

Explore Chinese New Year



Table of Contents

Welcome	3
Information for Teachers	4
What's in the Box?	4
Teaching with Objects	7
How to Handle Objects	8
What is Chinese New Year?	9
Background About Objects in the Box	10
Student Activities	14
Activity 1: Exploring Chinese New Year Objects	14
Activity 2: Make Chinese New Year Decorations	17
Zodiac Wall Hanging	18
Chinese Firecrackers	21
Good Luck <i>Fu</i> Banner	23
Woodblock Prints	26
Chinese New Year Lanterns	29
Activity 3: Perform a Lion Dance!	32
Peddlar Drums	33
Lion Dance Masks	36
Resources and References	39
Vocabulary Words	39
Extensions and Resources	41
Appendices	
Appendix A: Chinese Zodiac Chart	43
Appendix B: Good Luck <i>Fu</i> Character	44

Welcome

Thank you for choosing to use the Museum Bento Box “Explore Chinese New Year.” This box introduces Chinese New Year, an important holiday in Chinese culture that is celebrated by Chinese communities throughout the world. The objects, activities and resources in this box can be used in a number of different ways to support your study of literature, art, history, culture, math and geography as well as provide a starting point for more in-depth discussions of China and its people. It can also prompt discussions on multiculturalism, immigration and cross-cultural comparisons of Lunar New Year.

I have created Museum Bento based on the belief that teaching with objects is an effective way to connect students with other cultures, foster empathy and build emotional receptivity. Hands-on exploration of objects provides a direct sensory connection that results in new opportunities for learning and understanding. Most importantly, teaching with objects spurs curiosity and allows students to develop their own questions and find their own answers. The suggested activities in this guide have been developed with this in mind and can be shaped to suit grades K-7. It’s my hope that the objects in this box inspire a sense of play and discovery within the classroom and lead to further exploration of the vibrant cultures and arts of Asia.

What's in the Box?

Objects



Lion String Puppet



Lantern



Copper Gong, Cymbals & Peddler Drums



Red (*hongbao*) Envelopes



Decorative Firecracker

What's in the Box?

Objects



New Year Woodblock Pictures



Embroidered Zodiac Animals



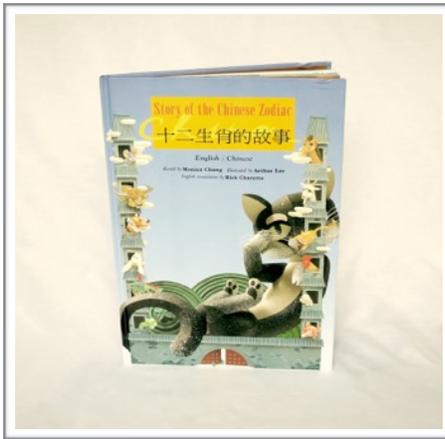
Embroidered Wall Hanging



Good Luck *Fu* Banner

What's in the Box?

Media, Books & Resources



Story of the Chinese Zodiac,
Retold by Monica Chang,
Translated by Rick Charette
(Yuan-Liou Publishing: Taipei,
Taiwan, 1994).



Celebrate Chinese New Year, by Carolyn
Otto, (National Geographic Society:
Washington D.C., 2009).



Audio CD: *Gongs and Drums of Celebrations*



DVD: *New Year in Pingwei*

Teaching with Objects

Teaching with objects is a powerful way to connect students to their own cultural background as well as with other cultures. Holding an object in their hands provides for students a powerful sensorial experience that engages their learning and incites their curiosity. Through such tangible experiences, students can be inspired to develop their own questions about the objects they are exploring and develop strategies for answering those questions. Teachers can encourage students to carefully examine an object, touch it gently and ask themselves what they see and what the object tells them. The following diagram can help teachers when exploring the objects in the box with their students.



How to Handle Objects

- Please have students handle the objects under adult supervision.
- Always hold objects with two hands.
- Paint, feathers, fur, paper and textiles are very fragile and should be touched as little as possible.
- Do not shake the objects or their containers.
- Extreme temperatures, direct sunlight and water can be very harmful to the objects. Please keep objects away from any heat sources, fans and open windows.
- Please secure the objects in the Museum Bento box when you are not using them.

What is Chinese New Year?

Chinese New Year (also called Lunar New Year or Spring Festival) is a colourful, joyous festival celebrated in Chinese communities throughout the world. Families celebrate together with special meals, parties and their own local traditions.

The first day of Chinese New Year falls in late January or early February, following the Lunar Calendar and usually lasts for fifteen days. The Lunar Calendar year is based on the cycle of the moon. The Lunar New Year is also celebrated in many other Asian countries. People travel great distances to be with one another and to pay respect to gods and ancestors.

Families begin preparing for Chinese New Year weeks in advance. Homes and businesses are cleaned to “sweep away” bad luck and to provide a fresh start for the New Year. Red and gold decorations are hung everywhere – red symbolizes happiness and good fortune, while gold signifies wealth. Banners with the character *fu* 福 are hung on doors and other places, the character symbolizes good fortune and happiness. On the fifteenth day of Chinese New Year is the Lantern Festival that is celebrated for three days. Lanterns are strung from the streets, homes and businesses as symbols of good fortune.

Chinese New Year revolves around food and family. On Lunar New Year Eve, families get together for a special meal. Traditional foods are served that have names similar to words like “good luck,” “long life,” and “prosperity.” Dumplings (*jiaozi*), which look like ingots of gold, and fish (*yu*), symbolizing abundance, are often served along with uncut noodles that are meant to represent long-life. A special dish of treats called the “Tray of Togetherness” is eaten to bring a sweet start to a new year. The circular tray, representing “togetherness,” is filled with dried fruits, seeds, candies and sweets.

Background About Objects in the Box



Lion String Puppet The lion dance is one of the most popular traditions of Chinese New Year. The lions, representative of good luck, dances their way through parades, weaving and zig-zagging to the rhythmic beats of drums, gongs and cymbals. Two dancers control a lion and have special strings to open and close its mouth and eyes. During the dance, the lions will gobble up lucky money and lettuce, both symbols of good fortune, from the crowd of spectators. The popping of firecrackers and the loud music are meant to scare away evil spirits and usher in good fortune for the upcoming year. A dragon, another auspicious symbol, will often follow the lions, welcoming everyone to a prosperous new year.



Lantern During the New Year, red lanterns are hung from homes, stores and city streets. On the fifteenth day of the festival, the lantern festival is celebrated for the first full moon of the new year. The lantern tradition began during the East Han Dynasty (AD 25 – AD 220) and is still popular today. Lanterns can come in many sizes and shapes and are commonly made from bamboo, wood, reed and wire. Round lanterns, like this one here, are meant to resemble the full moon and the roundness of *yuan*, Chinese money. Children often carry lanterns with sticks during the Lantern Festival parades.

Background About Objects in the Box



Embroidered Wall Hanging During the Chinese New Year, homes are hung with festive decorations meant to bring in good luck and prosperity. This embroidered wall hanging is decorated with a colourful peacock and features two traditional Chinese knots at the top and bottom. The peacock, thought to be an earthly form of the phoenix in Chinese folklore, is a symbol of beauty and dignity.



Embroidered Zodiac Animals According to the Chinese calendar, every year is represented by one of twelve animals. This cycle repeats every twelve years. People identify with the animal of their birth year and the personality traits of that animal. The animals are: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog and pig. During Chinese New Year, the zodiac animal for the new year embellishes decorations and gifts.

Background About Objects in the Box



Copper Gong, Cymbals & Drums Percussion instruments have a long history in China and are often used in special events and festivals. During Chinese New Year, the lion dance is accompanied by the rhythmic beats of drums, cymbals and gongs. The lion zig-zags and moves to the music in order to confuse the spirits, whom the Chinese believe cannot walk in straight lines. The loud music is meant to keep away misfortune.



Red Envelopes (*hongbao*) Children receive red envelopes filled with money from their parents, relatives, and adult friends during Chinese New Year. Printed on the envelopes are characters for good luck or the New Year zodiac animal. In Cantonese, the envelopes are called *lai see*.



Decorative Firecracker Chinese love to light fireworks throughout the New Year, believing the noise will ward off the dreaded *Nian* monster and usher in the New Year. Firecracker decorations are a common sight in homes and businesses during the New Year season.

Background About Objects in the Box



New Year Woodblock Pictures During the New Year celebration, it's customary for Chinese families to paste colourful woodblock prints on windows and walls. The prints, with their bright and cheerful images, are meant to stay up long after the festivities pass and bring a spark of colour into a dreary winter. This folk art has its origins in the Qing dynasty (AD 1644–1912) and still remains popular today.



Good Luck *Fu* Banner Red and gold banners decorated with the symbols of good fortune are very important during Chinese New Year. The character *fu* 福, meaning “good luck,” is hung upside down and means “good luck has arrived” because the Chinese word for arrived sounds similar to the word for upside down.

Activity 1: Exploring Chinese New Year Objects

Chinese New Year celebrations happen in Chinese communities all over the world. Beginning in January, Chinese New Year decorations begin appearing in shops and on buses and subways. In this activity, students will watch the DVD *New Year in Pingwei* and compare what they see in the video to the objects in the case. They'll become familiar with many of the colours, sounds and symbols of Chinese New Year.

Note: Before beginning this activity with your students, review the **How to Handle Objects** page included in this guide.

Materials

- “What Can Objects Tell Us?” worksheet (p. 16) in this guide.
- TV & DVD Player
- New Year in Pingwei* DVD** (from box)
- Paper & Pencils

What to Do

Questions to Explore:

1. What does the word “celebration” mean to you?
2. Why do people celebrate New Year?
3. What holidays does your family celebrate? What do you do? Eat? Activities?

1. Place the objects at stations around the room. There should be one object at each station.
2. Let the students examine the objects at each station. Set a timer so students progress through each station for 3–4 minutes.
3. After each student has seen all the objects, briefly discuss each in turn. Choose one object and ask the class to talk about their observations.

Activity 1: Exploring Chinese Year Objects (cont.)

What to Do

4. Have students choose one object and fill out the “What Can Objects Tell Us?” worksheet. If students don’t know an answer, explore ideas on how to find the information: Internet, books, etc.
5. Explain that all the objects in the case are items you might find at a Chinese New Year celebration. Discuss how celebratory objects differ according to country or custom.
6. Play the *New Year in Pingwei* DVD. Explain that the video takes place in a rural part of China and some customs of Chinese New Year may be celebrated differently in larger cities, though there is always a focus on family. While watching the video, have students look for objects that are similar to the objects in the case. There may not be exact matches but have students look for similar colours and symbols.
7. After the DVD, ask students to think about what they saw. How is the object they chose to explore earlier used in a Chinese New Year celebration?

What Can Objects Tell Us?

What is this object?

What does it look like? Smell like? Feel Like? Does it make any noise?

Where is the object from?

Why is it important? Who is it important to?

What is it made of? How was it made?

What else do you notice about it?

Drawing (on back)

Activity 2: Chinese New Year Decorations

In the following activities, students will have the opportunity to make their own Chinese New Year decorations for the classroom or to give away as gifts. There are five activities to choose from: zodiac wall hangings, firecrackers, good luck banners, New Year woodblock prints and lanterns. Students will learn the meaning of *fu* and other popular symbols of Chinese New Year.

Before beginning any of the activities, remind the students that to prepare for Chinese New Year the classroom must be cleaned and put in order! That way, they are making a fresh start in a New Year.



Questions to Explore:

1. What different materials are the New Year decorations in the box made from?
2. What colours do you see on the decorations? What are the most common colours?
3. What is your favourite decoration? Why?
4. Many of the decorations have lucky images on them. What images do you see? Why do you think they are considered lucky?

Zodiac Wall Hanging

The Chinese zodiac follows a twelve year cycle, with each year named after an animal. A person's zodiac animal is determined by the Lunar New Year in which they were born. Traditionally, the Chinese believed the animal of a person's birth year influenced their personality and fate. During Chinese New Year celebrations, zodiac decorations festoon shops, houses and streets and the animal of the year predicts the "mood" of the next twelve months.

Materials

- Western calendar
- Embroidered zodiac animals** (in box)
- Story of the Chinese Zodiac* by Monica Chang (in box)
- Red, white and gold sheets of paper
- Zodiac chart in **Appendix A** of this guide
- Red ribbon
- Gold or red pony beads
- Heavy red thread
- Coloured markers
- Hole punch



Zodiac Wall Hanging (cont.)

What to Do

1. Show students a western calendar and discuss how it is different from a lunar calendar (i.e. the western calendar is based on the Earth's movement around the sun and the lunar calendar follows the phases of the moon as well as the progression of the sun). Explain that Chinese New Year is also called Lunar New Year or Spring Festival.
2. Present the embroidered zodiac animals from the box. Explain that New Year decorations featuring zodiac animals are very popular. See if the class can identify the animals and write the names of the animals on the board.
3. Divide students into twelve small groups. Assign each group an animal based on the animals of the Chinese zodiac. Have each group identify some positive characteristics of each animal. Have them share these characteristics with class. Write these characteristics on board.
4. Read *The Story of the Chinese Zodiac* aloud. Everyone should listen for the animal they discussed with their group and take note of what order the animals finished the race.
5. Explain to students that each group will be making a zodiac animal wall hanging for the classroom.



Zodiac Wall Hanging (cont.)

What to Do

6. Distribute the paper (white, red and gold) to each group, along with markers, glue, thread, ribbons, beads, hole punch and scissors.
7. Draw a picture of the zodiac animal on the white circle of paper and decorate it with coloured markers.
8. Cut out a large octagon using the red sheet of paper. Cut a smaller octagon from the yellow paper, making sure it fits inside the red octagon.
9. Glue the yellow octagon inside the red octagon.
10. Glue the white circle of paper inside the yellow octagon.
11. Punch a hole in the top and bottom of the hanging.
12. String the beads through the red thread and loop six or seven times to make a tassel. Attach the tassel to the bottom of the hanging by threading it through the punched hole.
13. Attach a ribbon to the top of the hanging.
14. Once students are finished, have them bring their hangings to the front of the class in zodiac order.
15. Give students their own zodiac chart to discuss what animal they are and their characteristics.

Did you know that the Chinese word for “month” is *yue*, which means “moon?”

Chinese Firecrackers

China has celebrated with fireworks for thousands of years. The louder the explosion, the better to ward off the terrifying *Nian* monster that descends from the heavens on the eve of Chinese New Year to eat people. From as early as 200 BCE, people were burning stalks of bamboo in fire to create small explosions. After the invention of gunpowder in the 9th century, fireworks became hugely popular. The Chinese experimented with mixing things into the gunpowder – plant fibres and steel and iron shavings – to create bigger, louder and more colourful explosions.

Materials

- Decorative firecracker** (in box)
- White pipe cleaners
- Toilet paper rolls
- Glue
- Sheets of red tissue paper (approx 8" X 16").
- Gold glitter
- Noisemakers for filling – dried beans or rice (optional)



Chinese Firecrackers (cont.)

What to Do

1. Arrange the class into small groups at tables or desks.
2. Show the class the decorative firecracker from box. Explain to the class how firecrackers were traditionally used in China to scare away unlucky spirits during religious festivals and are still used today at birthdays, funerals and celebrations such as Chinese New Year. Tell the class they will be making their own firecrackers for the New Year celebration.
3. Place some glue, tape and glitter at each table. Give each student a pipe cleaner, toilet paper roll and a sheet of tissue paper.
4. Wrap the tissue paper around the tube and leave an equal amount at each end. Glue the tissue paper around the toilet paper roll.
5. Fold one end of the tissue paper over the end of the roll to create a base and tape.
6. Fill the roll with the dried beans or rice.

Legend has it that in ancient times, there was a monster called *Nian* ("year") that would come out on the eve of every New Year to terrorize people. One year, the villagers fought back with loud noises, explosions and the colour red (the one colour the monster feared). The monster never returned and that is, according to legend, how the customs of Chinese New Year began!

Watch this wonderful shadow puppet adaption of the *Nian* legend by Baltimore County Public Schools here:

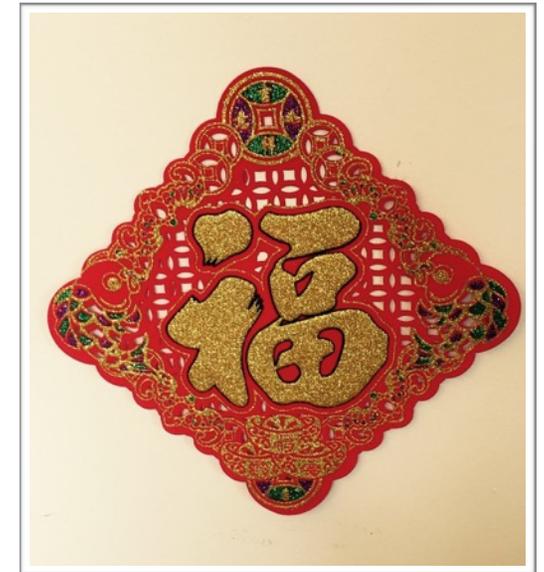
<https://goo.gl/0Crd4z>

Good Luck *Fu* Banner

Every Chinese New Year, people display red banners with lucky words, phrases and poems on their doors and windows. These red banners are called *chun lian*, or spring festival couplets. The banners are always red with gold or black characters. The character *fu* 福, meaning good fortune and happiness, is one of the most common characters seen during Spring Festival. A *fu* banner is often displayed upside down on the front door and welcomes good fortune to the home.

Materials

- Fu* banner** (from box)
- Fu* template (from **Appendix B**)
- Square of red construction paper around 9" x 9"
- White construction paper or heavy bond paper cut to a diamond 5 1/2" x 5 1/2"
- Gold paper cut to a diamond 6 1/2" X 6 1/2"
- Black paint
- Paintbrushes
- Black markers
- Gold glitter



Good Luck *Fu* Banner (cont.)

What to Do

1. Place students in groups at tables or desks.
2. Begin with a discussion about good luck and certain objects that people believe bring good luck.
3. Using the *fu* banner from the box, explain that certain items in Chinese culture represent good luck and fortune. Put the *fu* banner in a place where all the students can see it. Explain that the *fu* sign means “luck has arrived” and is placed upside down.
4. Tell students that they will prepare for Chinese New Year by making their own *fu* banners. Demonstrate how to write the character *fu* character by following the numbers on the template as a guide using the paintbrush.
5. Give each group black paint, glitter, markers, *fu* templates and glue to share. Give each student the sheets of red, white and gold paper.
6. Encourage students to decorate their banner with the symbols they have seen on the *New Year in Pingwei* DVD and to think about what other Chinese New Year symbols they have learned about. Have them consider zodiac animals and other lucky symbols. Allow them to use the objects and books in the box for ideas.

Do You Know that the character for good luck (*fu*) sounds similar to the word for bat? Bats are also symbolic of good fortune and prosperity.

Good Luck *Fu* Banner (cont.)

What to Do

7. Using the black paint, have students copy the *fu* template on to the white diamond (they may want to copy in pencil first). They may also add other Chinese decorations, if they desire.
8. When the paint is dry, spread glue inside the lines of the *fu* character and sprinkle with glitter.
9. When dry, glue the decorated *fu* banner inside the gold diamond. Then glue the gold diamond inside the red square.
10. Hang the lucky banners around the classroom when complete.



How do you tell someone Happy New Year in Chinese?

In Mandarin, the most common greeting for Happy New Year is “Gong Xi Fa Cai,” or “Xin Nian Kuai Le.” In Cantonese, people often greet each other with “Gong Hey Fat Choy!”

Woodblock Prints

Woodblock printing originated in China before the Han dynasty (BC 206 – AD 220). The Chinese used woodblocks to print images and books on textiles and later paper. Chinese New Year block prints (*nianhua*) are very popular household decorations and are always filled with bright colours and auspicious images or characters. The village of Yangjiabu in eastern Shandong province is especially well-known and was a major producer of Chinese New Year prints until the mid-twentieth century.

Materials

- New Year woodblock prints (in box)
- Brayer or rollers
- Tempera paint
- White paper
- Spoons
- Styrofoam blocks, produce trays or craft foam
- Dull pencils



Woodblock Prints (cont.)

What to Do

1. Divide the students into groups at tables or desks.
2. Introduce the New Year block pictures from the box. Explain that the tradition of Chinese woodblock printing goes back thousands of years. During Chinese New Year, it's common to hang woodblock prints with lucky signs or symbols around the home. Children and zodiac animals are popular woodblock subjects. Tell the students they will be making their own woodblock prints for Chinese New Year.
3. Place a woodblock print card at each table. Let the students examine it for a few moments. What lucky signs or symbols do they see? What colours are in the print? Students can discuss amongst themselves and then share with class.
4. Take the cards and place them on a table in front of the class. The students can refer to these cards for inspiration as they make their own prints.
5. At each table place two–three rollers, tempera paint and spoons. Give each student a styrofoam produce tray and a pencil.
6. Demonstrate for the class the process of making a woodblock print. (To make things simpler, have a styrofoam tray already prepared with etched design).

Get some more insight into traditional woodblock printing by watching this short video on a woodblock gallery in Guangzhou, China. <https://vimeo.com/123841174>

After watching, ask your students if they recognize some of the same symbols and images on the prints from the box that were featured in the video. What are some of the most common symbols?

Woodblock Prints (cont.)

What to Do

7. Printing Process:
 - A. Place one tablespoon of tempera on a tray. Roll the brayer or roller back and forth to get a thin coat of paint.
 - B. Roll the brayer on the styrofoam block.
 - C. Place a piece of white paper on the styrofoam block.
 - D. Rub with the back of a spoon.
 - E. Lift the print.
 - F. Re-“ink” the styrofoam block and make as many prints as you wish.
 - G. Styrofoam may need to be rinsed and dried occasionally to make lines clean.
8. Have the students etch their design on to the styrofoam with a dull pencil and follow the process above.
9. When dry, hang the prints around the classroom.



Chinese New Year Lanterns

Lanterns made from paper, silk and bamboo were once used as lamps in early China. They were commonly round, to protect the flame within. Nowadays, lanterns are mainly used for decoration, especially during Chinese New Year, and come in all shapes and sizes. The 15th day of the Lunar New Year is the Lantern Festival and marks the end of the New Year celebrations. Lanterns of various shapes and sizes are brightly lit and hung from homes, streets, temples and parks across China and in Chinese communities around the world.

Materials

- Chinese New Year Lantern (from box)
- Construction paper in contrasting colours
- Scissors
- Glue, tape and stapler
- Markers
- Red or gold glitter
- Red and gold ribbons
- Twine (optional)
- Stick, dowel or chopstick for handle (optional)



Chinese New Year Lanterns (cont.)

What to Do

1. Divide the students into groups at tables or desks.
2. Introduce the New Year lantern from the box. Explain to students the tradition of hanging lanterns during the Chinese New Year and how this tradition is practiced in Chinese communities around the world. Typically, lanterns are decorated with lucky symbols like children or zodiac animals. Tell the students they will be making their own lanterns for Chinese New Year.
3. Place glue, glitter, scissors, markers and extra paper at each table. Give each student two pieces of red and gold construction paper, ribbons, twine and chopstick, if using.
4. Have students draw a Chinese design on the red construction paper. Allow students to use the resources from the box for inspiration.
5. Fold the red construction paper in half lengthwise.
6. Along the horizontal edges, fold back one inch.
7. Cut slits into the paper about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch.
8. Open the paper and glue the 1 inch fold backs together to form the top and bottom of lantern.
9. Roll up and insert the second gold piece of construction paper inside the lantern.

Chinese New Year Lanterns (cont.)

What to Do

10. Staple the inside paper to the lantern.
11. Staple a red ribbon to the top of the lantern for the handle.
12. Staple red and gold ribbons to the bottom of the lantern. Alternatively, make a “fringe” with more yellow construction paper.
13. Tie twine around the chopstick handle and secure (optional if you want a hanging lantern).

Activity 3: Perform a Lion Dance!

The Lion Dance is one of the most anticipated events of Chinese New Year. Brightly decorated lions dance and weave their way through the crowds gathered at Chinese New Year parades worldwide. The dancers controlling the lions jump and perform acrobatic tricks to the sound of drums, gongs and symbols, making the lion move its head in rhythm to the strong beat of the instruments. While dancing, the lion will search for lettuce or other greens with a hidden red envelope filled with money. This money is the lion's reward for chasing away bad luck.

There are two types of lion dances: northern and southern. In northern China, lions sport long manes and shaggy orange and yellow fur. They also often dance in family pairs. In southern China, lions look like dragons, with a single horn and have two-four legs.

In the following activities, students will make small peddler drums and lion dance masks so they can perform a lion dance of their own.



Did you know dragon dances are also very popular during Chinese New Year? Dragons often dance behind the lions, wishing everyone good fortune and peace in the New Year. The longer the dragon, the more good fortune it will bring!

Peddler Drums

Loud and festive, the Chinese peddler drum (also called a rattle-drum) has been widely used as a percussion instrument in festivals, religious ceremonies and musical events since 221 BC. They are also used by street peddlers to attract customers and “drum” up new business. Because of their small size and noise, peddler drums are also popular toys for children.

Materials

- Cymbals, peddler drums, small drum (in box)
- Pony beads (two for each student)
- Small white paper plates
- Hole punches
- Tape
- Scissors
- Black and red markers
- Red yarn



Peddler Drums (cont.)

What to Do

1. Arrange students in groups at desks or tables.
2. Hold up the percussion instruments from the box (cymbals, peddler drums, small drum) and explain that during Chinese New Year, these loud, rhythmic instruments bring a lively, fun and festive atmosphere to celebrations.
3. Demonstrate each instrument for the class.
4. Ask students to think about what types of instruments are used to express fun and happiness in their culture during holidays and special events. Explain to students that they will be making their own peddler drum for Chinese New Year.
5. Select a few students to come up and try the instruments.
6. Distribute yarn, hole punches, tape, scissors and markers to each group.
7. Give each student two paper plates and two beads.
8. Have students decorate with markers the bottom of each plate with a *fu* character, zodiac animal, or another design of their choice. Let them use the books and objects in the box for ideas and inspiration.

Did you know one of the oldest orchestras in the world was found in China and is over 2,000 years old? In 1978, archaeologists unearthed the tomb of Lord Yi, who died in 433 BCE. In the tomb, they discovered an entire ensemble of bells, drums, flutes and zithers (stringed instrument).

Peddler Drums (cont.)

What to Do

9. Punch holes on either side of each plate.
10. Cut two even strands of yarn. Knot each strand on one end and thread each strand with a bead.
11. Put plates together (decorated bottom ends facing out). Thread yarn strands through holes. Each bead on the yarn should be long enough to swing and hit drum face.
12. Slide craft stick between each plate and tape. Wrap red yarn around the craft stick for extra decoration.



Lion Dance Mask

In this activity, students will make their own lion heads and dance to the beats and gongs of traditional Chinese New Year music.

Materials

- CD Drums and Gongs of Celebration** (in box)
- Lion puppet, cymbals, peddler drums, small drum and gong** (in box).
- Paper plates
- Craft materials – sequins, pom-poms, yarn, bells, etc.
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Craft sticks
- Scissors
- Tape
- Glue



Did you know lions came to China via the Silk Road from what is now Iran and Afghanistan during the Han dynasty? The Chinese believe the lion represents courage, energy and wisdom.

Lion Dance Mask (cont.)

What to Do

1. Take out the lion dance objects from the case for students to look at: lion puppet, cymbals, peddler drums, small drum and gong.

Demonstrate each instrument for the students.

2. Ask students to share what they see or notice about the lion puppet including its features, shape, and colour. List their observations on the board.

3. Distribute a paper plate to each student, and have assorted craft materials, construction paper, markers, scissors, tape, lion head templates, craft sticks, and glue available at tables for students to share.

4. Instruct students to tape a craft stick to their plate and design their own lion head mask. Have them use the puppet and the resource materials in the box for ideas.

5. Instruct students to tape a craft stick to their plate and design their own lion head mask. Have them use the puppet and the resource materials in the box for ideas.



Lion Dance Mask (cont.)

What to Do

6. While masks are drying, play track #2 from the CD *Drums and Gongs of Celebration*. Have students try and guess which percussive instrument they are hearing.
7. Once masks are dry, have students watch this short youtube video of a lion dance in Hong Kong: <https://goo.gl/zY3y8n>.
8. Have students note the way the lions move their heads and how the dancers move to the rhythmic beat of the instruments.
9. Time to dance! Students can use their masks and practice dancing the lion dance with the CD. (If any students prefer not to dance, offer them the cymbals or gong to play along). If students have made the peddler drums from a previous activity, use them too.

Did you know that dragons have a camel's head, a deer's antlers, a snake's body, a lobster's eyes, fish scales and an eagle's claws? Lions have the eyes of a rabbit, a deer's antlers, a tiger's paws, a rhino's horn and a dog's ears.

Questions to Explore:

1. The lion dance is a very important part of the Chinese New Year celebration. Is there a celebration you have recently participated in? What was it?
2. A lion dance is thought to bring good luck. Are there some things you think are lucky? Why?
3. Why do you think it's a lion dance and not another animal, like a mouse or a goat?
4. Two dancers inside the lion make it "dance." How do you think the dancers work together?

Vocabulary Words

Chinese New Year	A joyous festival celebrated on the first day of the first moon of the Lunar New Year in Chinese communities throughout the world.
Lunar Calendar	A calendar based on the cycles of the moon.
Lunar New Year	Another name for Chinese New Year. Lunar New Year is also called Spring Festival and is celebrated in many Asian countries.
Spring Festival Couplets	Red banners with lucky words, phrases and poems displayed on doors and windows. These red banners are also called <i>chun lian</i> .
<i>Fu</i>	Meaning good fortune and happiness, <i>fu</i> is one of the most common characters seen during Chinese New Year. A <i>fu</i> banner is often displayed upside down on the front door and means good fortune has arrived.
Chinese Zodiac	The Chinese zodiac follows a twelve year cycle, with each year named after an animal.

Vocabulary Words

Lion Dance

Brightly decorated lions dance and perform acrobatics for Chinese New Year and other special occasions. The dances are believed to bring good luck.

Lantern Festival

The 15th day of the Lunar New Year is the Lantern Festival and marks the end of Chinese New Year celebrations. Lanterns of various shapes and sizes are lit to celebrate the coming of spring.

Hongbao

Children receive these red envelopes filled with money from their parents, relatives, and adult friends during Chinese New Year. Printed on the envelopes are characters for good luck or the New Year zodiac animal. In Cantonese, the envelopes are called *lai see* and in Mandarin *hongbao*.

Extensions & Resources

Extensions

- ★ **Literacy:** Have students write their own spring couplets in English. Then have the students create banners with their couplets and decorate them with Chinese New Year symbols and images. See <http://goo.gl/AgXPJa>.
- ★ Have students interview their parents or guardians about their favourite New Year celebration memory or about their parents' New Year resolution.
- ★ **Social Studies:** How is Chinese New Year similar or different from New Year's Day Celebrations in Canada? Compare and contrast.
- ★ Find out how other cultures celebrate the New Year. Have students read about Vietnamese, Korean or other New Year celebrations. Older students may make comparisons on how they are different from the Chinese celebration.
- ★ **Science:** To better understand the lunar calendar, have students observe the night sky and keep a “moon journal” with sketches of the phases of the moon. See <http://goo.gl/K7L7Af> for kid-friendly information on the moon.
- ★ **Math:** Have students calculate what animal year their parents and grandparents were born in based on their age.
- ★ **Other:** Students host their own Chinese New Year celebration including food, costumes, a parade, decorations, and music. Students can create posters and fliers to post throughout their school. For recipe ideas on how to prepare a traditional Chinese New Year feast, look here: <http://goo.gl/oX2Qqk>.

Extensions & Resources

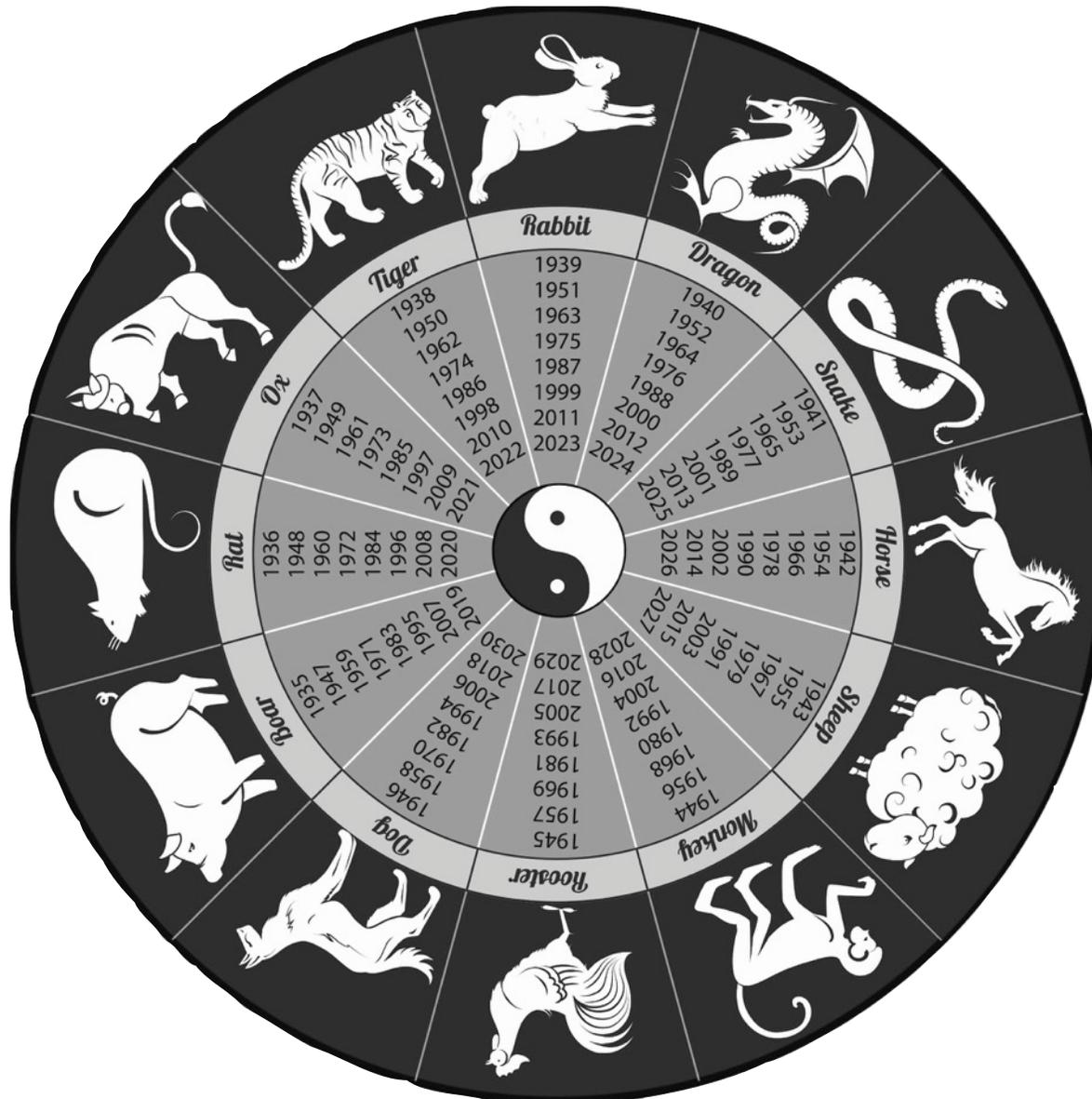
Books

- ★ *Sam and the Lucky Money* by Karen Chinn, Cornelius Van Wright (Illustrator), Ying-Hwa Hu (Illustrator). Lee & Low Books, 1995. A young boy learns how his “lucky money” can help others less fortunate. (picture book, ages 4-8)
- ★ *Moonbeams, Dumplings and Dragon Boats* by Nina Simonds, Leslie Swartz, and The Children’s Museum, Boston. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2002. a wonderful description of Chinese holidays with recipes and activities. (picture book, ages 4-8)
- ★ *The Year of the Dog* by Grace Lin. Little, Brown Books, 2007. The first in a series about a young Taiwanese-American girl exploring her heritage in contemporary America. (chapter book, ages 8-12)
- ★ *Celebrating Chinese New Year: An Activity Book* by Hingman Chan. Asia for Kids, 2004. Filled with fun facts, activities and crafts, this book is a great resource on Chinese New Year. (activity book, ages 5-11)

Websites

- ★ National Geographic Kids: <http://goo.gl/i0dMUu>. Chinese Horoscopes: This activity from National Geographic allows students to find their birth year animal and their related characteristics.
- ★ Cultural China: <http://goo.gl/aa6ait>. Information on Chinese culture and folk arts.
- ★ National Consortium for Teaching About Asia: <http://goo.gl/2VdlO1>. The East Asian Study Centre at Ohio State University has a wealth of links to lesson plans on Chinese culture.

Appendix A: Chinese Zodiac Chart



Appendix B: *Fu* Good Luck Character

