

# A Story About Chinese New Year

All around was red. As far as the eye could see, buildings were decorated with the colour of good luck and happiness. From lanterns to garlands and banners, it had taken weeks to put all the decorations in place and, at last, the preparations were almost complete. At home, we had been cleaning for days already to get rid of the bad luck which had gathered over the last year. It was important to start the new year with a clean house to be sure of a fortunate year to come. My friends and I had made the traditional red and gold banners for our front doors and now it was time to help Mum to prepare the most important meal of the year.

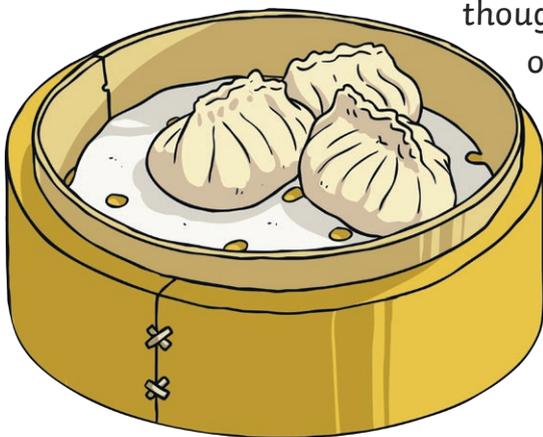


“There is plenty to do in here,” called Mum. “Come and help!”

“Can I prepare the dumplings, Mum?”

Every year, I loved trying to make the dumplings the right shape to look like gold ingots. It could be tricky to keep the filling in the middle but each year’s attempts were better than the last. This year, we were making our favourite pork dumplings and spinach and mushroom dumplings, which Dad had chosen. He’d be ready to enjoy them when he got home from work later that day.

The streets were a sea of people as Dad headed out of his office to make the journey home. He knew the family were already preparing their meal for the evening and he was looking forward to sharing it with them and celebrating the start of the new year together. Luckily, he’d remembered to buy the all-important firecrackers and was looking forward to setting them off after the meal. First, though, he had to squeeze onto the bustling train out of the city.



“Dad, at last you’re home!” I shouted excitedly. It felt like I’d been looking out for him for hours! After all the preparations, I couldn’t wait to start celebrating and I was particularly proud of my dumplings this year.



Pushing him through the door to get ready, I shouted after him.

“Get ready quickly, Dad, the first visitors are coming in half an hour!”

Before long, I was sitting together with my grandparents, aunties, uncles and cousins and sharing the wonderful food which had been prepared. No wonder it had taken so long – the table was groaning under the weight of it all! Everything had a meaning: long noodles for a long life, dumplings for good luck and chicken for wealth. Most importantly, it all tasted delicious.

Afterwards, I was thrilled with my lucky red envelopes with a gift of money inside and the wish for health and a long life. My uncle even sent me a ‘virtual’ red envelope to my smartphone this year.

The evening of celebrations came to an end at midnight with Dad lighting the firecrackers outside the house to keep bad luck away for another year.

The best thing about the new year is that we celebrate for two weeks. So, the next day, we visited the town to see the dragon parade and meet more friends. Seeing the dragon parade through the streets was a spectacular sight. Over the next fortnight, we set out to see new year markets to buy red lanterns. We also journeyed to the temple to say prayers and watch the amazing lion dance, which is supposed to bring good luck for the new year.

On the 15th day, it was time to celebrate the lantern festival. We watched in amazement as thousands of lanterns were released into the sky to signify the longer days of spring and the light of the full moon. There was just time to eat a few more delicious rice dumplings before we went home to bed with all the wonderful experiences to remember for another year.

# Questions

1. How do we know the new year celebrations are extremely important to the family in the text?

---

---

2. Name three ways the family has prepared for the festivities.

---

---

3. What task does the narrator do each year at this time?

---

---

4. Find and copy a word which means the same as busy.

---

---

5. How do we know that Dad has a particularly important task?

---

---

6. What do family and friends exchange at new year?

New year celebrations
People visit the temple
The dragon parade

to say prayers.
is a spectacular sight.
last for two weeks.

7. What does the clause below tell you about the meal?

**the table was groaning under the weight of it all**

---

---

8. What items symbolise the following things?

good luck: \_\_\_\_\_

wealth: \_\_\_\_\_

long life: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Name two ways that Chinese New Year is celebrated.

---

---

10. Write one way in which you celebrate the new year.

---

# Answers

1. How do we know the new year celebrations are extremely important to the family in the text?

**Answers may vary but should show evidence from the text, such as: The story tells us the preparations had taken weeks and they still had to prepare the food for family meal.**

2. Name three ways the family has prepared for the festivities.

**Accept any three of the following: hanging banners garlands and lanterns for decoration; cleaning the house to get rid of the bad luck; preparing food including dumplings for a meal.**

3. What task does the narrator do each year at this time?

**The narrator prepares the dumplings which are shaped like gold ingots.**

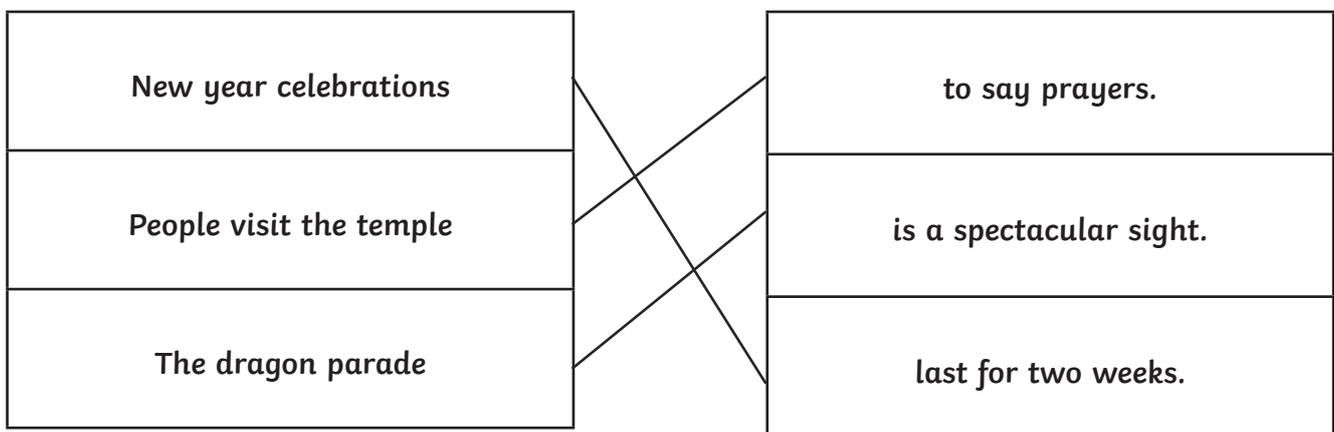
4. Find and copy a word which means the same as busy.

**bustling**

5. How do we know that Dad has a particularly important task?

**The firecrackers he buys are described as 'all-important'.**

6. What do family and friends exchange at new year?



7. What does the clause below tell you about the meal?

the table was groaning under the weight of it all

**It tells us that there is a lot of food there which has been prepared or brought by visitors so the meal is something special because it is much bigger than usual.**

8. What items symbolise the following things?

good luck: **represented by dumplings**

wealth: **represented by chicken**

long life: **represented by long noodles**

9. Name two ways that Chinese New Year is celebrated.

**Accept any two of the following: by having a shared meal; visiting the temple to pray; dragon parades; lion dances; releasing lanterns into the sky.**

10. Write one way in which you celebrate the new year.

**Pupils' own response.**