fernando Torres believes the number three will bring him good fortune. Before a match he always puts out three football shirts and three pairs of shorts, socks and boots. He doesn't wear all three while he is playing, however!

Superstitions are important in tennis too. When the Croatian tennis champion Goran Ivanisevic played at Wimbledon he always ate the same dinner at the same restaurant every night, and finished the meal with ice cream. And when American tennis star Serena Williams plays in a tournament, she always uses the same shower. She's also got three or four lucky dresses.

What do you think? Will special clothes or rituals bring luck and prosperity? If your favourite team puts on lucky shorts, will they definitely win, or is it just a superstition?



- 2 ★★  Read the text again. Write the person.

Who ...

... puts out more than one shirt before a match?

Fernando Torres

- 1 ... always wears clothes in a special colour?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
2 ... went to the same restaurant every night?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
3 ... thinks the number three is lucky?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
4 ... goes in the same shower?  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 3 ★★★ Answer the questions. Write complete sentences.

What will you see if you look carefully at your favourite sports stars?

They sometimes wear special clothes for important matches.

- 1 When does Tiger Woods wear red and black clothes?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
2 Why do players sometimes wear special things?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
3 What does Fernando Torres put out before a match?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
4 Which stars have got a superstition that is not related to clothes?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Build your vocabulary

- 4 ★★  Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

lucky superstition superstitious fear

In the UK people say that a black cat is lucky.

- 1 My little sister has a \_\_\_\_\_ of the dark, so she sleeps with the light on.  
2 Many sports stars are very \_\_\_\_\_ about the clothes they wear.  
3 I've got a \_\_\_\_\_: I always use the same pen in my exams.

**Lucky Numbers**  
**Audio**

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Reading

1 b

2

1 Tiger Woods

2 Goran Ivanisevic

3 Fernando Torres

4 Serena Williams

3 Possible answers:

1 He wears them for the last game of a tournament.

2 They fear that if they don't wear special things, they'll lose.

3 He puts out three shirts and three pairs of shorts, socks and boots.

4 Goran Ivanisevic and Serena Williams have got a superstition that is not related to clothes.

4

1 fear

2 superstitious

3 superstition