Spring Festival: Welcoming the New Year

Learning objective: I can retrieve information and make inferences from a non-fiction text about Chinese New Year.

About 15 minutes. Grown-up tip: Ask your child to explain the difference between a solar calendar and the lunisolar calendar mentioned in the text.

Read the passage carefully. For retrieval questions, scan the text for keywords. For inference questions, use clues from the text to explain your answer. Example: If the text says 'the room was filled with laughter', you can infer the people felt happy.

Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, is a vibrant celebration that marks the beginning of the new year according to the traditional lunisolar calendar. Unlike the calendar used in the UK, the date changes each year, usually falling between late January and mid-February. The festival is a time for families to gather, honour ancestors, and look forward to a year of good fortune.

Preparations often begin with a thorough cleaning of the home. This tradition symbolises sweeping away the 'dust' of the old year to make room for good luck. Red is the most significant colour during the festivities, as it is believed to bring prosperity and ward off misfortune. You will see red lanterns hanging in streets, and children often receive 'hongbao'—small red envelopes containing money—from their elders.

The festival lasts for fifteen days, concluding with the spectacular Lantern Festival. During this time, communities enjoy traditional performances, such as the energetic dragon and lion dances. On the final night, families light lanterns and share a meal of sweet rice balls. It is a period defined by hope, unity, and the shared excitement of a fresh start. Whether in a bustling city like London or a quiet village, the spirit of the festival is one of joy and renewal.

Word bank: lunar · tradition · prosperity · zodiac · festivities

1. Identify two specific activities that take place during the fifteen-day celebration. (2 marks)

2. According to the text, why is the home cleaned before the New Year begins? (1 mark)

3. Why might someone choose to decorate their home using red items during this festival? (2 marks)

4. Explain why the date of the Chinese New Year is different every year compared to the calendar we use in the UK. (2 marks)

5. Do you think the Spring Festival is important for building community spirit? Give a reason for your opinion using evidence from the text. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a traditional red lantern with intricate gold patterns on it, similar to those seen during the Spring Festival.

Extension challenge: Research the twelve animals of the Chinese Zodiac. Write a short paragraph explaining which animal represents the year you were born and what personality traits are associated with it.



I did it! Name: _____ Date: _____

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