

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF MAGIC

Mark It on the Map

West Africa, Ghana, Egypt, Papua New Guinea, West Indies

Introduction

Have students read “Editor’s Note” on page 3. Point out that magic can mean magic tricks or a belief in magical happenings. Discuss the idea that magic can be a way of asking for spiritual help. Instruct students to read to find out how some people believe that magic can help them solve their problems.

Questions for Discussion

- How is magic in some cultures similar to religion? How is it similar to science?
- How can magic in some cultures be used to punish evildoers?
- Why did Mrs. Number Three let everyone stay at her inn, even if they could not pay? (See “The Magic Pancakes at the Footbridge Tavern” on pages 8–10.)
- What are some ways people use magic charms to help them in love?
- What is a flexogram? How is it different from origami?
- Why is calligraphy, the art of beautiful writing, important to Muslims? What is the importance of the Qur’an (Koran)?
- How is writing used in making magic among some Muslims?
- What do Islamic amulets contain? Where are they placed or worn?
- What do ventriloquists do to entertain us?
- Why must a magician be very skillful to do close-up magic?
- Describe some magic tricks magicians do.
- What is sympathetic magic? Give some examples of practices that the Murik people follow to protect their babies and unborn children.
- Why do the Murik fear the ghosts of dead grandparents?

Writing Workout

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- If you have ever carried a lucky charm, write an essay explaining how you think it helped you.
- Write a story in which magic is used to bring good fortune to deserving people and to punish wrongdoers.
- Make up a magic chant or spell. Encourage your classmates to do the same, then collect these chants in an illustrated booklet.
- Write out the instructions for a magic trick. Give the instructions to a friend to see if they are easy to follow. If not, rewrite them with your friend’s help.
- On page 7, author Steven Rubenstein says, “No matter how different we are from one another, human beings can always understand other human beings.” Write a paragraph telling how a story or information in this issue helped you understand why some people believe in magic.

Viewpoints

Ask students whether they believe in magic. Have them explain why or why not.

Then and Now

Invite the class to brainstorm superstitions that many people used to have. Take a class poll to see which ones students still believe in. Students also could interview family and friends and report the results to the class.

Get Into Art

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Make an exhibit of magical objects—charms; a magic wand; signs with magic words, phrases, spells, and chants; and other objects associated with magical events.
- Design and make a special magician’s costume for yourself.
- Create an amulet (or several) to be worn or to place as protection over the door to your house.
- Follow the directions on pages 15–17 to create a flexogram.

Vocabulary

anthropologist	synagogue
moral	ritual
shaman	fertility
generator	goblet
penance	incense
odorous	origami
hexagon	Islam
Muslim	calligraphy
amulet	mystify
ventriloquist	cabaret
formidable	nocturnal

Just for Fun

- Have a student volunteer bake a delicious lemon chiffon cake by following the recipe “Lemon Magic” on pages 22–23.
- Challenge students to complete “Presto Change-o!” on page 34.
- Suggest that students read “Mystery Answer” on pages 35–36 and play this trick on their family and friends. Then have them report their experiences to the class.

Magic Show

Ask students to organize a magic show in which they perform tricks of all kinds and wear magicians’ costumes. Help them research magic tricks in the library.

Literature and Drama Enrichment

Many folktales, legends, and myths contain magic. Invite students to bring in their favorites to read to the class. A group might present one of these stories as a play.

People Around the World

Have students find out more about the following cultures: Hopi, Tiv, Slavs, Asante, Murik.

Follow These Footsteps

Harry Houdini

William Shakespeare

Sir James Frazer