



Lunar New Year

Pre-visit Activity: Background Reading

China is the fourth largest country in the world. It is located on the continent of Asia. China is home to the highest mountains in the world, a very large desert and many rivers that provide water for drinking and watering crops.

People have lived in China for thousands of years. Long before everyone in China could read and write, the people shared information with each other by telling stories. The older people told the stories to teach the younger children. These stories became part of China's culture. Culture is the way of life for a group of people.

Celebrations are part of culture. China's most important celebration is called Lunar New Year and it is based on a story that has been told for a long time. The Lunar New Year happens in January or February because it is based on the cycles of the moon, instead of always being on January 1.

On the first day of the celebration, families clean their houses as a way to be ready for the new year. They also share a special meal with the entire family, being sure to eat traditional Chinese foods such as oranges and dumplings. Another tradition involves children visiting the oldest member of the family then the elder gives the children a red envelope filled with money. People also wear red clothing, hang special signs outside their homes, and watch dragon parades in town.

Lunar New Year is an important celebration in China because it is about new beginnings and it helps Chinese people remember their similar traditions and culture.

Source: http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_general_lunar.htm



Lunar New Year

Pre-visit Activity: Background Reading Activity

Name: _____ Date: _____

On the left side of the chart, draw pictures or write words that describe the way *you* celebrate a New Year. On the right side of the square, draw pictures or write words that describe the way Lunar New Year is celebrated. Use the information in the reading to guide you.

When you celebrate a new year	When Lunar New Year is celebrated
Something you do with your family to celebrate a new year	Something done to celebrate Lunar New Year
Draw a picture of food that your family eats during a celebration	Draw a picture of a food that families eat during Lunar New Year





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Pre-visit Activity: Background Reading Activity **KEY**

On the left side of the chart, draw pictures or write words that describe how you celebrate a new year. On the right side of the square, draw pictures or write words that describe the way Lunar New Year is celebrated. Use the information in the reading to guide you.

When you celebrate the new year	When Lunar New Year is celebrated
January 1	January or February (Based on first new moon of the year)
Something you do with your family to celebrate a new year	Something done in China to celebrate Lunar New Year
Answers will vary, but could include fireworks, watching football on t.v. or eating a meal with black-eyed peas	One of the following: cleaning house, sharing a family meal, visiting older relative, wearing red, watching a dragon parade
Draw a picture of food that your family eats during a celebration	Draw a picture of a food that families in China eat during Lunar New Year
Answers will vary	Oranges, dumplings are the foods found in the reading (some students may know about rice, fish, or noodles)

