

# Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year is an important festival in the Chinese calendar. It is a time when family and friends get together to welcome in the new year. In this text, you'll find out all about Chinese New Year, and about the Chinese calendar, which is different from the Western calendar.

Chinese New Year is the biggest and most important celebration for Chinese people. The festival lasts for fifteen days. The date of Chinese New Year changes every year, but the first day of the festival is always between 21<sup>st</sup> January and 20<sup>th</sup> February.

- 5 The Chinese calendar is organised in a twelve-year cycle. Each year is named after an animal, and people are said to have similar characteristics to the animal associated with their birth year.

新年快乐

"Happy New Year"  
in Mandarin Chinese

**Rat — 2008, 1996, 1984, 1972, 1960**

- 10 Charming, quick-witted and full of energy, rats work hard and have ambition, but they can be selfish and greedy.

**Ox — 2009, 1997, 1985, 1973, 1961**

- 15 Oxen are reliable and hard-working, and their honesty and loyalty are valued. They are usually quiet, but can be stubborn.

**Tiger — 2010, 1998, 1986, 1974, 1962**

Brave, enthusiastic, passionate and confident, tigers are born leaders. However, they can sometimes be unpredictable and disobedient.

20 **Rabbit — 2011, 1999, 1987, 1975, 1963**

Rabbits are gentle and compassionate, and prefer peace to conflict. They often tend to be insecure and cautious.

**Dragon — 2012, 2000, 1988, 1976, 1964**

- 25 Dragons are confident, ambitious and successful, but can be aggressive and arrogant. The dragon is an important Chinese cultural symbol, so Chinese people consider it a very lucky year.

**Snake — 2013, 2001, 1989, 1977, 1965**

- 30 Snakes are wise but mysterious. They think a lot and are usually financially successful, but can be dishonest and judgemental.

**Horse — 2014, 2002, 1990, 1978, 1966**

- 35 Energetic and talented, horses are very popular and like to be the centre of attention. They have a tendency to be self-centred.

**Goat — 2015, 2003, 1991, 1979, 1967**

- 40 Goats are creative, gentle and clever, and are tougher than others think. However, they often worry and can be pessimistic and insecure.

**Monkey — 2016, 2004, 1992, 1980, 1968**

Monkeys are adventurous and mischievous. They are lively, sociable and find it hard to relax. They can often be cunning.

45 **Rooster — 2017, 2005, 1993, 1981, 1969**

Roosters are motivated, organised and independent. They're straightforward, but often outspoken and a little vain.

**Dog — 2018, 2006, 1994, 1982, 1970**

- 50 Loyal and honest, dogs have a strong sense of justice and fairness. They can, however, worry unnecessarily and be bad-tempered.

**Pig — 2019, 2007, 1995, 1983, 1971**

- 55 Generous and modest, with a loving and caring nature, pigs like to see the good in people, but can sometimes be too trusting.

Written by Alex Fairer.

1 If the first day of Chinese New Year falls on 8<sup>th</sup> February, what is the date of the last day of the festival?

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1 mark

2 Which animal sign is good at being in charge, according to the text?

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1 mark

3 What does "compassionate" (line 21) mean? Use a dictionary to help you. Why do you think this is seen as a positive quality?

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.....

2 marks

4 Which animal sign do you think is the most desirable for Chinese people? Why?

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.....

2 marks

5 Which animal sign does the text suggest is the most artistic?

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1 mark

6 Which year comes after the year of the pig?

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1 mark

7 Do the characteristics of the animal for the year you were born in reflect your personality? Explain your answer.

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.....  
.....

2 marks

Total  
out of 10