

Chinese New Year

"Gong Xi Fa Cai!" (May you be prosperous and happy!)
— Common Chinese New Year greeting



Warm up

- What is your most memorable New Year celebration, and why?
- How do you usually prepare for the New Year? Are there any special traditions in your family?
- Do you know when Chinese New Year takes place this year?
- What comes to mind when you think of Chinese culture or festivals? Have you seen or participated in any Chinese celebrations before?
- Have you worked with people from different cultures? How do you think understanding their traditions can improve communication?



1. Guess the answers about the Chinese New Year. The answers to these questions will be revealed in the next activity.

a. What colour is considered lucky during Chinese New Year? **(Red)**

Paragraph 2: "The colour red is everywhere during the celebrations, symbolizing happiness and warding off bad luck."

b. What animal was celebrated in 2024? **(Dragon)**

Paragraph 1: Each year in the Chinese zodiac is represented by an animal, and 2024 celebrated the Year of the Dragon, a symbol of power, strength, and good fortune.

c. How long does the Chinese New Year last? **(15 days)**

Paragraph 1: "It marks the start of the lunar calendar and lasts for 15 days."

d. What's the significance of giving red envelopes? **(Good fortune and prosperity)**

Paragraph 2: "Families exchange red envelopes (hongbao) filled with money, symbolizing good fortune and prosperity."

e. What's the significance of the dragon dance? **(To scare away evil spirits and bring good luck)**

Paragraph 3: "One of the most iconic traditions is the dragon dance, a vibrant performance meant to scare away evil spirits and bring good luck."

f. What do people traditionally clean before the New Year? **(Their homes)**

Paragraph 2: "Before the celebrations begin, people thoroughly clean their homes, sweeping away bad luck to make room for good luck in the coming year."

g. What does wearing new clothes symbolize? (A fresh start and new beginnings)

Paragraph 2: "Families...wear new clothes to represent a fresh start and new beginnings."

h. Why is the number 8 considered lucky in Chinese culture? (It sounds like "wealth" in Chinese.)

Paragraph 6: "The number 8 is considered particularly lucky in Chinese culture because it sounds like the word for 'wealth' in Chinese."



2. Read the text about the Chinese New Year and check your answers.

1. Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, is the most important holiday in China. Celebrated by over a billion people worldwide, it marks the start of the lunar calendar and lasts for 15 days. Each year in the Chinese zodiac is represented by an animal, and 2024 celebrated the Year of the Dragon, a symbol of power, strength, and good fortune. This holiday is steeped in history and traditions that have evolved over thousands of years.
2. The colour red is everywhere during the celebrations, symbolizing happiness and warding off bad luck. Fireworks and loud noises are an essential part of the festival as they are believed to scare away evil spirits and bring joy. Families exchange red envelopes (hongbao) filled with money, symbolizing good fortune and prosperity, and wear new clothes to represent a fresh start and new beginnings. Before the celebrations begin, people thoroughly clean their homes, sweeping away bad luck to make room for good luck in the coming year.
3. One of the most iconic traditions is the dragon dance, a vibrant performance meant to scare away evil spirits and bring prosperity and the lion's share of success. Traditional foods also play an important role: dumplings, shaped like ancient gold ingots, symbolize wealth; fish represents abundance; and rice cakes signify growth and success.
4. Chinese New Year is also remarkable for creating the world's largest annual human migration, known as Chunyun. Millions of people travel across the country to reunite with their families, causing entire cities to come to a standstill and businesses to close. This migration highlights the importance of family and community in Chinese culture.
5. Many other countries, including Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia, also celebrate Chinese New Year with similar traditions, reflecting the festival's widespread cultural significance.
6. For businesses, the holiday can have a major impact. Many companies close for weeks, so planning around the festival is crucial. Understanding these traditions is key to building strong relationships. For example, the number 8



is considered particularly lucky in Chinese culture because it sounds like the word for "wealth" in Chinese. Giving red envelopes, showing respect for customs, and recognizing the importance of family during this time can leave a lasting impression on Chinese partners. Appreciating these symbolic elements allows businesses to connect more effectively and respectfully during this festive period.



- a. How many quiz questions did you answer correctly? Were you surprised by any of the answers?
- b. Did you find anything in the text particularly interesting or unexpected? Why?
- c. How could this information be useful when doing business with Chinese partners or companies?
- d. What are the biggest celebrations in your country?



3. Find the phrases in the text that match the meanings below.

- a. To take actions to prevent misfortune or avoid something harmful.
Warding off bad luck (*expression, paragraph 2*)
- b. Prosperity, success, or positive luck in life or a particular situation.
Good fortune and prosperity (*collocation, paragraph, 2*)
- c. An opportunity to begin something again with a clean slate, free from past mistakes.
A fresh start (*collocation, paragraph, 2*)
- d. Physically or symbolically removing misfortune or negative influences to make room for better things.
Sweeping away bad luck to make room for good luck. (*expression, paragraph, 2*)
- e. The largest or most significant portion of something.
The Lion's share (*idiom, paragraph 3*)
- f. To stop completely, often due to disruption or unexpected circumstances.
Come to a standstill (*idiom, paragraph 4*)
- g. A strong and enduring impact on someone, often through actions, words, or behaviour.
Leaving a lasting impression (*collocation, paragraph 6*)



4. Complete the sentences with the phrases from exercise 2.

- The parade was so beautiful that it left **a lasting impression** on everyone who watched it.
- Before starting her new job, she decided to change her wardrobe entirely, hoping it would bring **a fresh start** to her career.
- After a long delay at the airport, the entire travel schedule seemed to **come to a standstill**.
- His hard work and dedication finally paid off, bringing **good fortune and prosperity** to his family.
- The country's top athlete won almost every event, securing **the lion's share** of the medals during the international championship.
- Hanging garlic and using charms around the house are believed to be effective ways of **warding off bad luck** in some cultures.
- To prepare for the upcoming challenges, the team gathered together to **sweep away bad luck** and encourage positive energy.



5. Research one of the topics below and deliver a 3-5 minute presentation in small groups.

- Chinese New Year food traditions.
- The role of family in Chinese culture.
- Dos and Don'ts in Chinese business etiquette.
- Other New Year celebrations from around the world (e.g., Rosh Hashanah, Songkran).





6. What Chinese Zodiac Animal Are You?

Brief History and Significance

The Chinese Zodiac, or *Shengxiao* (生肖), is a repeating cycle of 12 years, with each year represented by an animal. This tradition is based on the lunar calendar and is deeply rooted in Chinese culture, influencing personality traits, relationships, and even fortunes. Each animal is said to embody unique characteristics, shaping the personality of people born in that year.

Find Your Animal

Locate your birth year in the table below to discover your Chinese Zodiac animal and learn what it says about you!

Animal	Birth Years	Significance and Traits
Rat	1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020	Clever, resourceful, and charming. Rats are quick-witted problem solvers, highly adaptable, and thrive under pressure.
Ox	1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, 2021	Strong, dependable, and determined. Oxen are hardworking, methodical, and often leaders, respected for their reliability.
Tiger	1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010, 2022	Bold, confident, and unpredictable. Tigers are natural leaders, ambitious, and not afraid to take risks or embrace challenges.
Rabbit	1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011, 2023	Gentle, kind, and empathetic. Rabbits value harmony and are known for their diplomacy, creativity, and careful planning.
Dragon	1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012, 2024	Charismatic, energetic, and ambitious. Dragons are full of vitality, excel at inspiring others, and are often seen as visionaries.
Snake	1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, 2025	Wise, enigmatic, and intuitive. Snakes are deep thinkers, excellent decision-makers, and skilled at reading people and situations.
Horse	1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, 2026	Energetic, adventurous, and sociable. Horses thrive on freedom, are great at connecting with others, and have a strong sense of optimism.
Goat	1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015, 2027	Calm, artistic, and empathetic. Goats are deeply compassionate, thrive in creative pursuits, and excel in nurturing relationships.

Animal	Birth Years	Significance and Traits
Monkey	1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, 2028	Witty, intelligent, and playful. Monkeys are natural problem solvers, thrive on challenges, and are known for their sense of humour.
Rooster	1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017, 2029	Hardworking, observant, and confident. Roosters are known for their attention to detail, strong work ethic, and practicality.
Dog	1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, 2030	Loyal, honest, and protective. Dogs are selfless, great at forming deep connections, and are often seen as trustworthy and fair.
Pig	1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019, 2031	Generous, patient, and optimistic. Pigs are warm-hearted, value good company, and find joy in life's simple pleasures.

- What is your Chinese Zodiac animal? Do you feel it matches your personality?
- Which traits do you admire most in the animals? Why?
- If you could choose a different Zodiac animal, which one would it be and why?
- How do you think someone's Zodiac animal might shape the way others perceive them?

