

All About Chinese New Year



When Is Chinese New Year?

Chinese New Year starts somewhere between late January and Early February.

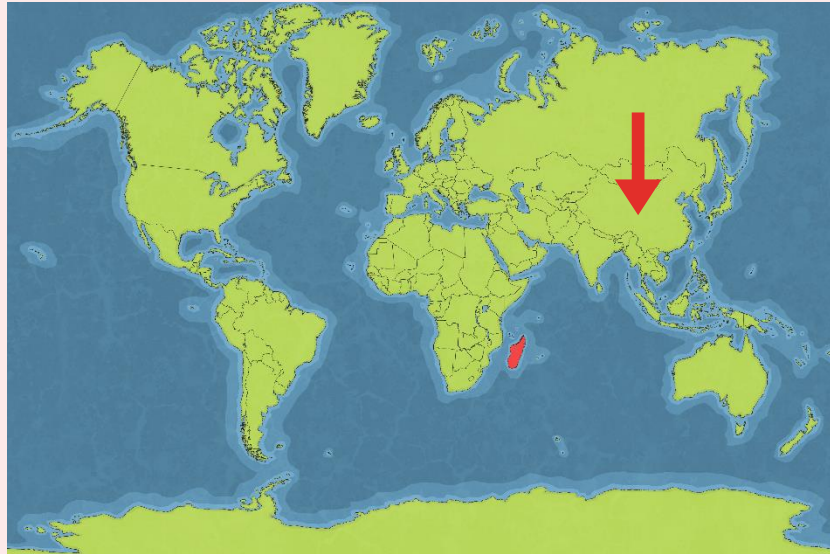
The date changes from year to year because it follows an ancient farmer calendar which is based on phases of the moon.

In 2021, Chinese New Year will be celebrated on Friday 12th February. As that is our INSET day, we're going to learn about Chinese New Year today!

Let's start by getting to know the country of China!



Where Is China?



The country of China is in north-east Asia.

China is the fourth biggest country in the world.

China has a very large population with over 1.3 billion people!

China is divided into provinces.

The capital city of China is Beijing.

What Is China Like?

- China has very diverse geography including deserts, mountains and fertile river basins.
- In the north of China, there are mountains, where it snows much of the year.
- The south of China is filled with jungles and it is very hot and humid.
- Central China consists mostly of mountainous regions.
- Most of Western China is mountainous – it is home to the Himalayas.
- Rivers are very important to China, both for transportation and for irrigation.
- Rivers are very important because many of the wheat and rice fields in China rely on irrigation.



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Who lives there?

- China is home to people from lots of different ethnicities and cultures.
- Chinese culture is very unique.
- The Chinese calendar, architecture, food, handicrafts, dance, festivals and martial arts are very popular across the world.
- Chinese people mainly speak Mandarin, but some also speak Cantonese, Hakka or Swatow, depending on which part of the country they are from.
- The staple food in China is rice and it is eaten with nearly every meal.
- In the last 20 years, China has changed more than any country in the world.



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The Chinese Zodiac

The **Chinese zodiac**, or shengxiao is a repeating cycle of 12 years, with each year being represented by an animal and its characteristics.

Chinese zodiac animals have lucky meanings. Chinese people associate **each animal sign with certain characteristics**. It's believed that people born in a given year have the personality of that year's animal.

2021 is the year of the Ox.

The characteristics of the Ox are: diligent, dependable, strong and determined.



The Chinese Zodiac

Can you find the year you were born and work out your Chinese Zodiac animal?

Does your personality fit with the characteristics of your animal?

Year of the Rabbit

1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999,
2011, 2023

Personality Traits: Quiet, elegant, kind,
responsible



Year of the Dragon

1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000,
2012, 2024

Personality Traits: Confident, intelligent,
enthusiastic

Year of the Snake

1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013,
2025

Personality Traits: Enigmatic, intelligent, wise



Preparing for the New Year

People in China spring clean their homes and gardens to sweep away any bad luck.

Homes are decorated with paper scrolls and lanterns with good luck phrases such as 'happiness' and 'wealth' on them.

All unfinished business is settled so there is a fresh start for the new year. Debts are paid, quarrels are resolved, and any work is brought up to date.



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New Year's Eve

Families gather together and have a large, traditional feast of fish and chicken.

In the North, people eat dijiaozi – a steamed dumpling.

In the South, people eat nian gao – a sticky sweet rice pudding.

People stay up until midnight, setting off firework to scare away evil spirits.



New Year's Day

Children wake up to find red envelopes filled with money and sweets under their pillow, left by their parents or grandparents.

Each family member starts the day with brand new clothes from head to toe. Red is a very popular color for clothing as it is considered lucky.

The first stop of the day is the temple to worship the gods and to welcome the New Year.

Most Chinese families gather together for a New Year's banquet. Each family has their own special dish they prepare for this time.



The Second Day

The birthday of the Chinese God of Wealth, Cai Shen, is celebrated.

People in China pray to their ancestors as well as the gods.

It is believed to be the birthday of all dogs, so dogs are treated with special foods.

It is also a time for visiting families.



The Third and Fourth Day

The third day:

- Chinese people believe they should not visit friends and relatives on this day.
- Instead, they visit the Temple of Wealth and have their futures told.



The fourth day:

- Most people go back to work.
- It is also the day of Spring Dinners. Businesses have department dinners or social events for their employees.



The 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Day

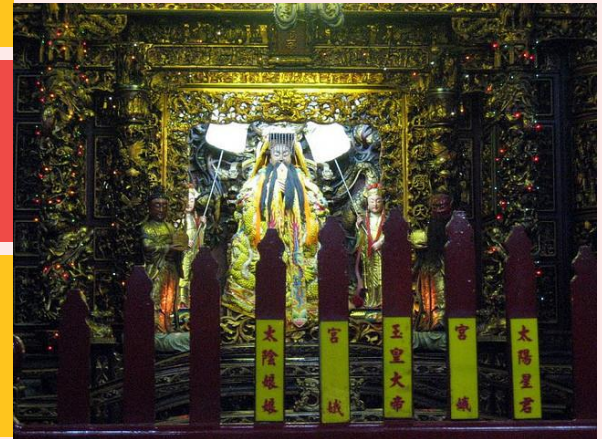
The 5th Day – Dumplings are eaten for good luck and some people shoot firecrackers to worship the God of War.

The 6th Day – Firecrackers are thrown to keep away bad spirits to worship the God of War.

The 7th Day – Day 7 is considered everyone's birthday.

The 8th Day – This is the eve of the Jade Emperor's birthday. Special family dinners are held.

The 9th Day – The Jade Emperor's birthday. The Emperor is worshipped by lighting incense and offering prayers



The 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th Day

The 10th Day – Recognition and offerings continue towards the Jade Emperor.

The 11th/12th Day – Family dinners.

The 13th Day – Everyone eats vegetarian food on the thirteenth day to give their stomachs a rest!

The 14th Day – This day is spent resting and preparing for the Lantern Festival, the last day of Chinese New Year.



The 15th Day

The 15th Day is also known as the Lantern Festival.

Crowds of people watch dragon dancing and lion dancing parades.

Families walk the streets with their glowing lanterns.

Candles are lit outside homes to guide wayward spirits home.

In Malaysia and Singapore, women throw oranges into a river or lake. Men then eat the oranges and the taste of the orange (sweet or sour) represents good or bad fate.



Activity

Your task today is to have a go at making a Chinese paper lantern.

There are instructions on the next slide and a template on the school website if you would like to print it off. You can copy the template onto a plain piece of A4 paper if you don't have a printer!

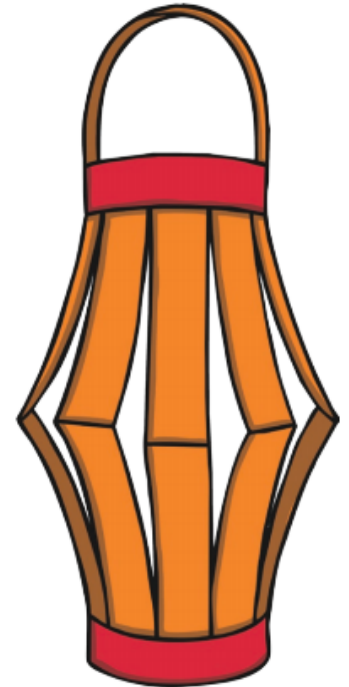


Instructions

How to make a paper lantern:

1. Cut off one end of the paper. Set aside to use as the handle.
2. Decorate the sheet using coloured pens, paint or glitter.
3. Fold your paper in half lengthwise along the dashed line.
4. Cut the marked lines along the sheet. (Do not cut to the edge of the paper).
5. Unfold the paper.
6. Match the long edges together on the lantern and use tape to hold it in place.
7. Staple the handle to the top of the lantern.

Why not try printing the template onto coloured paper?



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