

Many countries celebrate the Lunar New Year, including China, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Singapore, and Tibet. Lunar New Year celebrations also take place in the United States and around the world, held by people with heritage from these countries.

Cross-Curricular Activities

Here are some ideas to help you and your students get involved with reading and writing about the Chinese and Lunar New Year celebrations (also called the Spring Festival). Sources with additional information and guidance are listed at the end of this guide.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

1. Many video clips of Chinese and Lunar New Year parades are available online. One example is from the History Channel: <http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/chinese-new-year/videos>. If possible, let students view one or more of these to see a real parade. Have students describe the excitement, preparation, and festivities of the parade.
2. Have students locate China (and each country celebrating the Lunar New Year) on a map or globe and tell students that China is one of the largest countries in the world. Have students mark the capital of China and each country, as well as students' location in the United States. On what continent is China? Which countries border China? What are some major rivers in China? What seas and ocean border China?
3. Teach students about the history of Chinese Americans. When did they first immigrate to the United States? What were the reasons they left their homeland? In which cities did they settle? What were the origins of Chinatowns? What challenges did Chinese people and Chinese Americans face in the United States? One place to learn more is the timeline of Chinese in America from the Museum of Chinese in America: <http://www.mocanyc.org/learn/timeline>.
4. Explore the 12-year cycle of the Chinese lunar calendar with EDSITEment's lesson on the Chinese Zodiac (<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/animals-chinese-zodiac>) and video, "Why the Rat Comes First: A Lunar New Year Story," from the Asian Art Museum (<http://education.asianart.org/explore-resources/video/why-rat-comes-first-lunar-new-year-story>).



ART:

1. Explain that the Chinese dragon represents strength and goodness. The dragon appears at the end of the New Year parade to wish everyone peace, wealth, and good luck. It is called Gum Loong (in Cantonese), which means "Golden Dragon." Have students draw a picture of a Chinese dragon and describe the dragon in a paragraph. Instruct students to draw the dragon so it has the features of several creatures. Chinese dragons often have the scales of a fish, the beard of a goat, the claws of an eagle, and the body of a snake. For an excellent and more detailed lesson on drawing a Chinese dragon, check out the Art Institute of Chicago: <http://www.artic.edu/aic/resources/resource/930>.
2. Provide students with construction paper, tissue paper, colored cotton balls, crayons, safety scissors, glue, and other art supplies to make their own lanterns, masks, flags, and other items for a Chinese Lunar New Year Parade. Several students may even wish to work together to make a lion or a dragon. Let students carry their creations and hold their own parade. You may wish to download some Chinese music to play during the festivities.

SCIENCE:

1. For the New Year, Chinese children are given red envelopes with brand-new money inside. Make a solution of 1/2 cup white vinegar and 1/4 cup salt in a nonmetal bowl. Let students drop pennies into the solution, wait a few minutes, then remove and dry the coins with a paper towel. Students will have shiny "new" pennies to wrap in red paper and give as gifts to their friends and families.
2. The Lunar New Year is based on the lunar calendar as opposed to the solar calendar. Have students investigate the two calendars and compare them using a Venn diagram. Why does the Lunar New Year fall on a different date each year?

MATH:

1. Students may enjoy learning how to write the Chinese characters for the numerals 1 through 10. Here are the characters for 1 through 10: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primarylanguages/mandarin/numbers/>
2. Write the Mandarin numbers, their pronunciations, and their numerical equivalents on the whiteboard. Have students practice saying the number words until they are familiar with their pronunciations and meanings. Then give students simple math problems to solve using these number words.

WRITING:

1. Encourage students to describe a New Year's celebration that they spent with their families. What kind of activities took place? How did they celebrate?
2. Have students write an original story about a holiday they celebrate.

Book List

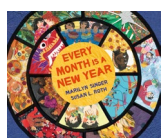
LEE & LOW BOOKS offers an award-winning selection of books for celebrating the Chinese and Lunar New Year around the world.

CHINESE AND LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS



Chinatown Adventure by Laura E. Williams

A young Chinese American girl is spending the day in Chinatown with her mother. With so many interesting things to buy, how will she spend her money? *Available in Spanish.*



Every Month Is a New Year: Celebrations Around the World written by Marilyn Singer, illustrated by Susan L. Roth

Every month of the year, somewhere in the world people celebrate with joy and good wishes for a happy new year. Acclaimed poet Marilyn Singer has created a lively poetry collection that highlights sixteen of these fascinating festivities, some well-known and some less familiar.



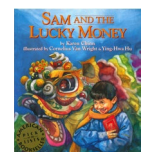
D is for Doufu: An Alphabet Book of Chinese Culture and **I Love China: A Companion Book to D is for Doufu** written by Maywan Shen Krach, illustrated by Hongbin Zhang

This book introduces readers to Chinese culture, beliefs, and legends in today's context. It explores the meanings of 23 Chinese words and phrases while providing an interesting historical and cultural background.



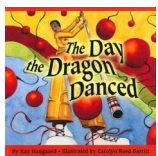
Golden Dragon Parade written by Anastasia Suen, illustrated by Priscilla Garcia Burriss

Chinese New Year is here. Come along to the Golden Dragon Parade. *Available in Spanish.*



Sam and the Lucky Money written by Karen Chinn, illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu

Sam can hardly wait to go shopping with his mom. It's Chinese New Year's day and his grandparents have given him the traditional gift of lucky money. Yet, Sam discovers that sometimes the best gifts come from the heart. *Available in Spanish and Chinese.*



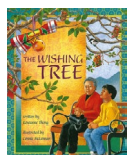
The Day the Dragon Danced written by Kay Hugaard, illustrated by Carolyn Reed Barritt

Sugar and her Grandma are going to the Chinese New Year's Day parade, but Grandma is skeptical about New Year's in February and scary dragons.



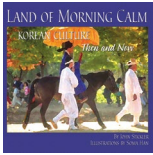
The Monster in the Mudball by S. P. Gates

When Jin's little brother is kidnapped by the monster Zilombo, Jin teams up with Chief Inspector of Ancient Artifacts Mizz Z on the streets of England to find him and defeat the monster.



The Wishing Tree written by Roseanne Tong, illustrated by Connie McLennan

Every Lunar New Year, Ming and his grandmother visited the Wishing Tree. Grandmother warned him to wish carefully, and sure enough, Ming's wishes always seemed to come true. But one year—when Ming made the most important wish of his life—the tree let him down.



Land of Morning Calm: Korean Culture Then and Now written by John Stickler, illustrated by Soma Han

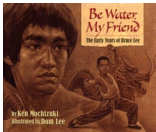
Take a journey to both ancient and modern Korea, where you will find a rich world of history and traditions that will capture your imagination and whet your appetite for learning more about this fascinating culture. Every page explains an aspect of Korean culture and its changes through the years.

CHINESE/CHINESE AMERICAN INTEREST



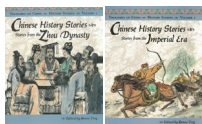
Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic written by Ginnie Lo, illustrated by Beth Lo

A Chinese American girl's Auntie Yang discovers soybeans—a favorite Chinese food—growing in Illinois, and their family starts a soybean picnic tradition that grows into an annual community event.



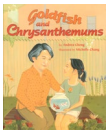
Be Water, My Friend: The Early Years of Bruce Lee written by Ken Mochizuki, illustrated by Dom Lee

The true story of the formative years of Bruce Lee's early life growing up in Hong Kong in the 1940s and 1950s, before he became an international film star.



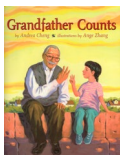
Chinese History Stories Volume 1: Stories from the Zhou Dynasty and **Chinese History Stories Volume 2: Stories from the Imperial Era** by Renee Ting

Nineteen of the most important and fascinating tales were translated from their original Chinese for this two-volume set of Chinese Historical Stories. They represent the most entertaining, well-known, and historically significant stories beloved by children and adults alike.



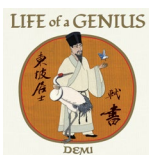
Goldfish and Chrysanthemums written by Andrea Cheng, illustrated by Michelle Chang

The story of a Chinese American girl who helps preserve her grandmother's childhood memories of China by creating a special garden for her in America.



Grandfather Counts written by Andrea Cheng, illustrated by Ange Zheng

Gong Gong (Grandfather) is coming from China to live with Helen's family. Helen is excited, but anxious. How will she and her siblings, who know only English, communicate with Gong Gong, who speaks only Chinese?



Life of a Genius: Su Dongpo by Demi

A tribute to the spirited life of one of China's greatest literary and historical heroes—poet, scholar, and statesman Su Dongpo.



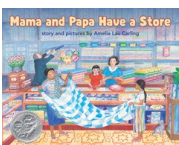
Confucius: Great Teacher of China by Demi

Beautiful biography provides a warm introduction to the teacher and philosopher who changed the world and some call "China's uncrowned king."



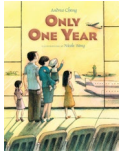
The Magnolia Sword: A Ballad of Mulan by Sherry Thomas

Bestselling writer Sherry Thomas weaves an enthralling #ownvoices retelling of a story that has thrilled readers for centuries: the ballad of Mulan.



Mama and Papa Have a Store by Amelia Lau Carling

Lyrical writing and delightful artwork will captivate both children and adults in this story drawn from the author/illustrator's childhood memories about growing up in Guatemala City and hearing stories from her parents' homeland in China. *Available in Spanish.*

**Only One Year** written by Andrea Cheng, illustrated by Nicole Wang

The story of three Chinese American children who learn to trust and love one another again after the youngest child returns from a year living in China with extended family.

**The Perfect Gift** written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Shirley Ng-Benitez

Mei's family is throwing a 100-days birthday party for her little brother—a traditional Chinese celebration after the arrival of a baby. With help from her friends and grandma, Mei discovers that the best gifts are those from the heart.

**Shanghai Messenger** written by Andrea Cheng, illustrated by Ed Young

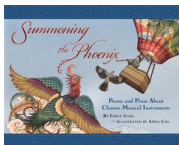
A story in verse about a biracial Chinese American girl's journey to self-discovery and love of family as she visits her extended family in Shanghai, China.

**Shining Star: The Anna May Wong Story** written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Lin Wang

The true story of Chinese American film star Anna May Wong, whose trail-blazing career in Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s broke new ground for future generations of Asian American actors.

**The Story of Movie Star Anna May Wong** written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Lin Wang

Meet Anna May Wong, a Chinese American actor who became one of the first Asian American movie stars.

**Summoning the Phoenix: Poems and Prose About Chinese Musical Instruments** written by Emily Jiang, illustrated by April Chu

A collection of original poems about children learning to play traditional Chinese instruments in preparation for a performance, accompanied by factual information about each instrument.

**The Best Thing** by Laura E. Williams

Meet Madison, a Chinese American girl who thinks being adopted into a great family is the best thing. *Available in Spanish.*

**The Dragon Lover and Other Chinese Proverbs** by Yong-Shen Xuan

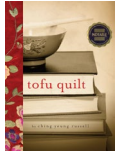
These proverbs are used in everyday Chinese life to illustrate moments of humor or clarity in our actions. Each of the five stories collected here feature animals that help readers shed light on the truths of human nature.

**The Great Voyages of Zheng He** by Demi

Readers will discover the larger-than-life figure, Zheng He, who led seven voyages of the treasure fleets between 1405 and 1431.

**The Magical Monkey King: Mischief in Heaven** written by Ji-Li Jiang, illustrated by Youshan Tang

Every child in China grows up listening to stories of the irrepressible Monkey King. Join Monkey as he wins his title as King of the Monkeys, studies with a great sage to learn the secrets of immortality, and even takes on the job as a royal gardener in the Kingdom of Heaven.

**Tofu Quilt** by Ching Yeung Russell

A collection of poems telling the story of Yeung Ying, a young girl in Hong Kong in the 1960s who, against the conventions of society and family members, aspires to become a writer.

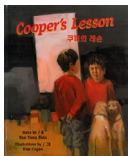
KOREAN/KOREAN AMERICAN INTEREST

**Turtle Ship** written by Helena Ku Rhee, illustrated by Colleen Kong-Savage

Loosely based on the true story of Admiral Yi Sun-sin and his Turtle Ship, this delightful tale by debut author Helena Ku Rhee and debut illustrator Colleen Kong-Savage introduce young readers to a fascinating episode in Korean history and naval engineering.

**Bibim Bap for Dinner** by Laura E. Williams

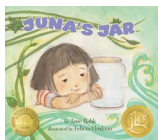
Follow along step-by-step as a young boy and his mother make a Korean dish, Bibim bap, for the whole family to enjoy. *Available in Spanish.*

**Cooper's Lesson** written by Sun Yung Shin, illustrated by Kim Cogan

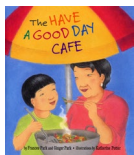
Cooper realizes that the question of who we are is never simple—whether you talk about it in English or Korean. Kim Cogan's richly hued oil paintings perfectly complement this story of identity and intergenerational friendship, and author Sun Yung Shin brings her characters to life with tender, vivid prose.

**Good Fortune in a Wrapping Cloth** written by Joan Schoettler, illustrated by Jessica Lanan

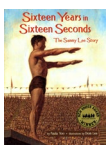
Ji-su's mother has been chosen by the Korean king to be a seamstress at the palace and sew bojagi, or wrapping cloths, for the royal household. It is a great honor, but to Ji-su it means saying good-bye to her mother. The only way for them to be reunited is for her to be chosen to serve the king.

**Juna's Jar** written by Jane Bahk, illustrated by Felicia Hoshino

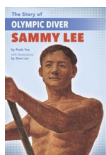
With the help of her special kimchi jar, Juna searches for her friend the world over. What Juna finds is that adventure—and new friends—can be found in the most unexpected places.

**The Have a Good Day Café** written by Frances Park and Ginger Park, illustrated by Katherine Potter

All summer long business dwindles away from Mike and his family's food cart, and Mike's worried parents start thinking about giving up their cart. Now it's up to Mike, and Grandma, to find a way to bring back their customers.

**Sixteen Years in Sixteen Seconds** written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Dom Lee

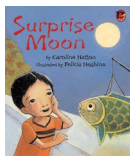
In 1948 Dr. Sammy Lee dove into Olympic history. Sammy Lee became the first Asian American to win an Olympic gold medal. Sammy Lee's story of determination and triumph sets an extraordinary example for anyone striving to fulfill a dream.

**The Story of Olympic Diver Sammy Lee** written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Dom Lee

Meet Sammy Lee, a Korean American diver and doctor who became the first Asian American to win an Olympic gold medal.

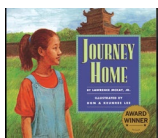


VIETNAMESE/VIETNAMESE AMERICAN INTEREST



Surprise Moon written by Caroline Hattton, illustrated by Felicia Hoshino

On a Fall night, a Vietnamese American boy named Nick shows his friends how to celebrate the Autumn Moon Festival, a special holiday in his father's home country. See which part of the celebration Nick likes the best. *Available in Spanish.*



Journey Home written by Lawrence McKay, illustrated by Dom Lee and Keunhee Lee

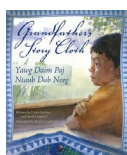
Mai is excited about traveling to Vietnam with her mother. Mom wants to search for her birth family and Mai wants to help solve the mystery. *Journey Home* is a story for all Americans who, like Mai, want to learn more about themselves through their family histories.



Going Home, Coming Home written by Truong Tran, illustrated by Ann Phong

Poet Truong Tran uses delicate, lyrical prose to craft this tender story of leaving and finding places that make up who we are. Ann Phong's lush paintings complete this unforgettable journey with vibrant color and loving detail.

LAOTIAN/LAOTIAN AMERICAN INTEREST AND MIEN/MIEN AMERICAN INTEREST



Grandfather's Story Cloth written by Linda Gerdner and Sarah Langford, illustrated by Stuart Loughridge

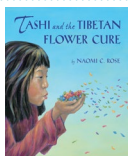
Through the story cloth, Grandfather's memories of his life in Laos come alive. And inspired by Grandfather's tales about his life before the war forced him to immigrate to America, Chersheng comes up with a plan to capture his family's new life with his own art project.



Piecing Earth and Sky Together: A Creation Story from the Mien Tribe of Laos written by Nancy Raines Day, illustrated by Genna Panzarella

Like the detailed Mien embroidery in the story, Nancy Raines Day's retelling of this traditional Mien tale and Genna Panzarella's striking illustrations also fit together like the earth and sky. Together, they create a book that is alive with the richness and beauty of the Mien culture and of the earth itself.

TIBETAN/TIBETAN AMERICAN INTEREST



Tashi and the Tibetan Flower Cure by Naomi Rose

Lyrically told and illustrated with impressionistic paintings, this story shines a tender light on the universal bond between grandchild and grandparent and the spirit of compassion and community.



Vanishing Cultures: Himalaya by Jan Reynolds

Author/photographer Jan Reynolds gives readers an intimate peek at the lives of Sherpas and Tibetans through the eyes of children and explores their daily lives, relationships with their environment, and challenges in a changing world.



Sacred Mountain: Everest by Christine Taylor-Butler

With stunning photographs and engaging text, *Sacred Mountain* presents a unique picture of Mount Everest and the Sherpa—their history, the mountain's ecology, and especially its people—that will captivate readers of all ages.



Sources with More Ideas for Teaching and Celebrating Chinese and Lunar New Year

WEBSITES

- **EDSITEment:**
edsitement.neh.gov
- **Smithsonian:**
www.si.edu/
- **Program for Teaching East Asia at University of Colorado, Boulder**
www.colorado.edu/ptea/
- **ReadWriteThink:**
www.readwritethink.org
- **Google Arts & Culture**
artsandculture.google.com/
- **ShareMyLesson:**
www.sharemylesson.com
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- **TeacherVision:**
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