

CELEBRATIONS

Chinese New Year

Exercise 1: Chinese New Year

How did you celebrate New Year's Eve this year? Where were you? Who were you with? What did you do?



Read the text below and answer the following questions with your partner:

- When is the next Chinese New Year?
- Why do people clean their homes?
- How do you say 'Happy New Year' in Chinese?
- What are children given?
- How long do the celebrations last?

The Chinese New Year begins on the first day of the first month on the Chinese lunar calendar, but people start preparing for the celebrations several days earlier. Families clean their houses, hoping to get rid of bad fortune and welcome some good. On New Year's Eve there is usually a large meal with the whole family, who then play cards or other games. Every light is supposed to be kept on the whole night, and at midnight the sky is lit up by fireworks and firecrackers. The next morning children are given 'lucky money' wrapped in red paper, and families greet each other saying, '*Kung hei fat choy*,' which means 'a happy and prosperous New Year'. The New Year celebrations continue for 15 to 20 days, ending with the Lantern Festival on the first full moon of the New Year. Each year is dedicated to one of 12 animals, and it is believed that people inherit the characteristics of the animal in whose year they were born.