



Lunar New Year Traditions

Reading Worksheet — Level F | tahricteaches.com

Lunar New Year, often referred to as the Spring Festival, is one of the most significant cultural **observances** in East and Southeast Asia. Celebrated according to the lunisolar calendar, the festival typically falls between late January and mid-February, marking the arrival of spring and the beginning of a new agricultural cycle. For more than a billion people across China, Vietnam, Korea, and diaspora communities worldwide, this period represents a time of renewal, reflection, and reunion.

In the weeks leading up to the festival, families engage in elaborate preparations that carry deep symbolic meaning. Thorough cleaning of the home is considered essential, as it is believed to sweep away misfortune accumulated during the previous year. Households are then **adorned** with red couplets, paper cuttings, and inverted characters representing prosperity, since red is traditionally regarded as a colour that wards off evil spirits and attracts good fortune.

The reunion dinner on New Year's Eve is arguably the most cherished tradition. Family members travel vast distances to gather around the table, where dishes are chosen for their **auspicious** connotations. Fish symbolises surplus, dumplings resemble ancient gold ingots, and long noodles represent longevity. The meal is rarely about sustenance alone; it is a ritualistic affirmation of familial bonds and shared heritage.

Following midnight, fireworks and firecrackers fill the night sky, a custom rooted in the ancient legend of Nian, a mythical beast said to be **deterred** by loud noises and the colour red. Younger generations receive red envelopes containing money from elders, while temples become crowded with worshippers seeking blessings for health, wealth, and academic success in the coming year.

Despite increasing urbanisation and the influence of globalisation, the core values **embedded** within Lunar New Year persist. Whether observed in bustling metropolises like Taipei and Singapore or in quiet rural villages, the festival continues to reinforce intergenerational ties and cultural identity, offering a meaningful pause in an otherwise rapidly modernising world.

A. Vocabulary

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. observances ____ | a. blocks of metal, especially gold or silver, cast for storage |
| 2. adorned ____ | b. scattered population living outside its ancestral homeland |
| 3. auspicious ____ | c. discouraged or prevented from doing something through fear |
| 4. deterred ____ | d. involving or shared between different age groups or generations |
| 5. embedded ____ | e. decorated or made more attractive with ornaments |
| 6. lunisolar ____ | f. suggesting good fortune or favourable outcomes |
| 7. diaspora ____ | g. firmly fixed or rooted within something |
| 8. couplets ____ | h. based on both the cycles of the moon and the sun |
| 9. ingots ____ | i. pairs of poetic lines, often displayed during celebrations |
| 10. intergenerational ____ | j. ceremonies or customs followed as part of tradition or religion |

B. True or False

- | | |
|---|---|
| ___ 1. Lunar New Year always falls on the same date in January each year. | ___ 2. The festival is celebrated by over a billion people across multiple countries. |
|---|---|

- ___ 3. Cleaning the home before the festival is meant to remove bad luck from the previous year.
- ___ 4. Red is avoided during Lunar New Year because it represents misfortune.
- ___ 5. Dumplings are eaten because their shape resembles ancient gold ingots.
- ___ 6. Long noodles are served to symbolise wealth and prosperity.
- ___ 7. Fireworks tradition comes from a legend about a creature named Nian.
- ___ 8. Red envelopes are traditionally given by younger people to their elders.
- ___ 9. Temples are typically empty during the Lunar New Year period.
- ___ 10. The festival continues to reinforce family bonds despite modernisation.

C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: observances, adorned, auspicious, deterred, embedded, diaspora, couplets, ingots

1. Many Chinese _____ communities continue celebrating the festival even after living abroad for generations.
2. Doorways are often _____ with red paper decorations during the Spring Festival.
3. Fish is considered an _____ dish because it symbolises surplus and abundance.
4. According to legend, the beast Nian was _____ by loud noises and the colour red.
5. Cultural values remain deeply _____ in the way families celebrate the new year.



D. Comprehension Questions

1. Why do families undertake thorough cleaning of their homes before the Lunar New Year begins?
2. What symbolic meaning is attached to the foods served at the reunion dinner?
3. How has Lunar New Year maintained relevance despite globalisation and urbanisation?

E. Discussion Questions

1. How do major cultural festivals in your country compare to Lunar New Year in terms of family traditions and symbolic meaning?
2. Do you think traditional festivals will remain important to younger generations as societies become increasingly globalised? Why or why not?



Answer Key

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A. Vocabulary: 1-j, 2-e, 3-f, 4-c, 5-g, 6-h, 7-b, 8-i, 9-a, 10-d

B. True/False: 1-F, 2-T, 3-T, 4-F, 5-T, 6-F, 7-T, 8-F, 9-F, 10-T

C. Fill Blanks: 1-diaspora, 2-adorned, 3-auspicious, 4-deterred, 5-embedded

D. Comprehension:

1. It is believed that cleaning sweeps away misfortune accumulated during the previous year and prepares the home for good luck.
2. Each dish carries auspicious connotations, such as fish representing surplus, dumplings resembling gold ingots, and noodles symbolising longevity.
3. It continues to reinforce intergenerational ties and cultural identity, offering a meaningful pause from modern life.

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