

Celebrating the Lunar New Year with Ellie

Learning objective: To develop comprehension skills through exploring the traditions and significance of Chinese New Year.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below. Think deeply about the traditions mentioned and why they are important to families.

Ellie the elephant has a wonderful memory, and she loves learning about how different cultures celebrate the start of a new year. Chinese New Year, often called the Lunar New Year, is a vibrant festival that marks the beginning of the spring season. It is a time for families to gather, honour their ancestors, and wish each other good fortune for the year ahead.

During this time, homes are thoroughly cleaned to sweep away any bad luck from the previous year, making space for new prosperity. People decorate their windows with bright red paper cuttings and lanterns, as red is considered a lucky colour. Children often receive 'hongbao', which are small red envelopes containing money to bring them happiness. Max the monkey once calculated that if every child received £5, the total amount spent across a whole town would be enormous! The celebrations conclude with the spectacular Lantern Festival, where the night sky glows with floating lights and families enjoy sweet rice balls together. It is a beautiful reminder that new beginnings are best shared with the people we love most.

Word bank: Lunar · tradition · prosperity · zodiac · festivities · customary

1. What do people do to their homes before the festival begins, and why do they do it? (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what is a 'hongbao' and what does it represent? (2 marks)

3. Why do you think the colour red is chosen for decorations and envelopes during this festival? (2 marks)

4. Explain why the author mentions the Lantern Festival at the end of the passage. (2 marks)

5. Do you think cleaning a house is an effective way to prepare for a celebration? Justify your answer using your own ideas. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene of a street during the Lantern Festival, including red lanterns hanging from trees and a family enjoying the glowing lights.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast the traditions mentioned in the text with a celebration you participate in with your own family. How do the feelings of gratitude and renewal compare? What might happen if a community decided to change a long-standing tradition; would the festival still feel the same?