

新年快乐: Happy Chinese New Year!

3, 2, 1...Happy New Year!

- 1 People have been celebrating the start of each new year for centuries. In America, many people celebrate by staying up until midnight, attending New Year's Eve parties, watching fireworks (on television or in person), and spending time with family and friends. But around the world, people celebrate the changing of the year in different ways – and even on different days! One place where the New Year is celebrated somewhat differently from America is the country of China.

Fifteen Days of Celebration

- 2 In China, the New Year's festival – often called the Spring Festival– is considered one of the most important celebrations of the year. Rather than being celebrated on one night and day like the American New Year, the Chinese New Year is actually celebrated over the course of 15 days! Because China has traditionally used a different calendar than the U.S., the first day of the Chinese New Year falls on a different day each year. It usually takes place in either January or February. In 2013, the first day of the New Year was Sunday, February 10th.

Important Traditions

- 3 China is a large country with many different groups of people. As a result, New Year's traditions – things that have been done for many years – can vary greatly from one part of China to another. However, there are some traditions that are common throughout the country. Much like in America, New Year's in China is usually celebrated with friends and family members. People may travel long distances to be close to their loved ones for this special occasion. As in America, many people set off fireworks at midnight as the new year begins. People may participate in dances and other fun activities.



On New Year's Eve, fireworks are common both in America and in China.

4

However, some Chinese New Year traditions are different from common American traditions. Because the color red is considered lucky in the Chinese culture, many decorations for the New Year are red in color, and some people may dress up in red. In China, each new year is associated with a particular animal, such as a tiger or a rat (2013 is the year of the snake); decorations may show the animal being celebrated that



Above: The head of a costume used in a traditional dragon dance.

year. Large parades are held and include dragon dances, in which teams mimic, or copy, the movements of a dragon. Additionally, one of the biggest events of the Chinese New Year is a huge feast with family members – making the celebration in some ways more similar to the American Thanksgiving celebration than to New Year's Eve.

5

If you live in America, you've probably made a New Year's resolution before. Many people make these promises to themselves that they will change something they are unhappy with. For example, you might make a resolution to eat healthier food in the new year, or to be nicer to your family members. In China, people make a fresh start for the new year by thoroughly cleaning their homes. They believe that this ritual helps to sweep away any bad luck that has accumulated in the house over the course of the year.

Chinese New Year Around The World

6

Chinese New Year is not only celebrated in China. Since many people with Chinese heritage, or background, live in other places around the world, Chinese New Year is actually celebrated in many different countries, including Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Singapore. The holiday is also celebrated in many American communities that have large numbers of Chinese-Americans. For example, there is a huge Chinese New Year festival in Flushing, Queens, which includes a parade complete with dragon dancers. Around 4,000 people march in this massive parade each year. If you want to learn more about Chinese New Year celebrations, consider finding one of these festivals near you and checking it out for yourself!

Use the passage 新年快乐: Happy Chinese New Year! to answer the following questions:

1. According to the text, which is a way that New Year celebrations in China are similar to many New Year celebrations in America?

- A** Chinese New Year decorations are often red.
- B** Chinese New Year celebrations take place for 15 days.
- C** Chinese New Year is celebrated with friends and family.
- D** A common Chinese New Year tradition is performing the dragon dance.

2. The first day of the Chinese New Year takes place on a different day than the American New Year primarily because:

- A** People in China place less importance on the New Year.
- B** New Year's in China involves a longer celebration.
- C** People need time to clean out their houses.
- D** The Chinese New Year is based on a different calendar.

3. Why did the author most likely include Paragraph 5?

- A** To prove that Chinese people enjoy cleaning.
- B** To give another example of how Chinese New Year is different from most American celebrations.
- C** To make readers think Chinese New Year is strange.
- D** To encourage readers to make a New Year's resolution.

4. Which statement best describes the way that this article is organized?

- A** The author explains how a tradition has changed over time.
- B** The author examines different people's opinions on New Year celebrations.
- C** The author compares how a holiday is celebrated in two different countries.
- D** The author shares her opinion about Chinese New Year.

5. Read the following sentence from the text:

*They believe that this ritual helps to sweep away any bad luck that has **accumulated** in the house over the course of the year.*

In this sentence, the word **accumulated** most likely means:

- A** Gotten rid of
- B** Built up
- C** Irritated people
- D** Been missing

6. Based on the text, which of the following makes Chinese New Year similar to Thanksgiving in America?

- A** Family members get together to have a huge feast.
- B** Both of them include parades that feature dragon dances.
- C** People set off fireworks in both China and America.
- D** Both holidays are celebrated on just one day.

7. Read the following sentence from the text:

“Chinese New Year is not only celebrated in China.”

Which sentence from the text could be used to support this statement?

- A** “But around the world, people celebrate the changing of the year in different ways – and even on different days!”
- B** “However, some Chinese New Year traditions are different than common American traditions.”
- C** “For example, there is a huge Chinese New Year festival in Flushing, Queens, which includes a parade complete with dragon dancers.”
- D** “If you live in America, you’ve probably made a New Year’s resolution before.”

8. According to the text, the reason there is such a large Chinese New Year's celebration in Flushing, Queens is because:

- A** The first Chinese people who came to America moved to Flushing
- B** There are many Chinese-American people living in Flushing
- C** People in Flushing can afford large celebrations
- D** A famous Chinese folktale takes place in Flushing

Using the information from 新年快乐: Happy Chinese New Year!, compare the ways that New Year's is celebrated in China to how it is celebrated in New York. In your response, be sure to include:

____ Supporting details from the text

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Answer Key

1. According to the text, which is a way that New Year celebrations in China are similar to many New Year celebrations in America?

C Chinese New Year is celebrated with friends and family.

2. The first day of the Chinese New Year takes place on a different day than the American New Year primarily because:

D The Chinese New Year is based on a different calendar.

3. Why did the author most likely include Paragraph 5?

B To give another example of how Chinese New Year is different from most American celebrations.

4. Which statement best describes the way that this article is organized?

C The author compares how a holiday is celebrated in two different countries.

5. Read the following sentence from the text:

*They believe that this ritual helps to sweep away any bad luck that has **accumulated** in the house over the course of the year.*

In this sentence, the word *accumulated* most likely means:

B Built up

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“Chinese New Year is not only celebrated in China.”

Which sentence from the text could be used to support this statement?

C “For example, there is a huge Chinese New Year festival in Flushing, Queens, which includes a parade complete with dragon dancers.”

8. According to the text, the reason there is such a large Chinese New Year’s celebration in Flushing, Queens is because:

B There are many Chinese-American people living in Flushing

Extended Response:

As extended response criteria will vary by grade, please see the Common Core extended response rubrics available at

<http://engageny.org/resource/test-guides-for-english-language-arts-and-mathematics> for scoring this question accurately.