

Exploring Chinese New Year: A Cultural Journey with Ellie the Elephant

Learning objective: To understand the significance, traditions, and symbolic meanings behind Chinese New Year, reflecting on how communities celebrate festivals.

Use these flashcards to test your knowledge about the traditions of Chinese New Year. Read the term or question on the left, then reveal the answer on the right to see if you are correct!

What is the alternative name for Chinese New Year, marking the end of the coldest part of winter?

The Spring Festival.

Which lunar-based system determines the date of Chinese New Year each year?

The Chinese Lunar Calendar (or lunisolar calendar).

How many animals are in the Chinese Zodiac cycle?

Twelve.

In the legend of Nian, why is the colour red used so prominently in decorations?

To scare away the mythical beast 'Nian', who was afraid of the colour red and loud noises.

What are 'Hongbao' or 'Red Envelopes' typically used for?

They are gifted to children and unmarried adults, containing money to bring good luck and blessings for the coming year.

What is the significance of the 'Reunion Dinner' held on New Year's Eve?

It is a vital time for family members to gather from far and wide to share a meal and honour their ancestors.

Why do people sweep their houses thoroughly before the New Year begins?

To sweep away the bad luck and 'dust' of the old year, making room for incoming good fortune.

What does the 'Lantern Festival' represent at the end of the celebrations?

It marks the final day of the traditional Chinese New Year period and signifies the return of spring.

Why are oranges and tangerines often displayed during the festival?

Because their names in Chinese sound similar to words for 'luck' and 'wealth' respectively.

What is the symbolic meaning of the Lion Dance performed during the festivities?

It is performed to bring prosperity and good luck, and to chase away evil spirits.

If you were born in a 'Year of the Rabbit', which animals come before and after you in the zodiac?

The Tiger comes before, and the Dragon comes after.

Why might a family choose to wear new clothes on the first day of the year?

To symbolise a fresh start, new beginnings, and a prosperous future.