





## Chinese New Year worksheet 1

### Read and write.

Read about Chinese New Year. Can you complete the ideas and color the lanterns? Use the pictures to help you!

### For Chinese New Year ...

- 1  Go to a dragon dance in the street, and enjoy it!
- 2  People wear red clothes, and children get a red ..... with money.  
Wear red – it brings good luck!
- 3  Find out your Chinese Zodiac sign. There are ..... signs in the Chinese Zodiac. Each sign has the name of an .....  
Which animal are you?
- 4  Eat some Chinese noodles, and a ..... for dessert.  
Open it and read the message. What does it say?



# Chinese New Year worksheet 2

Look at the Chinese Zodiac. Can you answer these questions?

Two thousand and nineteen is the  
year of the ...  
2018 was the year of the dog.



- Which animal is 2019?
- When was the year of the horse?
- How old were you in the year of the rabbit?
- In which year did you start elementary school?



## Level 3

# Festivals

### Chinese New Year

- These cultural notes describe both the origins of this festival, as well as its current traditions. You can explain as much as you think is relevant to your class and encourage students to recognize and point to the relevant items on the worksheet.
- Chinese New Year is the first day of the New Year in the Chinese calendar, which is not the same as the Gregorian calendar. It falls on different dates each year, between January 21st and February 20th. The origins of this festival are said to go back to prehistory, when it was celebrated to mark the beginning of the new lunar cycle, between the December solstice and the March equinox (in the northern hemisphere). This is why Chinese New Year is also known as the Spring Festival or the Lunar New Year. Each year in the Chinese calendar is represented by an animal. Legend has it that Buddha told animals that he would give them gifts if they honored him. Twelve animals came to pay their respects to Buddha. In return, Buddha gave each animal one of the 12 years of the Chinese Zodiac. People are said to have certain characteristics from the animal of their birth year. The zodiac animal signs are repeated every 12 years.
- Chinese New Year is celebrated in Chinese communities around the world. Many people wear new, red clothes to welcome the New Year. Red stands for fire: it scares away evil spirits and brings good luck. People also visit friends and family, and hold a large feast, which includes noodles, dumplings, and fish. Special food representing luck and happiness is also often served, such as mandarin oranges and fortune cookies. These are cookies containing a message, usually about the person's future. Other traditional activities are making offerings for household deities and taking part in or going to see parades. Some typical features in these parades are dragon and lion dances, as well as acrobatic and music performances using gongs and cymbals. Some families give "lucky money" in red envelopes to their children, and open the doors of their homes to let good luck come in. Sometimes there is also a lantern festival: people decorate and hang lanterns in temples, or carry them to a parade in the evening.

### Chinese New Year worksheet 1

- **Pre-activity:** Use the cultural notes to present Chinese New Year to students. Say *Chinese New Year is the most important festival in China, and people celebrate it around the world*. Encourage students to say anything they already know about this festival. They can use L1 if necessary. Point to the pictures in Activity 1. Ask students about what they can see, and read the captions with them.
- Point to the four big lanterns and say *Look, these are lanterns. People decorate them and hang them in the streets for Chinese New Year. What can we do for this festival? Let's read and complete the ideas*. Do the first example with students. Students read the ideas on the lanterns, and complete them by looking at the pictures and captions.

**Key:** 1 dragon dance, 2 envelope, 3 12 / twelve, animal, 4 fortune cookie

- **Optional follow-up activities:** Students put their worksheets face down. Tell them you are going to check how much they know about Chinese New Year. You can divide the class into two teams. Teams take turns to answer the questions. The winner is the team with the most correct answers. Some sample questions are: *Why is red a special color? (because it brings good luck), Who gets a red envelope? (children), What's in the envelope? (money), What can you see in the streets? (dragon dances / lanterns), What dessert / food comes with a message in it? (fortune cookies), What do people wear? (red clothes), How many signs are there in the Chinese Zodiac? (twelve), Each sign in the Chinese Zodiac has the name of ... (an animal), What Chinese food can you have? (noodles and fortune cookies)*.
- Ask students to choose their favorite activity from the four ideas. Find out about the class's most popular activity by having students raise their hands. Ask, e.g. *Who wants to go to a dragon dance?* Students raise their hands. A volunteer can come to the front to count and write the number on the board. Do the same with the other three ideas.

### Chinese New Year worksheet 2

- **Pre-activity:** Point to the Chinese Zodiac image in Activity 1. Present (or review) the 12 animals as necessary. Write them on the board. From left to right and top to bottom, the animals are: 1 rat, 2 ox, 3 tiger, 4 rabbit, 5 dragon, 6 snake, 7 horse, 8 goat, 9 monkey, 10 rooster, 11 dog, 12 pig. Then say *The Chinese give each year the name of an animal. Let's practice saying the years*. Write some years on the board and practice saying them with students, e.g., 2018 (two thousand and eighteen or twenty-eighteen), 2015 (two thousand and fifteen or twenty fifteen), 2008 (two thousand and eight), 2013 (two thousand and thirteen or twenty eighteen).

- Read the first sentence with students, *2018 was the year of the dog*. Say *Can you find the dog in the Zodiac?* Students point to the dog. Then do the first question with students. They figure out that 2019 is the animal that comes after the dog, i.e., the pig. Do a couple of examples with students to ensure they know they have to go backward and forward to figure out the years, using the dog (2018) as reference. Ask, e.g., *Which animal was 2016? (the monkey)*, *Which year was the year of the snake? (2013)*. Students answer the questions. Then, in pairs, they check and share their answers.

**Key:** 2019 is the year of the pig; The year of the horse was 2014; I was ... years old in the year of the rabbit; I started elementary school in the year of the ...

- **Optional follow-up activities:** In pairs, students write two more questions using the Chinese Zodiac and write the answers. Then they get together with another pair. The pairs take turns to test one another. Finally, the groups can ask you one or two questions each, and test you! You could say some incorrect answers for students to correct you.

- Students could create their own “Class Zodiac.” Divide the class into four groups. Each group can give themselves a Chinese-related name, e.g., the dragons / pandas / noodles, etc. Each group decides on, draws, and labels three signs for the zodiac, on a separate sheet of paper each. Circulate around the class, encouraging students to use their imaginations and helping with new vocabulary. Then draw a grid with 12 squares on the board and number the squares 1–12. The groups take turns to come to the front, stick their drawings on the grid, and say what they show, e.g., Students in group 1 say *Year 1 is the year of the (mountain)*, *year 2 is the year of the (waterfall)* and *year 3 is the year of ...*. Alternatively, the groups can just stick their pictures and the rest of the class can guess what they show.