

Chinese New Year

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit students will:

- explore the festivals and cultural events around the world
- explain the meanings of words as used in the text
- illustrate the use of simple present and simple past tense
- summarize the text by listing the important events of the Chinese festival
- produce an effective essay on a general subject

Pre-reading

- ◆ Which festivals do you celebrate throughout the year?
- ◆ What is the purpose of festivals?
- ◆ What do you know about China and the Chinese festivals?



For the Teacher:

Use pre-reading activity to help students predict the content of the text from the title, picture, headings and by using their prior knowledge of festivals.

- (1) Chinese New Year is a holiday that celebrates the beginning of a new year according to the Chinese lunar calendar. It is considered to be one of the most important holidays for Chinese families. The holiday is celebrated with big family gatherings, gift giving, eating of the symbolic foods and display of the festive decorations – all focused on bringing good luck for the new year and celebrating the coming of Spring. In China the lunar calendar is still used to determine traditional holidays like Chinese New Year. Since the lunar calendar is based on the phases of the moon-- which has a shorter cycle than the sun — Chinese New Year is never on the same day each year, but typically falls somewhere between January 21st and February 20th. Celebrations can actually last up to a month.

Why is Chinese New Year never on the same day each year?

Here are some traditions associated with Chinese New Year.

Cleaning Houses and New Clothes

- (2) Prior to the first day of the New Year it is customary for families to thoroughly clean their houses. Doing this is said to clear out any bad luck from the previous year and to make the house ready to accept good luck for the coming year. All cleaning must be finished before the New Year's Day so there is no chance of accidentally throwing out the good fortune of the New Year. Wearing black is not allowed due to its association with death, however, wearing red is encouraged as the colour is associated with warding off bad spirits.

What is the Chinese belief about cleaning houses before the new year day?

For the Teacher:

While-reading activity given in the box may be conducted to help students interact with the text actively. More while-reading questions may also be generated for better comprehension of the Chinese New Year.

Decorating the House

Another popular custom is to hang up signs and posters on doors and windows with the Chinese word *fu* written on them, which means luck and happiness. Buying flowers for the home is also commonplace since they symbolize the coming of spring and a new beginning. (3)

New Year's Eve Dinner

On the eve of the Chinese New Year it is customary to visit relatives and partake in a large dinner where a number of specific foods are served. It is typical for a Chinese family to make eight to nine dishes for the New Year's Eve Dinner because in Chinese language the word "eight" means "prosperity" and the word "nine" means "long-lasting". (4)

Why does this dinner consist of eight or nine dishes?

Giving Good Luck Gifts

It is a traditional practice for adults to give children little red envelopes filled with money in order to symbolize wealth and prosperity for the coming year. It is also common for elders to present red packets to unmarried members of the family. Envelopes are not to be opened until the recipient has left the home of the giver. (5)

Honouring the Animal

Every year is associated with one of the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac. These animals are often represented in decorations. Some people believe that those born during the year of a particular animal may have the character traits of that animal. (6)

Is Chinese belief about people having character traits of animals a fact or an opinion?

For the Teacher:

- Remind students to look for headings, captions and other text features to help them determine main ideas of paragraphs.
- Help them distinguish fact from opinion.

- (7) Chinese New Year is a time when the family should come together in order to give thanks for the year that has passed, and reinvigorate themselves for the coming year.

THEME

Chinese New Year is one of the major festivals in Chinese Culture. Just like other ethnic communities of the world, in China too the New Year is the most important day of the year. This is the time when the family members strive to be with their near and dear ones; they regard this as a time to usher out of the old year and welcome the new, with great festivities and merrymaking.

GLOSSARY

association	.....	feeling that is connected with a particular event
celebration	.....	party or special event at which you celebrate something
customary	.....	usual for somebody
gatherings	.....	bringing together or coming together of people of a family
lunar	.....	relating to the moon
partake	.....	take a part or share in
recipient	.....	receiver
reinvigorate	.....	strengthen
symbolize	.....	to represent something by means of a symbol
traits	.....	characteristics

VOCABULARY

- A. Give the meaning of each word as used in the lesson.

gatherings, customary, thoroughly, commonplace, partake, traits, reinvigorate



For the Teacher:

Vocabulary A: Help students pick out contextualized meaning of a word from many meanings given in the dictionary for one word.

B. Form nouns from the given words and use the nouns in sentences.**Example:**

celebrate – celebration

gather, symbolic, prosper, decorate, encourage

C. Translate the following paragraph into Urdu.

It is a traditional practice for adults to give children little red envelopes filled with money in order to symbolize wealth and prosperity for the coming year. It is also common for elders to present red packets to unmarried members of the family. Envelopes are not to be opened until the recipient has left the home of the giver.

READING COMPREHENSION**Analysis of patterns of text organization****A. Choose the correct options.**

- Chinese New Year falls somewhere _____.
 - on January 21st
 - on February 20th
 - between January 21st and February 20th
- Paragraph 1 gives _____.
 - general details of festivals
 - specific details of the Chinese New Year
 - General details of new year celebrations

**For the Teacher:**

Vocabulary C: Give students examples to understand the difference between literal and figurative language.

Help them use the knowledge of literal and figurative meaning, grammatical gender and syntax to translate the passage from English to Urdu.

Reading Comprehension A: Guide students to read the text silently to scan the information required.

3. It is customary for families to thoroughly clean their houses _____.
 - a. before the first day of the New Year
 - b. on the first day of the New Year
 - c. on the second day of the New Year

4. Hanging up signs and posters on doors and windows means _____.
 - a. love and sincerity
 - b. care and affection
 - c. luck and happiness

5. Envelopes are not to be opened until _____.
 - a. the giver has left the home of the recipient
 - b. the recipient has left the home of the giver
 - c. the giver has gone to sleep

B. Answer the following questions.

1. When does Chinese New Year start?
2. Why do Chinese families do thorough cleaning of their houses before New Year's Day?
3. Which colour is not allowed and which colour is encouraged on Chinese New Year? Why?
4. What do decorations on doors and windows symbolize?
5. What is the significance of New Year's Eve Dinner?
6. What do the little red envelopes filled with money symbolize?
7. What is the importance of Chinese New Year for Chinese families?

GRAMMAR**Collective Nouns****A. Fill in the blanks with the correct collective nouns.**

gang, crowd, committee, class, crew, audience, family

1. It is typical for a Chinese _____ to make eight to nine dishes for the New Year's Eve Dinner.
2. The _____ applauded heartily at the end of the concert.
3. The _____ has just had a physics lesson.
4. The _____ of robbers was arrested by the police.
5. A _____ of people gathered at the accident sight.
6. The _____ took many important decisions at its monthly meeting.
7. The _____ of Pakistan Air Force looked smart in their uniform.

Use of must/ mustn't

Strong obligation	must	All cleaning must be finished before New Year's Day.
Strong prohibition	mustn't	Mother: You mustn't play with matches

For the Teacher:

- **Grammar A:** Recapitulate students' previous knowledge of collective nouns. Encourage them to find more collective nouns.

B. Fill in the blanks with 'must' or 'mustn't'.

1. She _____ eat so much sugar.
2. Students _____ pass an entrance examination to study at this school.
3. You _____ watch so much television.
4. He _____ take some medicine for that cough.
5. Visitors _____ smoke.

Present Indefinite and Present Continuous Tenses**C. Make the present indefinite or present continuous sentences.**

1. You (not / like) _____ chocolate.
2. She (not / study) _____ at the moment.
3. They (not / eat) _____ rice every day.
4. We (not / work) _____ now.
5. It (rain) _____ a lot here.
6. I (go) _____ on holiday tomorrow.

D. Punctuate the following paragraph.

on the eve of the chinese new year it is customary to visit relatives and partake in a large dinner where a number of specific foods are served it is typical for a chinese family to make eight to nine dishes for the new year s eve dinner because in Chinese the word eight means prosperity and the word nine means long lasting

**For the Teacher:**

- Help students illustrate the use and function of modal verbs.
- Recapitulate students' previous knowledge of simple present and present continuous tenses. Ask them to illustrate the rules and function of these tenses. Encourage them to relate these tenses to everyday situations.
- Recall students' knowledge of punctuation.

Use of Hyphen (-)

Hyphens are used to divide words at the end of a line when the word cannot fit on the remainder of the line. There are six rules to follow.

1. Divide the word between syllables. It means, that one-syllable words are **never** divided.

Incorrect	Incorrect	Correct
s- upport	su- pport	sup- port

2. The hyphen goes at the end of the first line.

Incorrect	Correct
sup -port	sup- port

3. Prefixes and suffixes make natural divisions.

Incorrect	Correct
in- ternational	inter- national

4. Do not divide proper nouns or adjectives.

Incorrect	Correct
Pakis- tan	Pakistan

5. There should be at least **two letters plus the hyphen** on the first line and **three letters** on the second.

Incorrect	Incorrect	Correct
s- upposedly	supposed- ly	sup- posedly

6. Divide hyphenated word using the hyphen already in the word.

Incorrect	Correct
moth- er-in-law	mother- in-law



For the Teacher:

- Help students recognize rules to use hyphen to indicate the division of a word at the end of a line.

E. Work in groups and mark hyphens as used in your notebooks.

Make corrections in case you have wrongly used the hyphens.

Primary Stress and Secondary Stress

The mark / ' / shows the main or primary stress in a word. For example, **metalled** /'metld/ is stressed on the first syllable.

The mark / , / shows secondary stress in a word. For example, in the word **metamorphic** /,metə'mɔ:fɪk/ there is a secondary stress on the first syllable.

Mes-siah /mə'saɪə/ *noun* **1** the Messiah [sing.] (in Christianity) Jesus Christ who was sent by God into the world to save people from evil and **SIN** **2** the Messiah [sing.] (in Judaism) a king who will be sent by God to save the Jewish people **3** **messiah** a leader who people believe will solve the problems of a country or the world
SYN SAVIOUR: He's seen by many as a political messiah.

mes-si-an-ic /,mesi'ænik/ *adj.* (formal) **1** relating to a messiah **2** attempting to make big changes in society or to a political system in an extremely determined and enthusiastic way: The reforms were carried out with an almost messianic zeal.

Messrs (BrE) (NAMe Messrs.) /'mesəz; NAMe -sərz/ *abbr.* (used as the plural of 'Mr' before a list of names and before names of business companies): Messrs Smith, Brown and Jones ◊ Messrs T Brown and Co

mess tin *noun* a metal tin used by soldiers for cooking, eating and drinking

messy /'mesi/ *adj.* (mess-ier, messi-est) **1** dirty and/or untidy **SYN** CHAOTIC: The house was always messy. **2** making sb/sth dirty and/or untidy: It was a messy job. **3** (of a situation) unpleasant, confused or difficult to deal with: The divorce was painful and messy.

mes-tiza /me'sti:zə/ *noun* a female MESTIZO

mes-tizo /me'sti:zəʊ; NAMe -zoʊ/ *noun* (pl. -os) a Latin American who has both Spanish and Native American ANCESTORS

Met /met/ *abbr.* (informal) **1** METEOROLOGICAL: the Met Office weather forecast service **2** the Met the Metropol-

lated to metalanguage ▶ **meta-linguistics** /'metaɪŋgwɪstɪks/ *noun* [U]

metalled /'metld/ *adj.* (of a road or track) made or repaired with small pieces of broken stone

metal-lic /mə'tæɪlɪk/ *adj.* [usually before noun] **1** that looks, tastes or sounds like metal: **metallic paint/colours/blue** ◊ a metallic taste ◊ a **metallic sound/click** ◊ a metallic voice (= that sounds unpleasant) **2** made of or containing metal: a **metallic object** ◊ **metallic compounds**

metal-lif-er-ous /,metə'li:fərəs/ *adj.* (geology) (of rocks) containing or producing metal

met-al-loid /'metɪɔɪd/ (BrE also **semi-metal**) *noun* (chemistry) a chemical element which has properties both of metals and of other solid substances

metal-lur-gist /mə'tæɪlədʒɪst; NAMe 'metlɪ:rdʒɪst/ *noun* a scientist who studies metallurgy

me-tal-lurgy /mə'tæɪlədʒɪ; NAMe 'metlɪ:rdʒɪ/ *noun* [U] the scientific study of metals and their uses ▶ **metal-lur-gical** /,metə'li:dzɪkəl; NAMe ,metlɪ:'sɪ:rdʒɪ/ *adj.*

met-al-work /'metlwa:k; NAMe -wɜ:rk/ *noun* [U] **1** the activity of making objects out of metal; objects that are made out of metal **2** the metal parts of sth: cracks in the metalwork ▶ **metalworker** *noun*

meta-morph-ic /,metə'mɔ:fɪk; NAMe -'mɔ:rf-/ *adj.* (geol-ogy) (of rocks) formed by the action of heat or pressure

meta-morph-ose /,metə'mɔ:fəʊz; NAMe -'mɔ:rfəʊz/ *verb* ~ (sth/sb) (from sth) (into sth) (formal) to change or make sth/sb change into sth completely different, especially over a period of time **SYN** TRANSFORM: [V] The oil-

F. Look at the sample dictionary page:

- (i) Make a list of words that have both primary and secondary stresses.
- (ii) How many syllables does each of these words have?
- (iii) Which syllable has primary stress and which syllable has secondary stress?

For the Teacher:

- Explain to students a stressed syllable is relatively loud, long in duration, said clearly and made noticeable by the pitch of the voice. Longer words may have one or more secondary stresses coming before the primary stress. It feels like beats in a rhythm leading up to the main stress.

ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Form groups and discuss the following.

Festivals — A pleasant break from dull routine of life

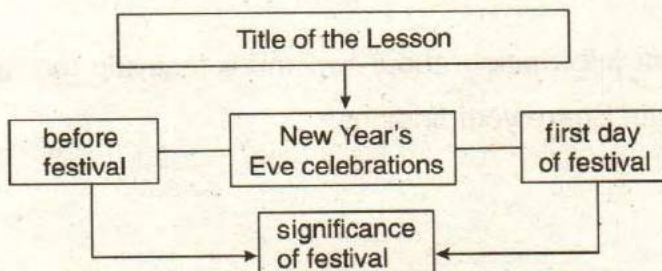
You may focus on purpose, celebration and significance of festivals.

Use the following expressions to give reasons.

- *The fact is that...*
- *It is obvious that ...*
- *One can say that ...*
- *There is no doubt that ...*
- *Because of ...*
- *That is why ...*
- *After all, ...*

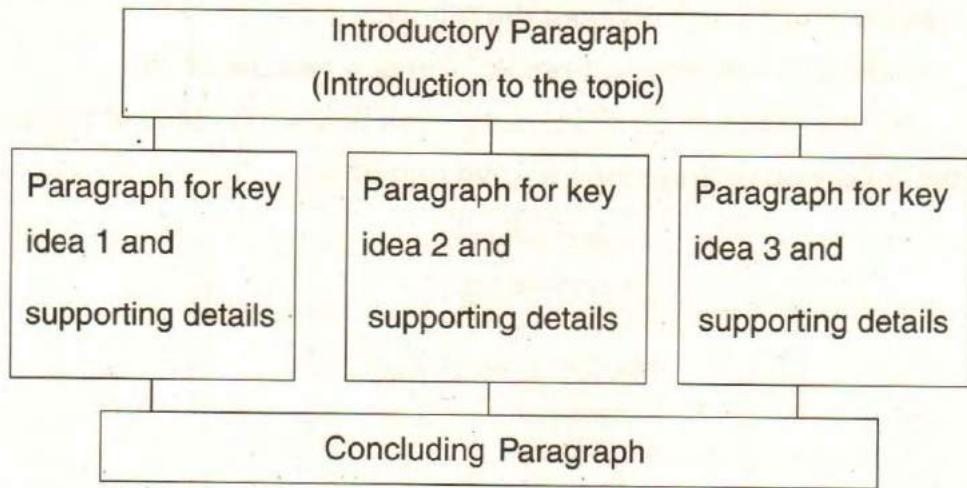
WRITING SKILLS

- A. Summarize the lesson by arranging the celebrations of “Chinese New Year” chronologically.



For the Teacher:

- Encourage students to use appropriate expressions to support or modify their opinion with reasons.
- Guide them to summarize the main points of discussion for the benefit of the whole group.
- Writing Skills A: Guide students to develop the mind map to summarize the text. Remind students that only main ideas should be included in a summary. To determine if students have included all main ideas, ask them if their summary is easily understood by someone who has not read the text. To help students include necessary information, ask them if they exclude this information, will their summary still sound complete.
- Help them analyze the order of arranging paragraphs chronologically.

B. Write an essay on "Our Cultural Festivals". (220-250 words)**Further Reading Activity**

1. Surf internet to find names of the animals Chinese years are named after.
2. Collect information about two more festivals that are celebrated around the world. Share your findings.

For the Teacher:

Writing B: Guide students to write a general essay following the process given in the mind map. Encourage students to use pre-writing strategies for writing the essay.