

CHINESE NEW YEAR

MAY YOU PROSPER!

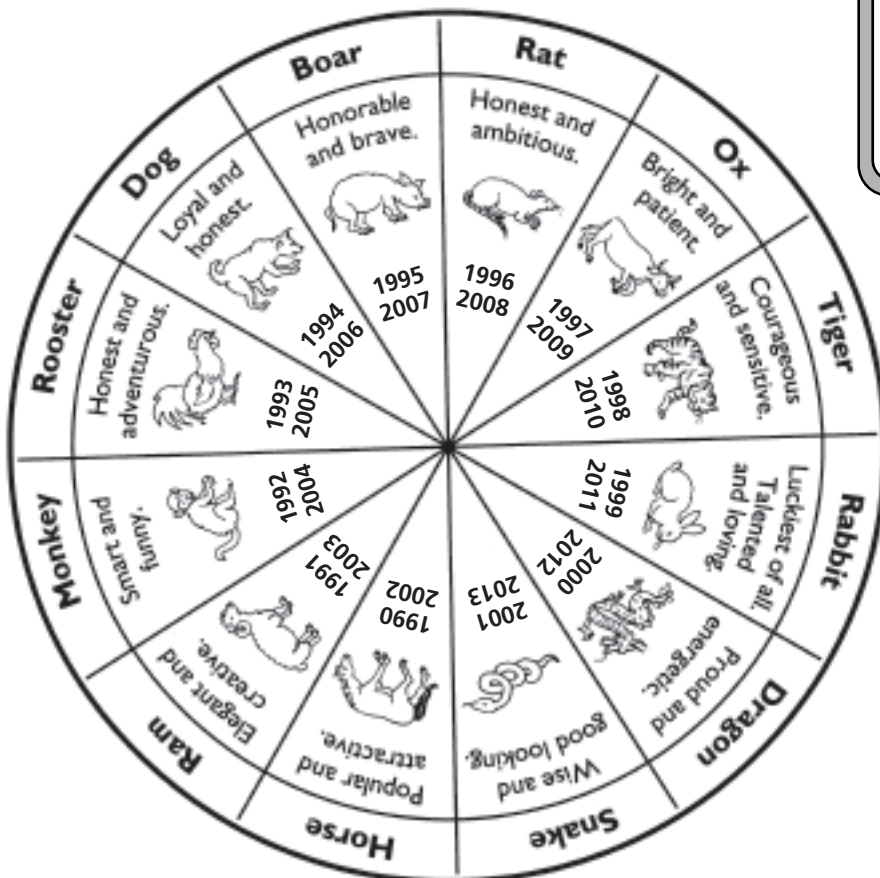
Gung Hay Fat Choy! May you prosper! This is the Chinese greeting for the New Year. In China, New Year is the most important holiday. It is celebrated by Chinese people all over the world.

The date of Chinese New Year is not January 1. In fact, the New Year begins on a different day each year. It is sometime between January 21 and February 19. Why is that? The Chinese calendar is based on the **phases** of the moon. These phases are changes in the moon's shape as it looks to us from Earth.

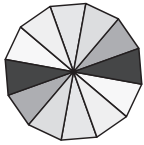
Chinese New Year begins when the moon is in the "new moon" phase. During this phase, the moon cannot be seen. The celebrations end 15 days later, when the full moon lights the sky.

Fact File

- Before the Chinese New Year celebration, people cut their hair, wash their clothes, buy new clothes, and clean their homes. People do this to say goodbye to the old year and start the new year fresh.
- People decorate their homes with flowers, trays of candy, and good luck poems written on red paper. Red is the color for good luck.
- During the holiday, families and friends give each other gifts such as oranges and tangerines. These fruits stand for good luck and wealth.



Each year on the Chinese calendar is named for 1 of 12 animals. The chart shows the animals and the years they represent.



Chinese New Year in the U.S.



Los Angeles, California

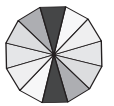
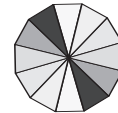
Los Angeles has had a Chinese New Year parade every year for 104 years! A huge painted dragon, swaying back and forth, starts off the parade. The dragon is the symbol of power, luck, strength, and success. It is followed by floats, marching bands, and drummers. People from all over the country come to the colorful parade. It's easy to see why!



This family has a feast at home for Chinese New Year. Notice the oranges and tangerines, which stand for luck and wealth.

Chicago, Illinois

On New Year's eve, the night before New Year's day, houses are brightly lit and a large family dinner is served. Popular dishes are duck, dumplings, and fish. Many people stay up until midnight, when fireworks are lit. New Year's day is spent visiting family and friends.



Connie puts her finger in a ring under each handkerchief. Look at them spin!

Portland, Maine

Portland celebrates Chinese New Year with a fair. Children show their talents. Here, Connie spins handkerchiefs on her fingers. "It's traditional," she said. "I learned how in China." Connie lived in China before her family moved to Maine.

People at the fair learn about Chinese **culture**, or the Chinese way of life. They will hear Chinese music, play Chinese games, and eat Chinese food.

Chinese New Year

Fill in the circle next to the correct answer.

1. Chinese New Year begins _____.
 (A) January 1
 (B) in December
 (C) on a different day each year
 (D) on the same day each year
2. The word **culture** describes a people's _____.
 (A) music, art, foods, and celebrations
 (B) birthdays
 (C) country where they were born
 (D) calendar
3. Which one of these is a symbol of strength to the Chinese?
 (A) oranges and tangerines
 (B) the color red
 (C) duck
 (D) dragon
4. The eve of your birthday would be _____.
 (A) the night before your birthday
 (B) the same night as your birthday
 (C) the day after your birthday
 (D) the week of your birthday
5. Use the Chinese New Year chart to answer these questions.
 What animal is the symbol for this year? _____
 In which year will the tiger be the Chinese New Year symbol? _____
 Which animal will be the symbol sooner—the horse or the rabbit?

Chinese New Year

People who move to a new country often bring their celebrations, foods, and traditions with them. Fill in the chart to show how people in the United States celebrate the Chinese New Year holiday.



DECORATIONS	
FOOD	
SYMBOLS	
ACTIVITIES	

Write About It

Write about your favorite holiday. When is it? Why is it your favorite?
How do you celebrate it? What special foods do you have?