



## Chinese New Year

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Communities throughout the world begin the celebration for Chinese New Year on February 3, 2011 with parades and carnivals. At home, many Chinese Americans will also celebrate by burning incense, doing special prayers, and making offerings to ancestors and traditional gods. The celebrations of Chinese New Year are diverse, reflecting various ethnic customs and the combined influences of Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Chinese folk religions. Like western Christmas, contemporary Chinese New Year's celebrations include decorations, family gatherings, and big meals. And like Christmas, Chinese New Year has become a colorful fusion of cultural traditions.

The coming year marks the beginning of the Year of the Rabbit. The symbols of the Chinese calendar are believed to stretch back to Buddha himself. According to one tradition, Buddha summoned all the animals to visit him just before his death, but only 12 appeared. In appreciation, Buddha named a year after each of them. In time, people born in a particular year were described by the characteristics ascribed to the animal representing that year <http://www.c-c-c.org/chineseculture/zodiac/zodiac.html>.

The study of Chinese New Year fits best with California H-SS standards in grades four and below, but as an important holiday celebrated by a large portion of the Asian community in California and the rest of the world, older students will gain insight and understanding through further study of this traditional Asian holiday. The following resources are offered as a starting point for such a study.



### WEB RESOURCES

#### Chinese New Year

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week324/calendar.html>

This Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly site is an interview conducted by Bob Abernathy about the religious significance of and the meaning behind the Chinese or Lunar New Year.

### **Chinese New Year**

[http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese\\_religion/holidays/chinese\\_new\\_year.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese_religion/holidays/chinese_new_year.htm)

This Religion Facts site provides an introduction to Chinese New Year and the traditional aspects of the celebrations such as the special foods and the Dragon Dance.

### **Chinese New Year**

[http://www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/chinese\\_new\\_year.html](http://www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/chinese_new_year.html)

This rich site has information about how the lunar New Year is calculated, the 15-day celebration of the Chinese New Year, traditional foods, decorations, and customs and superstitions of the holiday.

### **Chinese New Year**

<http://www.history.com/topics/chinese-new-year>

This History Channel site has background and resources on Chinese New Year, or Spring Festival as it's been called since the 20th century. It is the most important social and economic holiday in China.

### **Chinese New Year**

[http://www.history.com/topics/chinese-new-year/videos?paidlink=1&vid=HIS\\_SEM\\_Search&keywords=chinese%2Bnew%2Byear&utm\\_source=msn&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_campaign=chinese%20new%20year&utm\\_term=chinese%20new%20year#history-of-the-holidays-chinese-new-year](http://www.history.com/topics/chinese-new-year/videos?paidlink=1&vid=HIS_SEM_Search&keywords=chinese%2Bnew%2Byear&utm_source=msn&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=chinese%20new%20year&utm_term=chinese%20new%20year#history-of-the-holidays-chinese-new-year)

This History Channel video examines the history of Chinese New Year and the major ways that it has been celebrated in China.

### **Video Clips of the Traditional Dragon Dance**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apimBqgTeBA&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRVhf9Yrdjw&feature=related>

### **Video Clips of Chinese New Year Celebrations**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IyxI-cj-29c&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciU0TIH2Q9U&feature=related>



## WEB LESSONS & ACTIVITIES

### **Tet, the Vietnamese New Year**

<http://www.adoptvietnam.org/vietnamese/tet-lessonplan.htm>

Comparing Tet with other holidays provides a window into comparative cultures that will enrich many classrooms. However, students should not make altar remembrances of their own relatives, as suggested in the lesson, but may view and discuss photos of those altars created by people celebrating Chinese New Year.

### **Lions, Dragons, and Nian: Animals of the Chinese New Year**

<http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/lions-dragons-and-nian-animals-chinese-new-year>

This EDSITEment site features three lessons about the most important festival in the Chinese calendar, the New Year or Spring Festival.

### **Kids Domain – Chinese New Year**

<http://www.kidsdomain.com/holiday/chineseny.html>

Here are crafts and activities related to Chinese New Year.

### **Arts and Crafts for Chinese New Year**

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/chinesenewyear/>

These activities and crafts are designed for young children.

### **Chinese New Year**

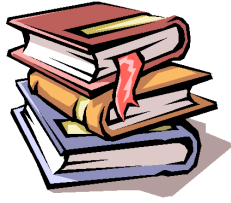
[http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/instructor/jan05\\_china.htm](http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/instructor/jan05_china.htm)

This Scholastic Instructor site offers a series of activities to learn about China and traditional New Year celebrations and symbolism that are appropriate for middle school students.

### **Celebrate the Chinese New Year**

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/OSSLAArtCelebrateChineseNewYearK3.htm>

Reading materials teach children about the celebration of the Chinese New Year and crafts projects provide relevant materials for the lantern festival and Dragon parade.



## CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

**Celebrating Chinese New Year** by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith. Holiday House, 1999. Grades K-4

**Chinese New Year's Dragon** by Rachel Sing. Aladdin, 1994. Grades 3-5

**The Chinese New Year Mystery (Nancy Drew Notebooks, No 39)** by Carolyn Keene. Aladdin, 2000. Grades 2-5

**The Dancing Dragon** by Marcia K. Vaughan. Mondo, 1996. Grades K-4

**Gung Hay Fat Choy** by June Behrens. Children's Press, 1989. Grades K-4

**Happy New Year! Kung-Hsi Fa-Ts' Ai** by Demi. Dragonfly, 1999. Grades K-4

**Holidays Around the World: Celebrate Chinese New Year: With Fireworks, Dragons, and Lanterns** by Caroline Otto. National Geographic Children's Books, 2009. Grades 1-4

**In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson** by Betty Bao Lord. HarperCollins, 1986. Grades 5-9

**Lanterns and Firecrackers: A Chinese New Year Story** by Johnny Zucher. Barron's Educational Series, 2003. Grades K-2

**Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year** by Kate Waters and Madeline Slovenz-Low. Scholastic, 1991. Grades K-4

**Long-Long's New Year: A Story About the Chinese Spring Festival** by Catherine Gower and He Zhihong. Tuttle Publishing, 2005. Grades K-4

**My Chinese New Year** by Monica Hughes. Heinemann-Raintree, 2005. Grades K-4

**New Clothes for New Year's Day** by Hyun-joo Bae. Kane/Miller, 2007. Grades Pre K - 2

**Paper Horse** by Clarissa Shen. Better Chinese LLC, 2008. Grades 5-9

**Sam and the Lucky Money** by Karen Chinn. Lee & Low, 1997. Grades K-4

