

37 *Facts and Myths*

Student A

MYTHS

1. It is said of a person who has suffered a terrible shock that their hair turns _____
2. It is said that you see your life flashing in front of your eyes _____
3. It is believed that the best way to cure someone of hiccups is _____
4. Eating fish is said to be good for _____
5. It is said that drinking sea water _____
6. It is believed that a camel's hump contains _____

FACTS

- a. Hair is already dead when it has emerged from the skin, so it cannot contribute to a person's strength or virility.
- b. Ostriches may listen for sounds with their heads close to the ground; but if they really buried their heads in the sand, they would probably suffocate.
- c. In the United States, white eggs are thought to be purer than brown eggs, while in Britain, brown eggs are considered to be superior to white eggs. In fact, the color of the eggshell depends merely on the kind of hen.
- d. In fact, they are caused by viruses, which are passed from person to person. If they were caused by the cold, Eskimos would have them all the time.
- e. A mouse is equally fond of sweet food. What is considered to be an animal's preference for a particular food is most likely to be the food we are used to giving them.
- f. Taking into account the proportional sizes of the bodies, the weight of the brain in both sexes is about equal. Anyway, there is no evidence to say that the size of the brain is related to the intelligence of its owner.



Student B

MYTHS

- a. It is said that hairy men are _____
- b. Ostriches are said to hide by _____
- c. Brown eggs are believed to be _____
- d. It is commonly believed that colds are caused by _____
- e. A mouse's favorite food is believed to be _____
- f. A woman's brain is believed by some people to be _____

FACTS

1. In fact, it would take weeks for a head of hair to change color. Hair is dead once it has grown out of the head. It grows only a couple of centimeters per month.
2. Nobody has come back from the grave to confirm it, but there are many cases of people being saved from near death who say that they did *not* see the events of their past life passing before their eyes.
3. First of all, more people die of shock than hiccups! But research into cures for hiccups shows that if a sufferer believes a particular treatment will succeed, it usually does. The cure is, therefore, at least partly psychological.
4. No particular food is good for one specific part of the body. A balanced diet will satisfy all the body's requirements.
5. It may contain harmful chemicals, but there is nothing in sea water which causes madness. However, drinking large quantities will poison the kidneys.
6. The hump of the camel contains fat which the animal can live on for a week or ten days. But there is no reservoir in its hump.



Facts and Myths

Worksheet

37

ACTIVITY

Pairwork: writing, speaking

AIM

To guess common myths and compare them with the facts that disprove them.

GRAMMAR AND FUNCTIONS

Passive constructions to show that you're not sure of the truth of a statement, or to show that you want to distance yourself from it: *it is said that...*, *it is believed that...*

VOCABULARY

Common myths

PREPARATION

Make one copy of the worksheet for each pair of students in the class and cut it up as indicated.

TIME

20 minutes

PROCEDURE

1. Ask the students if they have heard that eating carrots enables you to see in the dark. Discuss whether there is any scientific explanation for this myth, and ask them to suggest any other myths that they know of.
2. Explain that they are going to read about some common myths and the facts that disprove them.
3. Divide the class into Group A and Group B, and ask the students to work with a partner from the same group.
4. Give a copy of the Student A section of the worksheet to each student in Group A and a copy of the Student B section to each student in Group B.
5. Explain that students in Group A have the facts corresponding to the myths on Group B's worksheets and Group B students have the facts corresponding to the myths on Group A's worksheets. Tell them that in a few moments, they are going to compare them. But first, their task is to complete the myths on their own worksheets. If they are not familiar with these myths, they should make them up. They should work with their partner, but all students should complete the myths on their own worksheet.
6. When they have completed the myths, ask them to work with a partner from the other group, that is one student from Group A works with one student from Group B.
7. Ask them to take turns reading out their myths. Their partner checks to see if they have completed the myth correctly by reading out the corresponding fact.