



Hope at Hand

“Chinese New Year”

Directions

1. Read: The “What is Chinese New Year?” handout to teach participants about a part of Chinese culture.
2. Read: “Happy Chinese New Year” and “Chinese New Year” poems.
3. Read: The Chinese Zodiac handout and let participants identify which animal they are based on their birth year.
3. Write: Practice writing your zodiac in Chinese.
4. Write: An acrostic poem using each participant's zodiac as the spine.
5. Art: Dragon Mask
 - Color in the dragon mask
 - Cut out the mask
 - Glue tissue paper around the edges from the back side
 - Glue a popsicle stick at the chin so they can hold it up as a mask

Please bring an example of the art activity to your session—ideally one you’ve made yourself. A full-color example is included at the end of this document. *If needed, print it elsewhere, as color printing is not permitted on the office printer.*

Materials

Pencils, color pencils/markers, popsicle sticks, glue, colored tissue paper.

What is Chinese New Year?

Chinese New Year is a major holiday in China and Chinese communities throughout the world. The celebration is one of the largest of the Lunar New Year festivals that are held throughout Asia. The starting date of the Lunar New Year is not the same each year because it is based on the cycles of the moon. It begins in late January or early February. The 15-day celebration begins with the new moon and lasts until the full moon.

In Chinese communities, firecrackers are often shot off on New Year's Eve. Fireworks celebrate the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year. Chinese New Year is a time to feast and to visit family members. Many traditions of the season honor relatives who have died.

The last event of the 15-day celebration is the Lantern Festival. People often hang glowing lanterns in temples or carry them during a nighttime parade. The dragon dance highlights festival celebrations in many areas. A long, colorful dragon is carried through streets by numerous dancers.

Chinese years are named after 12 different animals. For example, there is a Year of the Rat and a Year of the Ox. Chinese New Year marks the start of the next animal's year. After 12 years, the cycle of animals repeats itself.

What is Chinese New Year?

Chinese New Year is a major holiday in China and Chinese communities throughout the world. The celebration is one of the largest of the Lunar New Year festivals that are held throughout Asia. The starting date of the Lunar New Year is not the same each year because it is based on the cycles of the moon. It begins in late January or early February. The 15-day celebration begins with the new moon and lasts until the full moon.

In Chinese communities, firecrackers are often shot off on New Year's Eve. Fireworks celebrate the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year. Chinese New Year is a time to feast and to visit family members. Many traditions of the season honor relatives who have died.

The last event of the 15-day celebration is the Lantern Festival. People often hang glowing lanterns in temples or carry them during a nighttime parade. The dragon dance highlights festival celebrations in many areas. A long, colorful dragon is carried through streets by numerous dancers.

Chinese years are named after 12 different animals. For example, there is a Year of the Rat and a Year of the Ox. Chinese New Year marks the start of the next animal's year. After 12 years, the cycle of animals repeats itself.

Happy Chinese New Year

by Helen Moore

“Gung Hoy Fat Choy!”
In China, every girl and boy
celebrates the New Year
in a very special way
with fireworks and dragons,
colored red and gold.
They welcome in the New Year
and chase away the old.

Chinese New Year

by Marga Saul

Dragons, lions,
Red and gold.
In with the New Year,
Out with the old.

Banners flying,
Bands playing.
Lions prancing,
Dragons swaying.

Fireworks crackling,
Lanterns swinging.
People laughing,
Dancing, singing.

Happy Chinese New Year

by Helen Moore

“Gung Hoy Fat Choy!”
In China, every girl and boy
celebrates the New Year
in a very special way
with fireworks and dragons,
colored red and gold.
They welcome in the New Year
and chase away the old.

Chinese New Year

by Marga Saul

Dragons, lions,
Red and gold.
In with the New Year,
Out with the old.

Banners flying,
Bands playing.
Lions prancing,
Dragons swaying.

Fireworks crackling,
Lanterns swinging.
People laughing,
Dancing, singing.

Chinese Zodiac

The Chinese Zodiac is based on a twelve-year cycle and each year in that cycle relates to an animal. The 12 animals are below. Each Chinese zodiac animal has personality traits assigned to it by the ancient Chinese.



Rat

Birth years: 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020
Ambitious, charming, talkative, resourceful, private



Ox

Birth years: 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, 2021
Diligent, gentle, hardworking, reliable, patient



Tiger

Birth years: 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010
Confident, brave, magnetic, idealistic, thrill-seeking



Rabbit

Birth years: 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011, 2023
Kind, sensitive, artistic, romantic, timid



Dragon

Birth years: 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012, 2024
Bold, energetic, generous, intelligent, perfectionistic

Chinese Zodiac

The Chinese Zodiac is based on a twelve-year cycle and each year in that cycle relates to an animal. The 12 animals are below. Each Chinese zodiac animal has personality traits assigned to it by the ancient Chinese.



Rat

Birth years: 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020
Ambitious, charming, talkative, resourceful, private



Ox

Birth years: 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, 2021
Diligent, gentle, hardworking, reliable, patient



Tiger

Birth years: 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010
Confident, brave, magnetic, idealistic, thrill-seeking



Rabbit

Birth years: 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011, 2023
Kind, sensitive, artistic, romantic, timid



Dragon

Birth years: 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012, 2024
Bold, energetic, generous, intelligent, perfectionistic



Snake

Birth years: 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, 2025
Clever, curious, alluring, wise, calculating



Horse

Birth years: 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, 2026
Amusing, enthusiastic, independent, opportunistic



Goat/Sheep

Birth years: 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015, 2027
Easygoing, empathetic, creative, cheerful, impulsive



Monkey

Birth years: 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, 2028
Entertaining, intelligent, optimistic, sociable, fickle



Rooster

Birth years: 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017, 2029
Adventurous, charitable, funny, loyal, argumentative



Dog

Birth years: 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, 2030
Helpful, honest, trustworthy, unselfish, pessimistic



Pig

Birth years: 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019, 2031
Caring, generous, smart, outgoing, materialistic



Snake

Birth years: 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, 2025
Clever, curious, alluring, wise, calculating



Horse

Birth years: 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, 2026
Amusing, enthusiastic, independent, opportunistic



Goat/Sheep

Birth years: 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015, 2027
Easygoing, empathetic, creative, cheerful, impulsive



Monkey

Birth years: 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, 2028
Entertaining, intelligent, optimistic, sociable, fickle



Rooster

Birth years: 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017, 2029
Adventurous, charitable, funny, loyal, argumentative



Dog

Birth years: 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, 2030
Helpful, honest, trustworthy, unselfish, pessimistic



Pig

Birth years: 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019, 2031
Caring, generous, smart, outgoing, materialistic

Practice writing your zodiac in Chinese

鼠	牛	虎	兔
RAT	OX	TIGER	RABBIT
龙	蛇	马	羊
DRAGON	SNAKE	HORSE	SHEEP
猴	鸡	狗	猪
MONKEY	ROOSTER	DOG	PIG

Practice writing your zodiac in Chinese

鼠	牛	虎	兔
RAT	OX	TIGER	RABBIT
龙	蛇	马	羊
DRAGON	SNAKE	HORSE	SHEEP
猴	鸡	狗	猪
MONKEY	ROOSTER	DOG	PIG

Use your zodiac animal to write an acrostic poem that describes you. Here's an example:

Dancer
Reader
Adventurer
Grateful
Optimistic
Nocturnal

Your turn!

Use your zodiac animal to write an acrostic poem that describes you. Here's an example:

Dancer
Reader
Adventurer
Grateful
Optimistic
Nocturnal

Your turn!



