

Celebrating the Lunar New Year

Learning objective: To develop reading comprehension skills by identifying and interpreting information about Chinese New Year traditions.

Read the passage below carefully, then answer the questions that follow in full sentences.

Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, is a vibrant celebration marking the beginning of the new year on the traditional lunisolar calendar. Our friend Pip the caterpillar loves learning about this time, as it is filled with colour and meaning. Families gather for a reunion dinner, which is considered the most important meal of the year. It is customary to serve fish, as the word for fish sounds like the word for 'surplus', symbolising prosperity for the year ahead.

Streets come alive with the sound of drums and the sight of energetic dragon dances. Red is the most significant colour, seen in lanterns, clothes, and 'hongbao'—red envelopes containing money given to children. These gifts are often small amounts, perhaps £5 or £10, meant to share good fortune. Every year is represented by one of twelve animals from the Chinese zodiac. Whether it is the Year of the Dragon or the Rabbit, the festival is a time for honouring ancestors, cleaning homes to sweep away bad luck, and looking forward to a bright, hopeful future with family and friends.

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

1. What are two specific things that people do to prepare their homes or celebrate during the Spring Festival? (2 marks) (2 marks)

2. According to the text, why is fish served during the reunion dinner? (2 marks) (2 marks)

3. Why do you think red is chosen as the most significant colour for this celebration? (2 marks) (2 marks)

4. What does the tradition of giving red envelopes suggest about the values of the people celebrating? (2 marks) (2 marks)

5. Do you think festivals like the Spring Festival are important for families today? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks) (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene showing a traditional Chinese New Year celebration, including a red lantern, a decorative dragon, and a red envelope.



Extension challenge: Research the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac. Create a fact file for the animal that represents the year you were born.