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Superstition forces airline logo change

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22nd February, 2007

THE ARTICLE

Superstition forces airline logo change

Superstition has forced a European airline to change its logo. New Belgian carrier Brussels Airlines had to change its 13-red-dot logo on the tail of all its planes because of a flood of complaints from passengers about the combination of thirteen red balls representing bad luck. This number is unlucky in Western culture and many would-be passengers thought it just wouldn't do on an airplane. Airline officials were taken aback by the volume of disapproving mail they received. Particularly upset was the original logo's designer Ronane Holt. She said the thirteen dots "looked just right" and had extra significance because the number of dots matched the destinations it flew to in Africa. The design, in the shape of a "b", also resembled the pattern of lights on an airport runway as planes taxied before take off.

All of the airline's planes now have to go back to their hangars for a paint job. A fourteenth red dot will be added to the top of the "b". However, this may not go down well in China, where the number fourteen is unlucky. One-four in Mandarin sounds like the phrase "to want to die". Passengers at Brussels airport were in two minds as to whether or not they thought the fourteen-dot logo would bring better luck. Frequent business flyer Rene Charles said: "In this day and age, superstitions are a little silly. There is no logic behind them." However, she did admit that she shared the concerns of other passengers and was happier that the newer logo has an extra dot. Brussels Airlines is the result of a merger between SN Brussels Airlines and Virgin Express. It begins flying, with the fourteen dots, on March 25.

WARM-UPS

1. SUPERSTITIONS: Students write down superstitions from their country on slips of paper (one for each superstition). The teacher writes these on the board. In pairs/groups, students guess which country the superstitions are from. Change partner(s) and talk more about the superstitions.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

Superstitions / airlines / logos / red dots / the number 13 / Western culture / paint / bad luck / passengers / logic / this day and age / silly things / mergers

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. AIRLINE LOGOS: Go to the Internet and find different airplane logos (your teacher might bring some to class). With your partner(s) discuss the meaning of the logos. Vote on which you think are best and which you think are worst. Walk around the class and try to persuade other students your best/worst decisions are better than their decisions.

4. MY LOGO: Spend a few minutes drawing a quick sketch of a logo that you could use for yourself. Walk around the class and explain the meaning of the logo to other students. Ask for ideas and advice on how to improve your logo. Take a vote on the best ones. (The Brussels Airlines logo is on page 13 – unlucky for some ☺)

5. LOGIC: Look at these superstitions. Decide which are real and which are made up. With your partner(s), try to find the logic behind them. Switch partners and explain your reasons. Vote on the most likely reasons behind the superstitions.

- Never cut your nails after dark
- Touching wood brings luck
- Never eat KFC fries in McDonald's
- Carrying a rabbit's foot for luck
- Study English before breakfast
- Walking under a ladder is unlucky
- A broken mirror brings bad luck
- Singing in the shower is lucky

6. NOT ME!!!: Are you superstitious? Are there numbers you do not like? Are there small routines or rituals you have when taking exams? Do you have lucky charms? Write down your superstitions and discuss them with your partner(s).

7. LOGO: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "logo". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

NOTE: Triskaidekophobia is the name for the fear of the number 13.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. An airline changed its logo because it had a big, red "13" in it. T / F
- b. The airline received a flood of emails from complaining passengers. T / F
- c. Airline officials were not surprised at how many emails they got. T / F
- d. "Thirteen" is the number of African destinations the airline flies to. T / F
- e. Airline officials have decided to paint 14 dots on their airplanes. T / F
- f. The number 14 is lucky everywhere in the world. T / F
- g. A frequent business flyer said superstitions are very logical. T / F
- h. Brussels Airlines is the result of a merger with Virgin Express. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| a. flood | meaning |
| b. would-be | be liked |
| c. taken aback | union |
| d. significance | potential |
| e. resembled | confess |
| f. go down well | deluge |
| g. in two minds | looked like |
| h. logic | undecided |
| i. admit | shocked |
| j. merger | reason |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| a. a flood of | the destinations it flew to |
| b. would-be passengers thought | pattern of lights on an airport runway |
| c. officials were taken | and age |
| d. the number of dots matched | it just wouldn't do |
| e. resembled the | well in China |
| f. go back to their hangars | complaints from passengers |
| g. this may not go down | for a paint job |
| h. Passengers at Brussels airport | aback by the volume of disapproving mail |
| i. In this day | concerns of other passengers |
| j. she shared the | were in two minds |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Superstition forces airline logo change

Superstition has _____ a European airline to change its logo. New Belgian carrier Brussels Airlines had to change its 13-red-dot logo on the tail of all its planes because of a _____ of complaints from passengers about the combination of thirteen red balls _____ bad luck. This number is unlucky in Western culture and many would-be passengers thought it just _____ do on an airplane. Airline officials were taken aback by the _____ of disapproving mail they received. Particularly _____ was the original logo's designer Ronane Holt. She said the thirteen dots "looked just _____" and had extra significance because the number of dots matched the destinations it flew to in Africa. The design, in the shape of a "b", also resembled the pattern of lights on an airport runway as planes _____ before take off.

All of the airline's planes now have to go back to their _____ for a paint job. A fourteenth red dot will be added to the top of the "b". However, this may not _____ down well in China, where the number fourteen is unlucky. One-four in Mandarin sounds like the _____ "to want to die". Passengers at Brussels airport were in two _____ as to whether or not they thought the fourteen-dot logo would bring better luck. _____ business flyer Rene Charles said: "In this day and _____, superstitions are a little silly. There is no logic _____ them." However, she did admit that she shared the concerns of other passengers and was happier that the newer logo has an extra dot. Brussels Airlines is the _____ of a merger between SN Brussels Airlines and Virgin Express. It begins flying, with the fourteen dots, on March 25.

right
wouldn't
flood
upset
forced
taxied
representing
volume
phrase
result
go
age
hangars
frequent
behind
minds

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Superstition forces airline logo change

Superstition _____ European airline to change its logo. New Belgian carrier Brussels Airlines had to change its 13-red-dot _____ its planes because of a flood of complaints from passengers about the combination of thirteen red balls representing bad luck. This number is unlucky in Western culture _____ passengers thought it just wouldn't do on an airplane. Airline officials _____ the volume of disapproving mail they received. Particularly upset was the original logo's designer Ronane Holt. She said the thirteen dots " _____ " and had extra significance because the number of dots matched the destinations it flew to in Africa. The design, in the shape of a "b", also resembled the pattern of lights on an airport runway as planes _____.

All of the airline's planes now have to go back _____ a paint job. A fourteenth red dot will be added _____. However, this may not go down well in China, where the number fourteen is unlucky. One-four in Mandarin _____ "to want to die". Passengers at Brussels airport were in two minds as to whether or not they thought the fourteen-dot logo would bring better luck. Frequent business flyer Rene Charles said: " _____, superstitions are a little silly. There is no logic behind them." However, she did admit that _____ other passengers and was happier that the newer logo has an extra dot. Brussels Airlines _____ merger between SN Brussels Airlines and Virgin Express. It begins flying, with the fourteen dots, on March 25.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'bad' and 'luck'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "SUPERSTITIONS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about superstitions.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• forced• flood• combination• volume• extra• take off	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• paint• phrase• frequent• age• result• March 25
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What adjectives would you use to describe this story and why?
- c) Are you a superstitious person?
- d) Would the 13 dots on the logo have bothered you?
- e) Do you worry about flying and airplane safety?
- f) If you thought something about an airline was unlucky, would you write an email to complain?
- g) Do you have any small rituals/habits you do when you fly?
- h) Do you believe in fate?
- i) What numbers do you consider to be lucky or unlucky?
- j) Would you feel safer flying with Brussels Airlines if the logo had 13 or 14 red dots?



STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What do you think about what you read?
- c) What do you think of the logo of your country's airline?
- d) What do you think of the Brussels Airlines logo (see p.13)?
- e) How do you think superstitions begin and become part of our culture?
- f) Do you think all superstitions are old, or do new ones come along?
- g) Who is the most superstitious person you know?
- h) Do you have anything you keep with you or use for luck?
- i) Do you think Brussels Airlines should find a fourteenth African destination to match the fourteenth red dot?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a) What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b) Was there a question you didn't like?
- c) Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d) What did you like talking about?
- e) Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

YOUR AIRLINE: In pairs / groups. You are starting a new airline. Fill in the details of the table together.

DECISIONS	REASONS WHY
Airline name	
Slogan	
Logo	
Airplane colours	
Kind of service	
Flight attendant uniform	
How to beat your competitors	

Change partners and share your ideas. Give each other advice on better ideas for the airlines.

Give a presentation of your ideas to your class. Vote on the best one(s).

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Superstition forces airline logo change

Superstition has (1) _____ a European airline to change its logo. New Belgian carrier Brussels Airlines had to change its 13-red-dot logo on the tail of all its planes because of a (2) _____ of complaints from passengers about the combination of thirteen red balls representing bad luck. This number is unlucky in Western culture and many (3) _____ passengers thought it just wouldn't do on an airplane. Airline officials were (4) _____ aback by the volume of disapproving mail they received. Particularly upset was the original logo's designer Ronane Holt. She said the thirteen dots "looked just right" and had extra significance because the number of dots matched the destinations it (5) _____ to in Africa. The design, in the shape of a "b", also resembled the pattern of lights on an airport runway as planes (6) _____ before take off.

All of the airline's planes now have to go back to their (7) _____ for a paint job. A fourteenth red dot will be added to the top of the "b". However, this may not go (8) _____ well in China, where the number fourteen is unlucky. One-four in Mandarin sounds like the phrase "to want to die". Passengers at Brussels airport were (9) _____ two minds as to whether or not they thought the fourteen-dot logo would bring better luck. Frequent business flyer Rene Charles said: "In this day and (10) _____, superstitions are a little silly. There is no logic behind them." However, she did (11) _____ that she shared the concerns of other passengers and was happier that the newer logo has an extra dot. Brussels Airlines is the result (12) _____ a merger between SN Brussels Airlines and Virgin Express. It begins flying, with the fourteen dots, on March 25.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. | (a) force | (b) forced | (c) forces | (d) forceful |
| 2. | (a) flood | (b) flooding | (c) flooded | (d) floods |
| 3. | (a) would | (b) would've | (c) would have | (d) would-be |
| 4. | (a) presented | (b) stolen | (c) given | (d) taken |
| 5. | (a) flying | (b) fly | (c) flew | (d) flown |
| 6. | (a) taxied | (b) taxi | (c) taxis | (d) taxed |
| 7. | (a) hangouts | (b) hangings | (c) hangars | (d) hangers |
| 8. | (a) out | (b) in | (c) down | (d) up |
| 9. | (a) thinking | (b) having | (c) in | (d) on |
| 10. | (a) age | (b) aged | (c) ageless | (d) ageing |
| 11. | (a) from | (b) of | (c) with | (d) by |
| 12. | (a) importance | (b) tension | (c) pressured | (d) stressed |

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about the Brussels Airlines logo story. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. AIRLINE LOGO POSTER: Make a poster showing airline logos. Make sure you write a description and history of the logos. Show your poster to your class in the next lesson. Vote on the best one

4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Write a magazine article about how superstitions affect people's lives. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the CEO of Brussels Airlines. Tell him/her what you think about the airline adding an extra dot. Ask him/her three questions. Give him/her three pieces of advice. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

6. SURVEY: Ask all the people you know about their superstitions. Write a short report. Read your report to your classmates in your next lesson.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. T e. T f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| a. flood | deluge |
| b. would-be | potential |
| c. taken aback | shocked |
| d. significance | meaning |
| e. resembled | looked like |
| f. go down well | be liked |
| g. in two minds | undecided |
| h. logic | reason |
| i. admit | confess |
| j. merger | union |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| a. a flood of | complaints from passengers |
| b. would-be passengers thought | it just wouldn't do |
| c. officials were taken | aback by the volume of disapproving mail |
| d. the number of dots matched | the destinations it flew to |
| e. resembled the | pattern of lights on an airport runway |
| f. go back to their hangars | for a paint job |
| g. this may not go down | well in China |
| h. Passengers at Brussels airport | were in two minds |
| i. In this day | and age |
| j. she shared the | concerns of other passengers |

GAP FILL:

Superstition forces airline logo change

Superstition has **forced** a European airline to change its logo. New Belgian carrier Brussels Airlines had to change its 13-red-dot logo on the tail of all its planes because of a **flood** of complaints from passengers about the combination of thirteen red balls **representing** bad luck. This number is unlucky in Western culture and many would-be passengers thought it just **wouldn't** do on an airplane. Airline officials were taken aback by the **volume** of disapproving mail they received. Particularly **upset** was the original logo's designer Ronane Holt. She said the thirteen dots "looked just **right**" and had extra significance because the number of dots matched the destinations it flew to in Africa. The design, in the shape of a "b", also resembled the pattern of lights on an airport runway as planes **taxied** before take off.

All of the airline's planes now have to go back to their **hangars** for a paint job. A fourteenth red dot will be added to the top of the "b". However, this may not **go** down well in China, where the number fourteen is unlucky. One-four in Mandarin sounds like the **phrase** "to want to die". Passengers at Brussels airport were in two **minds** as to whether or not they thought the fourteen-dot logo would bring better luck. **Frequent** business flyer Rene Charles said: "In this day and **age**, superstitions are a little silly. There is no logic **behind** them." However, she did admit that she shared the concerns of other passengers and was happier that the newer logo has an extra dot. Brussels Airlines is the **result** of a merger between SN Brussels Airlines and Virgin Express. It begins flying, with the fourteen dots, on March 25.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - b 2 - a 3 - d 4 - d 5 - c 6 - a 7 - c 8 - c 9 - c 10 - a 11 - d 12 - b

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THIS IS PAGE 13

BRUSSELS AIRLINES' OLD 13-DOT LOGO



<http://company.brusselsairlines.com/en/home/>