

Chinese New Year WebQuest

Chinese New Year will be celebrated on February 9th in 2005 and on January 29th in 2006. The year 2005 will be the year of the rooster and 2006 will be the year of the dog. Why isn't Chinese New Year celebrated on the same day each year? Why are the Chinese years named after animals? In this **WebQuest** you will find the answers to these questions and discover how the Chinese celebrate their New Year.

Each activity listed below covers a different aspect of the Chinese New Year: the Chinese calendar, celebrations, traditional food, and decorations. Either individually or in groups of between two and four visit the websites and find the answers to the questions.

Next, prepare a short presentation for your class about what you have discovered. You may illustrate your presentation using posters, postcards, or anything else suitable that you can find.

Activity 1: The Chinese calendar

Questions:

- Is the Chinese calendar solar or lunar? How many months are in the Chinese calendar?
- Why is each year in the Chinese calendar named after an animal?
- Find out two personality characteristics for each Chinese sign (e.g. horse: intelligent, friendly).
- Find the sign to match your year of birth. Does your personality match the description of your Chinese sign?

Websites:

<http://webexhibits.org/calendars/calendar-chinese.html>

Calendars through the ages

<http://www.new-year.co.uk/chinese/calendar.htm>

Chinese New Year calendar

<http://www.romanization.com/chinesenewyear>

Chinese New Year dates

<http://www.c-c-c.org/chineseculture/zodiac/zodiac.html#Sign%20Background>

Chinese zodiac page

Activity 2: The celebration

Questions:

- a) There are 15 days of celebration. How is each day celebrated?
- b) There are various taboos and superstitions about Chinese New Year. Describe two of them.
- c) What is the history of the celebration? How did the different customs begin?
- d) Name two countries other than China which also celebrate Chinese New Year.

Websites:

http://www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/15-day_celebration.html

15 day celebration of Chinese New Year

<http://www.web-holidays.com/lunar>

General information on Chinese New Year

<http://www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/taboo.html>

Taboos and superstitions of Chinese New Year

Activity 3: Traditional food

Questions:

- a) What is *jai* and what do each of its ingredients symbolise?
- b) Which three items symbolise prosperity?
- c) Why do people eat fish during the Chinese New Year?
- d) What is a typical dinner menu for four people?

Websites:

<http://www.web-holidays.com/lunar/recipes/index.asp>

Chinese food and menus

http://www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/traditional_foods.html

Traditional New Year foods

Activity 4: Decorations

Questions:

- a) How are living rooms decorated and what do each of the decorations symbolise?
- b) When were *Yanliuqing* paintings first introduced? What do they look like?
- c) According to the Chinese, what do peanuts symbolise?
- d) What are *Spring Couplets*? What do people do with them?

Websites:

<http://www.chinapage.com/newyr.html>

China the beautiful

<http://www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/decorations.html>

Chinese New Year decorations

http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/festival_c/spring_e/slogans.htm

Spring Couplets