



**CHINESE NEW YEAR**  
**AROUND THE WORLD**  
**TEACHING RESOURCE – 2023**



## Chinese New Year Around the World– Introduction



The Chinese New Year festival has been celebrated for more than four thousand years. It celebrates the earth coming back to life and the beginning of the growing cycle, to mark the end of the long winter season and the arrival of spring. Hence it is also called the **Spring Festival**. For Chinese people the **Lunar New Year** is *the* celebration of the year, a time for happy reunions, family and friends, rich in colourful traditions and customs.

Chinese New Year is now an annual observance and celebration globally as a result of trade links, emigration and the presence of long established Chinese communities around the world. Substantial Chinese populations beyond China **exceeding one million** (including ancestry) from the largest include: Thailand; Malaysia; U.S.A.; Indonesia; Singapore; Canada; Myanmar; Philippines; Australia and South Korea. The U.K. has approximately 466,000 people of Chinese heritage and notable 'Chinatowns' in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle upon Tyne and Liverpool.

The Chinese New Year Resource Pack is intended to be a starting point, to shine a light on and to celebrate the enormous contribution of Chinese Britons have made to our vibrant and diverse society, and is intended to be a working document to be adapted, added to or changed to suit the individual requirements of the educational setting.

**Moreover, it has been questioned whether it is appropriate to confine the study of Chinese history and culture to one month of the year. This Chinese New Year Resource Pack is intended therefore to avoid tokenism and does not substitute for the inclusion of these elements, themes and accomplishments, in the curriculum throughout the year, in all spheres including: history; literature; religion; politics; design and technology; science; sport; mathematics; music; media; visual and the performing arts.**

# Chinese Festivals

## The common traditions and celebrations

Chinese festivals are based in the lunar calendar so the exact dates will vary from year to year.

- The most important festival is **Chinese New Year** (also known as the **Lunar New Year** or the **Spring Festival**) which falls at the end of January or beginning of February in our Western calendar and is jam-packed with feasts, parades, lion dances and fireworks. During this two-week period millions travel home to be with their families. All over the world the festivities are a colourful display of dragon dances, lantern festivals, feasts and firecrackers.

### When is Chinese New Year?

In China, New Year's Day is also the first day of the first month **of the Lunar Calendar!** Therefore, Chinese New Year dates vary each year and could fall at the end of January or in February.

The New Year celebrations begin on New Year's Eve, the big party is on New Year's Day and the celebrations continue for the next 15 days. It all ends with the first full moon of the year with the **Lantern Festival**, another great carnival.

### Where is Chinese New Year Celebrated?

Chinese populations **exceeding one million** around the world (including ancestry) from the largest are: Thailand; Malaysia; U.S.A.; Indonesia; Singapore; Canada; Myanmar; Philippines; Australia; South Korea. The U.K. has approximately 466,000 people of Chinese heritage, including notable 'Chinatowns' in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle and Liverpool.

Source: [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overseas\\_Chinese](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overseas_Chinese)

### There are many Chinese traditions associated with the New Year celebrations, including:

- **Preparations for the New Year** begin a couple of weeks before the big day. This is the time to clean the house from top to bottom to get rid of all the bad luck, prepare food for the feast and make banners and decorations.

- **Make some banners with New Year's greetings** - Red and gold banners with New Year messages of good luck decorate the entrances of houses. Red symbolizes vitality of life and happiness, gold represents wealth and prosperity.
- **The New Year's feast** takes many days to prepare and in addition, food for the next couple of weeks has to be plentiful as there will be lots of visiting relatives and friends. Food must be prepared ahead of time, as one of the popular Chinese New Year superstitions dictates that **all knives must be put away**.
- **Family and friends visit each other**. Traditional New Year's gifts are sweets and snacks, oranges and tangerines, which are a symbol of prosperity.
- **Happy New Year!** The entire family enjoys the big dinner on New Year's Day with all the traditional foods for good fortune and luck. Children get their Lucky Red Envelopes.

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

Happy New Year is **Gōng Xǐ Fā Cái** in Mandarin or **Gong Hey Fat Choy** in Cantonese.

The characters are the same, reading right to left:



**Gōng Xǐ** - are good wishes or congratulations

**Fā Cái** - to become rich, acquire wealth

- On New Year's Day, children are given red lucky envelopes **with money inside!**



Visit the link below to try and make some Chinese red envelopes:

<https://www.china-family-adventure.com/chinese-new-year-red-envelope.html>

- **The New Year's meal**

Each family will have their own "special" dishes that are traditionally served at this time. Some of the traditional Chinese new year foods which you can expect to see during the festivities:



Shrimps



fish



chicken



soup



green vegetables



long noodles



sweet rice cakes



oranges



tangerines

- **Firecrackers** are an important part of the **Chinese New Year celebrations**. They are lit in front of houses and stores, so that the evil spirits are scared away. Firecrackers provide the happy ending to the parades and dances.



- On **New Year's Eve**, people will go to the temples and pray for good fortune for the New Year. They bring offerings of food and incense to please the spirits of the deceased.
- **Dragon dancing**  
Dragon Dances are an important part of the Chinese New Year celebrations. The Dragon represents wisdom, power and wealth. The Dragon Dance performed on New Year's Day scares away the evil spirits and all the bad luck. It is performed by a team of a dozen or so dancers that carry the dragon.



The frame of the Dragon itself was traditionally made of wood or bamboo, covered with material. The Chinese Dragon costume, different colours can be chosen. Some dragons can be up to 100 meters long. The longer the Dragon is, the more luck it will bring.

### **Other most remarkable festivals that all Chinese kids love and enjoy include:**

- **Lantern festival** when streets, markets, store fronts, homes and parks will be lit with beautiful lanterns in all sorts of shapes, forms and colours. The Chinese Lantern Festival is celebrated on the 15th day of the 1st

lunar month. During this festival there is a variety of cultural performances including martial arts and kung fu demonstrations, floats and parades with clowns, stilt walkers, acrobats, lots of music and drumming, Chinese\_Lion, Dragon Dances and firecrackers!



Red Lanterns have traditionally been a sign of joy and vitality, when placed on the doorways, it was a way of participating a birth or impending marriage.

**Chinese Lanterns** were traditionally made of silk, paper and even glass.



- **Chinese Tomb Sweeping Day**

At the beginning of April, is for honouring ancestors and to make sure they are happy in the after world. As part of the tradition Chinese will burn incense and pray to their ancestors on this day. People will also clean and sweep their ancestors' graves and at the same time bring food, normally fruits, buns and sweets, wine, etc. Cemeteries will be very crowded on this day.





- **The Chinese dragon boat festival**

This takes place on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, or around June in our Calendar.

During the festival people take part in dragon boat races. Chinese Dragon Boats are long, narrow boats with a dragon's head at one end and a tail at the rear.



- **The Chinese Ghost Festival** falls in the seventh lunar month (which typically falls around August in our calendar). In this month the spirits of the deceased are released and they come back to wander off in the living world. To keep the spirits happy, people will make offerings of food and incense and burn ghost money as well as will perform rituals and ceremonies to appease the spirits.



- The **Moon Festival or Mid-Autumn Festival** is celebrated on the 8th full moon of the year. On this night, the moon is at its brightest. This is one of the two most important holidays in the Chinese calendar. Friends and family gather together to enjoy the moonlight, the beautiful lantern displays that illuminate the city.



## **Lantern Making**

1. Easy to make at home or for school projects; great decorations for entrances, halls, classrooms, the garden, a Chinese New Year party. Written instructions with photos:  
<https://www.china-family-adventure.com/how-to-make-chinese-lanterns.html>

## **Other Chinese New Year crafts:**

Paper lantern,

Balloon lantern,

Paper fan,

Banners and signs,

Chinese firecrackers,

Red envelopes,

Chinese dragon.

All Instructions are written in steps, with photos to help and can be found here:

<https://www.china-family-adventure.com/chinese-new-year-crafts.html>

## **The Chinese Bad / Lucky Numbers**

Chinese consider number 4 a "bad luck" number as the pronunciation "suh" sounds similar to the Chinese character for "death".

The number 8 "bâ" sounds similar to the word for "wealth" and is considered to be a very lucky number.

## **12 Zodiac animal signs**

2022 was the Year of the Tiger according to Chinese zodiac.

**2023 is the Year of the Rabbit.**

This is the Year of the Rabbit, starting from the 2023 Chinese New Year on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023 and lasting to 2024 Lunar New Year's Eve on February 2024.



The 12 Chinese zodiac animals in a cycle are not only used to represent years in China, but also believed to influence people’s personalities, career, compatibility, marriage, and fortune.

What Is Your Chinese Zodiac Sign? (Chinese Zodiac Chart)											
											
Rat	Ox	Tiger	Rabbit	Dragon	Snake	Horse	Sheep	Monkey	Rooster	Dog	Pig
1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923
1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947
1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043



### The most widespread Chinese zodiac legend

The Jade Emperor (The Emperor in Heaven in Chinese folklore) ordered that animals would be designated as calendar signs and the twelve that arrived first

would be selected. On that day, the rat got up very early and rushed to the gathering site. On the way, he encountered the ox that ran much faster.

In order not to fall behind, he thought up a good idea. He made the straightforward ox carry him on condition that he sang for the ox. At last, the ox and rat arrived first. The ox was happy thinking that he would be the first sign of the years, but the rat had already slid in front, and became the first lucky animal of the Chinese zodiac. That's how the rat won the race.

Following Rat and Ox, are Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, Pig.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrKQml4vSwA>

## How to Say Happy New Year in Chinese

- 新年好

xīn nián hǎo

- 过年好

guò nián hǎo

- 新年快乐

xīn nián kuài lè

## **Chinese New Year Greetings – Lucky Words and Sayings**

Listen and learn how to say “Happy New Year” in Chinese:

<https://www.travelchinaguide.com/essential/holidays/new-year/greetings.htm>

Learn to speak Chinese! – Different topics with useful expressions such as: Chinese numbers, greetings, congratulations, weather, asking the time, in a taxi etc.

### **Useful Links:**

<https://community.travelchinaguide.com/learn-chinese/>

Chinese dragon dance <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vi95ZTEHoL8>

Chinese lion dance ( 12 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTgD8Mhgrek>

Chinese fan dance (3mins) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOJtuO1T2Gs>

Chinese ribbon dance (5mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYz9PuO1eCk>

### **Chinese Calligraphy**

Learn Chinese calligraphy for “metal, wood, water, fire and earth” (3mins.)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cq\\_-GW2gkz4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cq_-GW2gkz4)

Chinese calligraphy is the writing of Chinese characters as an art form. Chinese calligraphy used to be popular in China, Taiwan, Japan and Hong Kong. In Taiwan, students were requested to write Chinese calligraphy starting from primary school all the way to junior high school on weekly basis at least to year 1980.

A brush is the traditional writing instrument for Chinese calligraphy. The body of the brush is commonly made from bamboo or other materials such as wood, porcelain, or horn. The head of the brush is typically made from animal hair, such as weasel, rabbit, deer, goat, pig, tiger, wolf, etc.

The implements were the brush, made of animal hair, and black ink made from pine soot and animal glue. Writing as well as painting was done on silk. But after the invention of paper in the 1st century, silk was gradually replaced by the new and cheaper material.

## Rules of Modern Calligraphy

- The characters must be written correctly
- The characters must be legible
- The characters must be concise
- The characters must fit their context
- The characters must be aesthetically pleasing



## The Four Treasure of Study

### 文房四寶 筆墨紙硯

#### Paper

- Paper making is among the 'four great inventions' and one of the great contributions that ancient Chinese people made to the world.



#### Writing Brush

- The nib can be made from rabbit's hair, wool, horsehair, weasel's hair, or bristles.
- The shaft may be made from bamboo, ivory, jade, crystal, gold, silver, porcelain, sandal, ox horn, etc.
- Both soft and hard brushes each producing their own particular styles.



#### Inkstone

- Inkstone is the most important of the "four treasures of study." Because of its solid texture inkstone can be handed down from generation to generation.

#### Ink stick

- A good ink stick should be ground so as to be refined black with luster.

## Painting

Traditional Chinese painting involves essentially the same techniques as Chinese calligraphy and is done with a brush dipped in black or coloured ink; oils are not used. As with calligraphy, the most popular materials on which paintings are made of paper and silk.

<https://www.christies.com/features/Chinese-Traditional-Painting-Collecting-Guide-7607-1.aspx>

There are two main techniques in Chinese painting:

- Gongbi (工笔 /gong-bee/), literally 'working pen', is a meticulous style, rich in colour and detailed brush strokes (often used for portraits or narrative subjects).



- Xieyi (写意 /sshyeah-ee/ 'writing'), meaning "freehand", is a looser style of painting, and usually used in landscapes. Often features exaggerated forms and expresses the artist's feelings.





## **Great Chinese Inventions – Paper Making**

Paper is a thin non-woven material traditionally made from a combination of milled plant and textile fibres.



Commonly white, it was primarily used for writing and artwork. The first paper making process was documented in China during the early Han period (25-220 CE). During the

8<sup>th</sup> Century paper making spread to the Islamic world and to Europe in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.

Useful links:

<https://www.education.theiet.org/primary/teaching-resources/making-paper/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/primary-science-how-paper-is-made/zryb92p>

## **Great Chinese Inventions – Printing**

Printing was invented in China during the Tang Dynasty (618-906



A.D.). The earliest forms of Chinese printing relied on blocks cut from wood. These blocks were used to print textiles and reproduce Buddhist texts. Short religious texts printed in this form were originally carried as charms.

Useful links:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/art-and-design-printmaking-different-materials/zhytscw>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk> – links to practical block printing techniques in all Key Stages.

## Great Chinese Inventions – The Compass

The compass was invented in China during the Han Dynasty, between the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. and the 1<sup>st</sup> Century A.D. where it was called the ‘South governor’ or the ‘North pointing fish’. The magnetic compass was first used for fortune telling by the Chinese and to harmonise buildings using the geomantic principles of *Feng Shui*.



Early compasses were made with lodestone, a form of naturally occurring magnetite, which aligns itself with the Earth's magnetic field. People in ancient China discovered that if lodestone was suspended it would turn freely

and always point to the magnetic poles. Compasses were later adapted for navigation during the Song Dynasty in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.

<https://www.steampoweredfamily.com/activities/how-to-make-a-compass>

<https://www.science-sparks.com/make-a-compass-with-a-magnet>

<https://bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zrvbkqt/articles/zfb6pbk>

(How to make a magnetic compass – KS3)

## Great Chinese Inventions – Gunpowder

Gunpowder was originally invented in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century by Chinese alchemists in



search of the *elixir of immortality*. Originally gunpowder was used to make fireworks for festivals and major events.

It was later used as an explosive substance in cannons, fire arrows and other military weapons. By the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese formulas for gunpowder were capable of bursting through cast iron, in the form of grenade bombs.

**N.B. Searches for related activities prohibited by T&W search engines.**

## Crafts and Practical Activities: EYFS /KS1/KS2

### Chinese New year paper plate puppet craft

Use scissors, glue and craft sticks to make a Chinese puppet show for children to play with.



### Chinese New Year paper lanterns



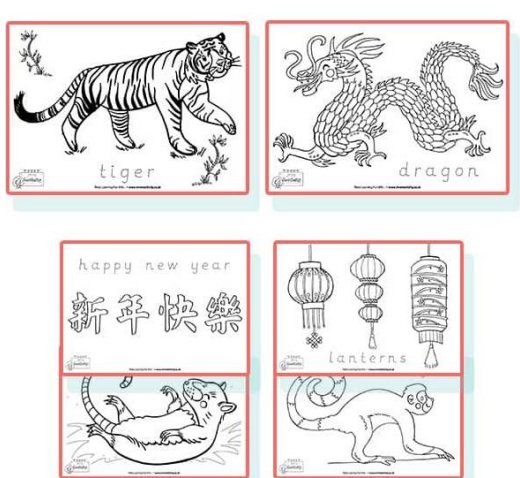
## Chinese New Year (Chinese Characters) Colouring and Word Trace

To colour and trace the words for Happy New Year in Chinese characters.



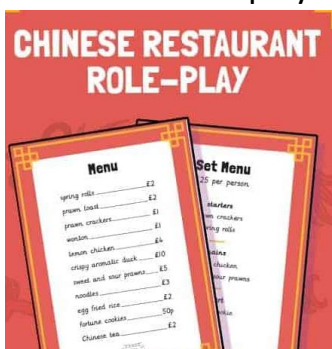
## Chinese New Year Colouring and Word Tracing

-for colouring and practising fine motor skills. Add paint or glitter for extra sparkle!



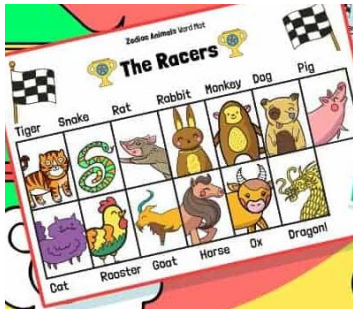
## Chinese restaurant role-play area

- for children to play in, turn take, role-play, practise speaking and listening



## Chinese Zodiac Word Mat

-helps children to spell the words they need



## Chinese New Year Tuff Tray Rainbow Rice

- Rainbow rice is a great recipe for messy and sensory play. Can be used to encourage children to trace the Chinese numbers with their fingers or a brush.



### What you need to make rainbow rice

Uncooked rice

Food colouring

Vinegar

### How to make rainbow rice

Separate your rice into portions for each colour that you want to use

Add 1 portion to a tupperware box

Add 1 tablespoon of normal household vinegar

Also add a few drops of food colouring

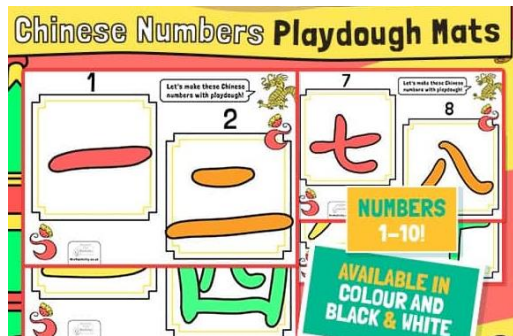
Seal the tupperware and shake to mix all the ingredients until you can see that the colour has covered all of the rice

Lay out your rice on greaseproof paper until dry

Do this for each colour

Voila, you have rainbow rice that can be used again and again

### **Chinese Numbers Playdough Mats**



### **Chinese New Year Maths Race Game**

Use a dice, to move your zodiac animals round the track.



### **Chinese New Year Zodiac Hats**

- great for speaking and listening and oral story telling



## Tiger Handprint Craft



## Rocking paper plate tiger craft instructions :

<https://www.redtedart.com/paper-plate-tiger-craft/>

## Chinese New Year recipes



<https://chopstix.com/chinese-recipes/spring-rolls/>

## CHINESE NEW YEAR - WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

- <https://www.google.com> – search Chinese New Year Images.
- <https://www.youtube.com> – search Chinese New Year film clips and videos for children.

- <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/festivals-and-cultural-celebrations/chinese-new-year> - practical activities and work sheets aimed at different year groups (some free) including power-points.
- <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/factfile/chinese-new-year-topic-teaching-facts> - free fact file covering many aspects of Chinese New Year.
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/assemblies-ks1-ks2-chinese-new-year-festivals-lunar-festival-lunar-festival/zp993j6> - comprehensive teaching resource including: introduction; pdf resources; assemblies; audio links; images; videos and related questions to explore.
- <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resources/blog/bringing-chinese-new-year> - primary and secondary resources produced by teachers (many free or small cost).
- <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/chinese-new-year-story-3009610> - free Chinese New Year power-point.
- <https://www.tes.com/chinese-new-year-2021-1181191> - Chinese New Year stories and colourful images with audio (KS1).
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zjkc92p/articles/zphcydm> - information and film-clips.
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/chinese-new-year> - 'Lets Celebrate' film clips (aimed at EYFS/KS1)
- <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/eight-ways-to-celebrate-chinese-new-year-your-school> - practical suggestions for primary school teachers.
- <https://www.teachingideas.co.uk/global-geography/chinese-new-year-resources> - practical suggestions and film clips aimed at primary school teachers.
- <https://www.theschoolrun.com/homework-help/the-chinese-new-year> - aimed at parents or useful resource for home study or research including key information; gallery images, questions and answers