

Books to Treasure

Bringing in the New Year

Written & Illustrated by Grace Lin

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Language Arts

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Summary: A Chinese American family prepares for and celebrates the Lunar New Year. End notes discuss the customs and traditions of Chinese New Year.

Activity #1

Focus: Students will make their own New Year's dragon image using paper with designs and patterns.

Pass Objectives: Visual Art

Visual Art: Visual Art Expression - The student will observe, select, and utilize a variety of ideas and subject matter in creating original works of visual art.

- 3.1 Experiment in color mixing with various media
- 3.2 Use a variety of subjects, basic media and techniques in making original art including drawing, painting, weaving, sculpture, and ceramics.
- 3.3 Demonstrate beginning skills of composition using the elements of art and principles of design.
- 3.4 Use art media and tools in a safe and responsible manner.

Supplies: Construction paper, markers, patterned paper. You may use either scrapbooking paper or books of wall paper samples (stores will often donate old ones).

Activity: Have students draw their own version of the head of a dragon to completely fill the piece of construction paper. Use the patterned paper and markers to make the eyes, skin, and other details of the dragon's face. Encourage students to look at the detail and shape of the dragon in the book as they create their own. Draw their attention to the way Grace Lin uses

textures in her artwork and encourage them to do the same as they create their dragon. If you do not have patterned paper, let each student make repetitive patterns on pieces of construction paper and then use them to decorate their dragons. Encourage them to experiment with different colors and designs. They may share their pieces with each other for greater variety.

Optional activity: They may cut out the dragon head and attach it to the bottom of a small paper lunch bag to make it into a dragon puppet. Students can also decorate the bag with their patterned papers to look like the scales on the dragon.

Activity #2

Focus: Have students conduct simple research (online or in books) to find out when Chinese New Year will be next year and what animal sign it will be.

Pass Objectives: Social Studies

Social Studies: The student will develop and practice the process skills of social studies.

- 1.1 Use information located in resources such as encyclopedias, timelines, visual images, atlases, maps, globes, and computer-based technologies.

Supplies: Books, encyclopedias, Internet

Activity: Students will need access to books, encyclopedia, or the internet to conduct their research. A simple Google search with the question “When is Chinese New Year” should get them off to a good start. Use this opportunity to mention that some sources are more reliable than others. If they are unsure of their facts, they should use more than one source to confirm the information. If they are successful with their searches, you might lead them to find what animal is associated with the year of their own birth.

Activity #3

Focus: Play a “Pictionary” style game using phrases for things associated with celebration of the New Year to reinforce traditions described in the book and compare them with their own celebrations.

Pass Objectives: World Languages/Language Awareness

- 2.1 Develop an awareness of other cultures
- 4.1 Be aware of the differences among cultures and respect those differences.
- 4.3 Compare holidays and celebrations.

Supplies: You will need a dry erase board, one or two markers, and pieces of paper with words associated with New Year’s Celebrations written on them. The list below includes words from the Chinese New Year as told in the book and words that include typical American celebrations. Feel free to add your own.

Activity: Choose a child to draw the clue first. He or she will select a paper without reading it and then proceed to draw it on the dry erase board for the others to guess. When someone guesses it, then ask them if it is part of the Chinese New Year celebration the traditional American

celebration or both. You can then lead them to discuss ways their families celebrate the New Year. For further enrichment add customs from other cultures represented among your students.

Chinese New Year activities

Sweeping the house
Hanging up poems
Round lanterns or lanterns on a stick
Dumplings
Getting a haircut
New clothes
Firecrackers (on both lists)
Dragon

Traditional US New Year Celebrations

Staying up till midnight
Eating black-eyed peas
Firecrackers (on both lists)
Making resolutions
Funny hats
Noisemakers and confetti