

11:02:21 - Thursday 11th February

Hi, this is your home learning work for today. Make sure you have somewhere quiet to do your work and that you send us photos on Dojo of your tasks.

Some less structured activities today and tomorrow as it is almost half term – well done for all of your amazing work this half term.

Remember at 1:30pm to join the LIVE EVENT with the amazing author Michael Morpurgo. See the letter you received yesterday for the link.

Chinese New Year – the Lunar New Year

Friday this week is the Lunar New Year. A huge celebration in China and many other countries in Asia. We are going to find out more about it.

1. Watch this clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cRMRp9-Z08>

The story of the New Year Race

Many thousands of years ago – in fact more thousands than you could possibly count – the Jade Emperor was arranging the world in an orderly fashion so that he could keep track of what was going on and keep everything neat and tidy.

He was particularly pleased with the way that time worked, but had an irritating feeling that maybe he had missed something. As he walked around the Heavenly Peach Orchard one day – well actually it was several hundred years, but that was just like a day to him – he realised that what was needed was a way of tracking the passing of the years. He was quite happy with the seconds, minutes, hours, days and months, but the years just didn't feel right yet. They needed names, he suddenly

thought, not just numbers – that way they would be much easier to remember, and he could have a bit of fun making the names and what happened in those years fit together. But what to call them? As he thought about this, he watched two phoenixes playing in the sky above him, diving and swooping and chasing each other. "That's it", he thought, "I'll gather the animals and birds together and have a race. I can name the years after the order they finish. The first 12 I think, because that will make a nice number to remember."

Once he'd made this decision, he wasted no time in summoning all the birds and animals to take part in the Great Race; but when he saw the huge crowd that arrived, he realised that this might be a bit difficult and dangerous to arrange properly. He was a bit disappointed, because, being an Emperor, he liked things on a grand scale, but in the end decided that since he only wanted 12 winners he only needed 12 animals to decide which order the names should be in. Having decided this, he chose the animals that he thought humans were most familiar with – only when he came to count them, he realised he had been distracted by a particularly juicy peach he was munching on and had actually chosen 13! They were the Rooster, Dragon, Ox, Dog, Monkey, Rabbit, Tiger, Horse, Cat, Pig, Rat, Sheep and Snake. He lined them up at the gate of the Heavenly Peach Orchard, and described the course they had to race around. It started going up the mountain to the left of the orchard, made a big loop round and ended with them

crossing the river that flowed to the right of the orchard. The Emperor thought he would include lots of different types of countryside to give the different types of animals a chance, but to be honest, he hadn't thought this through too carefully. In fact, as you will see, it all turned out all right in the end, but not quite the way he imagined.

"Yi, er, san, *kaishi!*" the Emperor shouted and the animals set off, with the dragon well in the lead, as you might expect. As the animals disappeared up the mountain, the Emperor strolled across the river to wait for them. He took a large basket of peaches with him to keep him going, and just as he was finishing the 273rd he saw the Ox swimming across the river and hauling himself out onto the bank. "Well, well, well," he said to himself. "Who'd have thought it!" But imagine his surprise



The story of the New Year Race

when, just as the Ox had got his front hooves onto the bank, out from behind his ears jumped the Rat, who landed neatly on solid ground, and with a small squeak of triumph, raced across the finishing line. The Ox lumbered up next, grumbling and mumbling about how the Rat had tricked him into giving him a lift. One by one the other animals emerged from the river and crossed the line. Third was the Tiger, then the Rabbit, followed by the Dragon, the Snake, the Horse, the Sheep, the Monkey, the Rooster, the Dog and the Pig.

They all stood around for a while waiting, until at last the Cat appeared complaining bitterly that the Dog had cheated and pushed it off the log they floated across the river on. But as there were no rules for the race, except to finish as quickly as you could, no one really listened and eventually the Cat ran off still complaining and

promising to get even with the Dog. The Jade Emperor was very pleased with the result of the race, but was a bit puzzled by why some of the animals hadn't done as well as he had expected. When questioned, the Dragon, who could have won the race so easily, admitted that he had been distracted by several humans he had found in various sorts of trouble and had stopped to help them – that, after all, is what Chinese dragons do. The Dog said that the Cat had put up rather more of a fight than he had expected and he had stopped to lick all the scratches better, and eventually the Pig had to admit that he had stopped for several snacks and a light breakfast on the way.

All in all, however, the Jade Emperor said that they had each acted according to their nature, especially the tricky Rat and the greedy Pig, so he carefully recorded the result of the race. This was on a long yellow scroll which he hung at the gates of the Heavenly Peach Orchard. It is probably still there now. What is certain is that the Rat is still the first year of the Zodiac, the Pig the last and the Cat has still not forgiven the Dog.

Because this all happened so long ago, no one can be certain of the exact details of the race, and who did what to whom. All that we do know for sure is the order the animals finished in.

A Chinese dragon carving at a temple



A traditional Chinese garden



2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zd9nd6f> this link tells us more about the animals' race.
3. Read this and answer these comprehension questions:

Chinese New Year

What is Chinese New Year?

Chinese New Year is celebrated every year by millions of Chinese people. In addition, it has now become a very popular event for people of all cultures and races. Many communities flock to their local Chinatown to witness the joyful festivities and it is the longest and most important holiday for a lot of Asian countries, such as China, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia.

Chinese New Year doesn't happen on the same day as the Western New Year's Day. This is because it is worked out according to the first day of the Chinese Lunar calendar, which means the year is determined by the movements of the sun and moon. The celebration falls between 21st January and the 19th February. In 2021, Chinese New Year falls on Friday 12th February.

Celebrations

There are certain traditions that are very likely to occur at a Chinese New Year celebration. Here are just a few:

Red Envelopes: The colour red is very lucky to the Chinese as it symbolises fortune, good luck and joy. People give each other money in small, decorated red envelopes. It is usually older people who give them to the young in amounts of even numbers.

Firecrackers: Firecrackers are traditionally made of lots of red paper rolls strung together. When lit, they explode very quickly, one after the other, and create loud popping noises as well as a cloud of red paper shards in the air. However, they are quite dangerous and have been banned in a lot of countries, except for some rural villages in China.

Lion and Dragon Dances: These dances are often performed by skilled acrobats under the lion and dragon costumes. The dance is accompanied by loud music consisting of drums and cymbals to chase away the evil spirits and bad luck. The dragon dance is often the highlight of a parade in a Chinatown and people flock to see the magnificent show!

Spring Cleaning and Debt: It is believed that spring cleaning your home will sweep away the bad fortune of the old year and any debts should be settled before the new one.

Food and Families: Food is quite symbolic at this time of year. Chicken and prawns represent happiness whilst noodles represent long life. Dumplings are also eaten. Like Christmas, friends and family all gather together to eat and enjoy each other's company.

Legends

It is said that Chinese New Year started in ancient times, when the Chinese people were hounded by a mythical beast called the 'Nian'. The Nian would visit every New Year's day to gobble up all their livestock, crops and even people!

Scared and tormented, the villagers left food outside their houses for the Nian, in the hope that it would leave them be once it had been fed.

One day, the villagers noticed that the Nian was afraid of a small child wearing the colour red. From that day on, red lanterns, firecrackers and scrolls were used to frighten the Nian away and it never came back!

The Chinese Zodiac and its 12 animals all link to certain years of the Lunar calendar. Last year (2020) was the year of the rat, 2021 is the year of the ox and 2022 will be the year of the tiger.

These animals all came to be ranked by a legendary race they all took part in by crossing a river. The rat won the race through trickery and people who are born in the year of the rat are said to be very cunning.

From first to last, the animals finished in this order: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog and pig.

Your Celebrations

It is very likely that your local community will be holding some sort of celebration for Chinese New Year. Have you ever watched a dragon dance? If not, do you think you will this year?



Comprehension

1. Name two countries where Chinese New Year is celebrated?

2. What day of the week is Chinese New Year in 2021? Tick one.

- Monday
- Friday
- Wednesday
- Thursday

3. Look at the **Celebrations** section.

Find and copy one word which means the same as **talented**.

4. Why is it a popular tradition to tidy your home for Chinese New Year?

5. In your own words, explain the legend of how Chinese New Year began.

6. According to the Chinese Zodiac, 2021 is the year of the...? Tick one.

- dragon
- pig
- dog
- ox

7. Why is Chinese New Year not on the same day as the Western New Year? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

8. Choose two Chinese New Year traditions and explain how they are symbolic.

9. Would you like to experience Chinese New Year? Why?

1:30pm LIVE EVENT - Michael Morporgo 1:30 LIVE EVENT You received a letter yesterday explaining this event. Click on the link in the letter to access the event. It is for 45 minutes, live with one of the most amazing children's authors.

Creative - Chinese New Year lanterns.

Have a go at making some lanterns of your own.



Activity: make a Chinese lantern

You will need:

- a sheet of A4 coloured card
- scissors
- a stapler or sticky tape

1 Cut a strip about 3cm wide from the short side of the card. This will be used to make the handle.



2 Fold the rest of the sheet of card in half length-ways.



3 Cut a straight line across the fold of the card, about 2cm in from the side, stopping about 3cm from the unfolded edge. Don't cut all the way across!



4 Repeat Step 3 across the card, with the cuts about 2cm apart.



5

Unfold the card, curve it round so the two short sides are just overlapping, and staple together at the top and bottom (or stick together with tape).



6

Squash the lantern down a little so that the middle pushes outwards. Staple the handle strip to either side of the top of the lantern.



You can decorate your lantern any way you like, and hang up a row of different coloured lanterns along a string from the ceiling.

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