



Reflect and Respond

Our Family Dragon: A Lunar New Year Story

Author: Rebecca Lim

Illustrator: Cai Tse

Storyteller: Wai Chim

Publisher: Allen and Unwin



Themes: Celebrations, Traditions, Culture, Calendar, Asia, Family, Food

Year levels: Lower & Middle Primary

Learning area: Humanities

Discussion questions:

- Before reading the story, look at the front cover. Read the subtitle also. What do you think this story might be about?
- What do you already know about the Lunar New Year? Do you know how this is celebrated?
- Discuss the term 'lunar' and how this relates to the moon.
- Do you know of any other New Year celebrations that are celebrated around the world?
- Can you describe a celebration that your family enjoys each year?
- What are the family in this story doing to prepare for the Lunar New Year?
- What are some of the special foods that are prepared and eaten to celebrate it?
- How else is it celebrated in the story? E.g. decorations, rituals, parades and music.
- How many days of celebrations are there in the story?
- What is the importance of the dragon in the story?
- What Chinese zodiac animal represents the 'old' year in the story?
- What do you think the 'lucky' colours are in the story?
- How do you think the boy feels when he sees Jie Jie, his big sister at the door?
- What have you discovered about the Lunar New Year, after reading this story, that you didn't know before?

Story response ideas:

a. Which Chinese zodiac animal are you?

In this story we find out that 2024 is the year of the dragon. Discuss the Chinese zodiac calendar with students. Explain how each year is represented by an animal, called a Chinese zodiac sign. There are 12 different animals and legend has it that people born under that sign have similar traits to the animal. You might like to also share the story [The Race for the Chinese Zodiac](https://storyboxlibrary.com.au/stories/the-race-for-the-chinese-zodiac) - a retelling of a classic Chinese legend, available here:

<https://storyboxlibrary.com.au/stories/the-race-for-the-chinese-zodiac>.

Continued over page...





Story response ideas continued...

Invite students to identify which animal represents the year they were born, and explore what traits this animal is believed to have. Use the website below to help them with this. You might like to display a visual of a Chinese Zodiac Calendar on the whiteboard.

The following websites and video clip:

- <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/celebrations/article/which-chinese-new-year-animal-are-you-like>
- <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/lunar-new-year/13118230>

Students can use the following **template** to organise their findings.

b. Descriptive language

"We'll **flock** to Chinatown in our bright parade costumes..."

1. What do you picture when you hear this sentence?
2. Why might the author choose to use a word like 'flock' to describe how the characters went to Chinatown?
3. Discuss how interesting and descriptive language like this, can help readers to visualise or use their senses to imagine something that is happening in the story (**imagery**). Invite students to choose one of the following options:
 - a. Brainstorm other words (**verbs**) that could be used to help describe how people head to an event that they are excited about. E.g. gathered, swarmed etc.
 - b. Find a sentence in one of their own draft pieces of writing, that could be improved by replacing a word with a more interesting verb or description, to help the reader picture what is happening.

c. Share a snapshot of a special celebration

Invite students to think of a special celebration that they enjoy - or have enjoyed with their family. This may be a particular cultural or religious event, or a popular family tradition such as a birthday or summer party etc. What were they celebrating? What did they do to celebrate it? How did they feel?

Ask students to use a **Y-Chart** to help brainstorm ideas and descriptive language about this occasion. Thinking about what the occasion:

- looked like - what did they see?
- sounded like - what sounds did they hear?
- felt like - how did the occasion make them feel?

They can then use their ideas to write a short descriptive 'snapshot' of the special occasion they have chosen. You might like to model this first.

See the **Student Task Sheet** below for more activity ideas and templates



Scan the QR code to view the story!



Which Chinese Zodiac Animal am I?



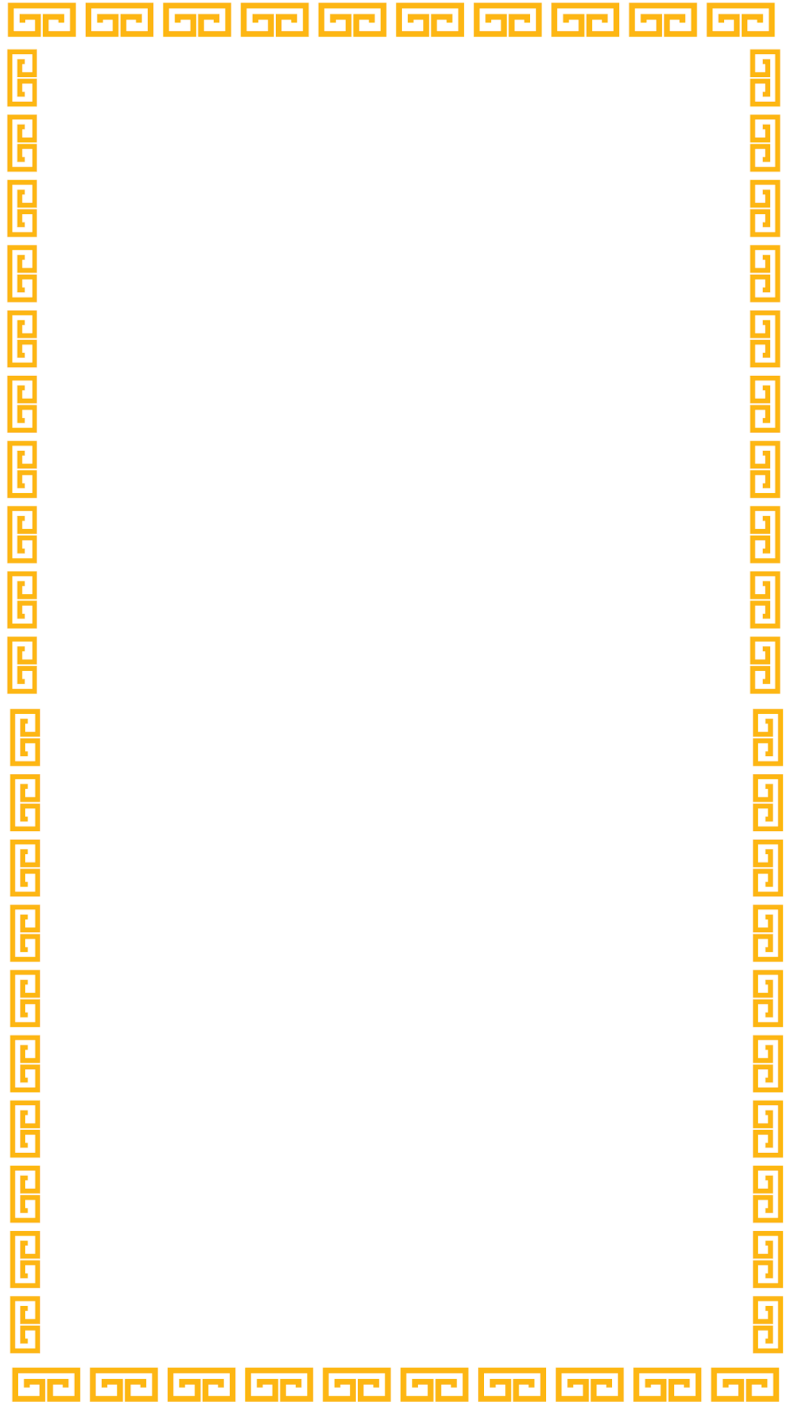
Year I was born:

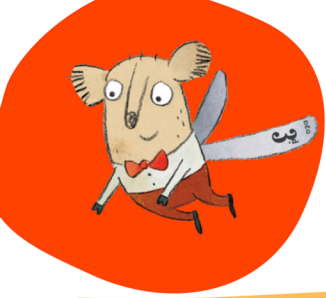


Chinese zodiac animal:



Character traits of this animal:





Student Task Sheet

Print this page for your students to use during Literacy Rotations

Today, you will be viewing and listening to:

Our Family Dragon: A Lunar New Year Story

Author: Rebecca Lim

Illustrator: Cai Tse

Storyteller: Wai Chim

Publisher: Allen and Unwin

Year levels: Middle Primary



Learning tasks:

Scan the QR code to view the story!



After viewing the story, choose one of the following three activities to complete.

a. Plan a menu to celebrate a special occasion

The family in the story prepared and enjoyed special dishes to celebrate the Lunar New Year.

1. Think of a special occasion that your family celebrates or recognises. This might be a religious, cultural, community or family tradition.
2. Plan a menu of different dishes for this occasion. Use the **Menu Planner** to draw and describe the different foods you could enjoy together.

b. Writing from the perspective of the main character

Imagine you are the main character in the story. Select one of the following options to write from their perspective:

1. Write a **Postcard** to a friend describing some of the Lunar New Year celebrations you have enjoyed.
2. Write a **Diary entry** describing a particular part of the celebratory events you enjoyed. This might be the parade, the family games and meals etc.

Select one of the templates below to use.

c. Lucky vs...

The story describes different activities the family do to 'welcome' luck into their home in preparation for celebrating the Lunar New Year. Can you find a word in the story that means the **opposite** to **lucky** (turn the captions on to help you)? Use the **T-Chart** below and write 'Lucky' on one side, and then the word that means the opposite to this - on the other side of the chart.

Can you think of an example of something that is lucky? Draw or describe this underneath the correct heading. Now think of something to draw for the heading on the opposite side.

Note: A word that has the opposite meaning to another word is an **antonym**.

