

Name: _____

Chinese New Year



¹ As the clock strikes midnight on the eve of the Chinese New Year, firecracker sounds pound heavily against our eardrums, and fireworks paint the night sky in red, yellow, orange, blue, and green. People crowd the streets and exchange greetings with one another. For the next fifteen days, Chinese people all over the world reunite with their families, carry out rituals to show respect for their ancestors and mythical gods, or simply have a good time!



Nian, the Chinese Character for "Year"

² Each year the Chinese New Year falls sometime in January or February. The reason that the Chinese New Year is never celebrated on the same day every year is because of the calendar that Chinese people use to count days. The Gregorian calendar we commonly use today tracks the movement of the sun. This calendar is different from the Chinese calendar. The Chinese calendar, which is a lunar calendar, tracks the movement of the moon. The Chinese New Year starts with the new moon on the first day of a new year and ends on the full moon fifteen days later.

³ According to the most popular Chinese myth, the origin of Chinese New Year celebrations was to scare away a man-eating monster called Nian. Nian lived in a high mountain. It came down from its hideout once a year and attacked villagers promptly at midnight on the eve of a new year. Villagers were terrified and didn't know what to do. Finally, a villager discovered that Nian was afraid of the color red, fire, and loud noises. He advised his fellow villagers to wear red, set fires, and make lots of noise to frighten away Nian. As doubtful as his fellow villagers were, they decided to follow his advice. Well, they had nothing to lose, really!

⁴ When the time moved slowly past midnight, a new year arrived and, as expected, Nian roared and charged toward the village at full force. Suddenly, the dark landscape lit up - villagers came out of their homes wearing red outfits, carrying torches, and setting off firecrackers or banging on any object with which they could make noise. Nian was startled, and it fled as fast as its feet could carry it. From that point on, Chinese people always celebrate their New Year by wearing red, decorating their houses in red, and lighting firecrackers so Nian doesn't come back again. In fact, the Chinese term "Guo Nian" means not only to welcome the passing of an old year, but also to celebrate the escape from Nian's annual attack.

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| <p>1. When is the Chinese New Year celebrated every year?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A January 1st</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Sometime in December or January</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Sometime in January or February</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Sometime in February or March</p> | <p>2. The Chinese calendar tracks the movement of the sun whereas the Gregorian calendar tracks the movement of the moon.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p> |
| <p>3. The Chinese calendar is what type of calendar?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Lunar calendar</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Julian calendar</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Solar calendar</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Gregorian calendar</p> | <p>4. According to legend, what was the original purpose of Chinese New Year celebrations?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A To show their respect for their ancestors and mythical gods</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B To scare away a monster called Nian</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C To have a fixed family reunion time</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D To celebrate a good harvest</p> |
| <p>5. Which color did Nian dislike?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Red</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Yellow</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Orange</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Pink</p> | <p>6. Which of the following was Nian not afraid of?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Fire</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Cats</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Red colors</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Noises</p> |
| <p>7. Nian came down from a high mountain once a year and attacked the village on the fifteenth day of a new year.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p> | <p>8. For how many days do Chinese people celebrate their New Year?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A 15</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B 10</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C 1</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D 5</p> |

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9. What is the meaning of the Chinese term "Guo Nian"?
- A How are you?
 - B Good luck!
 - C Good-bye.
 - D Celebrate a new year free of Nian's annual attack.

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