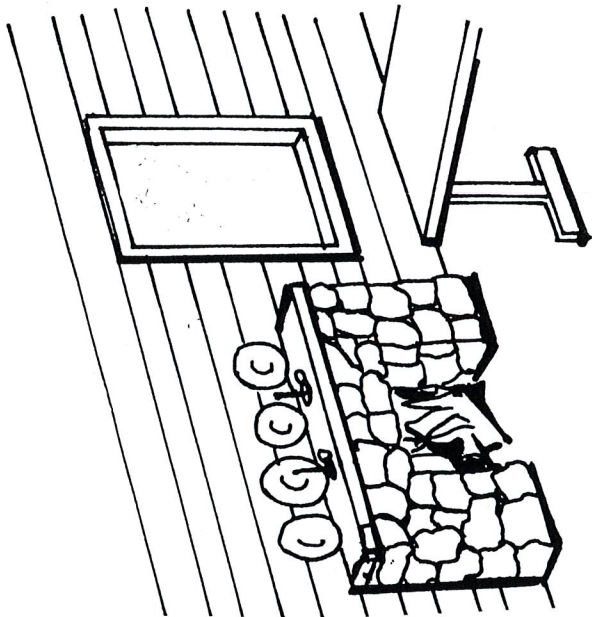


What is the origin of the word "curfew"?



The English word "curfew" is based on an old French term "cuevre-feu" which means "cover the fire." The expression started more than 1,000 years ago. At that time, each house had a big, open fireplace to provide both heat to warm the house and heat for cooking. Many of the houses were built of wood and had straw roofs. Such houses would burn easily. The houses in a village were close together. If one house caught on fire at night, a whole village might be burned. Town leaders passed laws that made people put out their fires and cover them with cooled ashes before they went to bed. Each evening, a bell was rung as warning that it was time to "cover the fire." If someone was working outside or visiting with a neighbor, he had to hurry home to cover his fire.

The bell meant "cover the fire," but it also caused everyone to go home. People seldom went out again after the "cuevre-feu" bell rang. Eventually, the word "curfew" was used to mean a time when people must get off the streets.

What is the origin of the word "curfew"?

COMPREHENSION ACTIVITIES

Underline another good title for this story.

- Curfews as a Safety Device
- Village Fires
- The Evening Bell

Underline the main idea of the story.

The English word "curfew" is based on an old French term meaning "cover the fire."

A thousand years ago, most homes were built of wood and had straw roofs.

Today, curfew is a time when people must get off the streets.

Match.

- | | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| expression | not very often; rarely |
| provide | advance notice; a word of caution |
| seldom | a saying |
| warning | to furnish; equip |

Circle.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| T | F | A thousand years ago, people had very small fireplaces. |
| T | F | "Cuevre-feu" used to mean "time to go home for dinner." |
| T | F | The word "curfew" is based on an old French expression. |

Check the two that apply.

- Long ago, cuevre-feu (curfew) . . .
- ___ was the time to cover the fire.
 - ___ was signaled by a bell.
 - ___ was a good time to cook dinner.
 - ___ told people they must go to bed.