

# CELEBRATIONS

onestopenglish

## Chinese New Year

Teacher's notes

**Age:** Teenagers/Adults

**Level:** Upper intermediate (B2)

**Time:** 45 minutes



contrary opposites – male/female, dark/light, old/young.) In pairs, ask them if they can think of any more opposites in English. Next, ask them to make a list of the animals on the wheel. If students find this difficult, write the words on the board and ask them to match the words to the animals.

**Activity:** In this lesson, students will:

1. read about Chinese New Year;
2. read a Chinese legend;
3. discover their Chinese animal sign;
4. read a character description.

**Key:**

The 12 animals are: horse, ram, monkey, rooster, dog, pig, rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake

**Language focus:** reading; speaking; animal vocabulary; character adjectives

**Materials:** one copy of the worksheet per student

### Procedure

1. Hand out the first two pages of the worksheet. Ask students to work in pairs and talk to their partner about last New Year using the opening three questions in Exercise 1. If you have different nationalities in your class, ask them to explain any interesting New Year's traditions in their country. When they have finished, ask each pair to report their partner's answers to the class. Tell the students that in China, New Year is celebrated in January or February depending on the lunar calendar.
2. Tell students they are going to read and learn about Chinese New Year. Ask students to read questions a–e individually, then go through the questions as a class to check their understanding. Ask students to read the short article and then answer the questions in pairs.

**Key:**

- a) on the first day of the first month on the Chinese lunar calendar (Feb 8th 2016, Jan 28th 2017, Feb 16th 2018)
- b) to get rid of bad fortune and welcome some good
- c) *Kung hei fat choy*
- d) lucky money
- e) 15 to 20 days

3. Ask students to look at the Chinese Astrological Wheel in Exercise 2. Ask them what the symbol at the centre is called. (It's called yin and yang and symbolizes the principle that all things exist as

**Key:**

1. f
2. e
3. g
4. a
5. b
6. c
7. d

5. Tell students to work in pairs and decide on a character adjective that they think represents each one of the twelve animals. When they have finished, ask them to compare their answers with another pair.
6. Next, ask students to complete Exercise 4 in pairs, then check answers as a class. Did they get many answers right? Or do they see the animals very differently to Chinese tradition? Model the pronunciation of any difficult words and get students to practise saying the words.

**Key:**


1. rat
2. ox
3. tiger
4. rabbit
5. dragon
6. snake
7. horse

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8. sheep
9. monkey
10. rooster
11. dog
12. pig

 **TEACHING TIP:** When teaching new vocabulary, ensure that students learn the correct pronunciation by asking them first to identify the number of syllables in the word, and then to identify which syllable carries the main stress in the word. This can be done by writing the word on the board, underlining all the syllables, then highlighting the stressed syllable, e.g. sym pa the tic.


7. Ask students to look at the list of character adjectives and decide whether they are positive or negative. When they have finished, conduct whole class feedback and ask students if there are any other adjectives that they would like to add to each list. Ask students to look at the Astrological Wheel and find their Chinese Zodiac animal. Do they agree or disagree with the adjectives that describe it? What adjectives would they add?

#### Key:

Positive: affectionate, alert, artistic, attractive, brave, charming, confident, determined, energetic, fair, friendly, generous, hard-working, independent, intelligent, loyal, lucky, noble, optimistic, passionate, polite, popular, sociable, strong, successful, sympathetic, trustworthy, wise

Negative: impatient, quick-tempered, self-centred, selfish, stubborn

Could be either: curious, competitive, sensitive, shy

 **TEACHING TIP:** Ask students to write a homework assignment using the new vocabulary learnt in class. For example, you might ask them to write an essay describing a family member in which they have to use five of the new adjectives from this class.

8. Explain to students that a motto is a short sentence or phrase chosen as encapsulating the beliefs or ideals of an individual, family or institution. Give them a couple of examples (Boy Scouts: Be Prepared; Nike: Just do it) and ask if there are any mottos in their language that they can translate into English.