

New Year Celebrations Around the World

New year festivals are celebrated all over the world.

These traditions often include saying goodbye to the old year and bringing good luck into the new year. Around the globe, the new year is celebrated on different dates depending on calendars, cultures and traditions. For example, while some people celebrate the new year on 1st January, the Chinese New Year doesn't begin until between the end of January and the middle of February.

Many countries choose to celebrate the new year with exciting firework displays. Recently, flying drones have been lit up and used instead of fireworks to create incredible moving images above the ground. These displays can create complicated images and giant letters across the night sky.

Hogmanay



In Scotland, many people celebrate Hogmanay which begins on 31st December.

During Hogmanay celebrations, some people take part in a tradition known as 'first footing'. For 'first footing', people visit friends and family, aiming to be the first person in their house in the new year. Some people take a piece of coal with them which is thought to show that they wish for the house to keep warm over the winter months. Other people choose to bring small gifts to celebrate the new year.

Shōgatsu

Shōgatsu is a Japanese holiday in which many people celebrate the new year. Celebrations begin on 1st January and usually end on 3rd January.



New Year Celebrations Around the World

On New Year's Eve, many temples across Japan ring their bells 108 times. It is thought that eight rings say goodbye to the old year while 100 rings welcome in the new year. During this celebration, many people wake up early to watch the first sunrise of the new year and choose to visit local temples with their friends and family. While there, they ask that the new year is filled with good health.

Songkran



Songkran is a water festival that celebrates the Thai new year on 13th April.

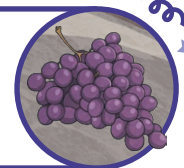
Water plays a big part in the festival of Songkran as it is thought to wash away the old year in preparation for the new year. Traditionally, families will visit a Buddhist temple and pour water over statues of Buddha. This is thought to represent good fortune. Many people also clean their houses and public spaces (such as schools) in preparation for the new year. During Songkran, adults and children can often be found outside enjoying a street party and a giant water fight.

More Traditions from Around the World



In Siberia, a few brave people take part in a new year's day tradition of diving into a frozen lake or body of water.

In Spain, some people take part in a tradition of eating one grape every time the clock strikes at midnight.



In Romania, children can sometimes be found dressing up in bear costumes and dancing. This is thought to help ward off evil spirits as the new year begins.

In South America, some people choose to carry an empty suitcase around with them on New Year's Eve. This is believed to show that the new year ahead will be full of adventure.



Questions

1. What have recently started to be used instead of fireworks? Tick one.

- water fights
- flying drones
- bonfires
- actors dressed as fireworks

2. In which country do people celebrate **Shōgatsu**? Tick one.

- China
- Scotland
- Japan
- Thailand

3. Look at the section titled **Songkran**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'symbolise'.

4. Fill in the missing words.

In Scotland, many people celebrate _____ which begins on 31st

_____.

5. In which country do some people try to eat one grape every time the clock strikes at midnight?

6. Which new year celebration would you most like to take part in? Explain your answer.

7. **The author is impressed with the flying drones.**

Find evidence in the text to support this statement.

8. Using 20 words or fewer, summarise what you have learnt about **Songkran**.

Answers

1. What have recently started to be used instead of fireworks? Tick one.

- water fights
- flying drones**
- bonfires
- actors dressed as fireworks

2. In which country do people celebrate **Shōgatsu**? Tick one.

- China
- Scotland
- Japan**
- Thailand

3. Look at the section titled **Songkran**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'symbolise'.

represent

4. Fill in the missing words.

In Scotland, many people celebrate **Hogmanay** which begins on 31st **December**.

5. In which country do some people try to eat one grape every time the clock strikes at midnight?

In Spain, some people try to eat one grape every time the clock strikes midnight.

6. Which new year celebration would you most like to take part in? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I would most like to take part in the Thai new year festival of Songkran because taking part in a giant water fight with the whole street sounds like a lot of fun.

7. **The author is impressed with the flying drones.**

Find evidence in the text to support this statement.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The author uses lots of positive words to describe the drones. They have written things like 'incredible moving images' which makes them sound impressed. They have also described the images as 'complicated' which makes it sound as though it is not an easy thing to do.

8. Using 20 words or fewer, summarise what you have learnt about **Songkran**.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Songkran is a water festival that starts on 13th April and celebrates the Thai new year.

New Year Celebrations Around the World

New year festivals are celebrated all over the world and often involve traditions which aim to bring good fortune into the new year. The new year is celebrated at different times around the globe in various cultures and religions. For example, the Chinese New Year begins between the end of January and the middle of February whereas some people celebrate the new year on 1st January.

Many countries choose to celebrate the new year with elaborate firework displays. The use of fireworks is thought to have originated from a time when fire and loud noises were used to ward off evil spirits. Recently, illuminated drones have been used in place of fireworks to create moving images up to 150 metres above the ground. Using artificial intelligence, these displays can create complex images and giant letters across the night sky.

Hogmanay



In Scotland, many people celebrate Hogmanay which begins on 31st December and lasts for two to three days.

Although the origin of the word 'Hogmanay' isn't fully known, it is thought that it may have come from the French word 'huginane' which translates to mean 'gala day'. During Hogmanay celebrations, some people take part in 'first footing'. This is a tradition in which people visit friends and family, aiming to be the first person in their house in the new year. Some people take a piece of coal with them which symbolises their wish for the house to remain warm for the coming months — others bring small gifts to celebrate the new year.

Shōgatsu

Shōgatsu (also known as Oshōgatsu) is a Japanese holiday in which many people celebrate the new year; celebrations begin on 1st January and usually end on 3rd January.



New Year Celebrations Around the World

On New Year's Eve, temple bells in Japan can be heard ringing 108 times. It is thought that eight rings show out the new year while the remaining 100 are used to ring in the new year. During this celebration, many people choose to visit shrines or local temples with their friends and family. While there, they ask that the new year is filled with good health. Many people also choose to wake up early to watch the initial sunrise of the new year.



Songkran

Songkran is a water festival and national holiday that celebrates the Thai new year on 13th April.

Water plays a significant part in the festival of Songkran as it is thought to wash away the old year so that the new year can start afresh. Traditionally, families will visit a Buddhist temple and pour water over statues of Buddha. This is thought to represent good fortune and purification. Many people also take part in cleaning houses and public spaces in preparation for the new year. During Songkran, adults and children can often be found outside enjoying a street party and a giant water fight.

More Traditions from Around the World



In Siberia, a few brave people take part in a new year's day tradition of diving into a frozen lake or body of water. Incredibly, some people have even taken this tradition further and try to plant a type of evergreen tree at the bottom of the lake.

In Spain, some people take part in a tradition of eating one grape every time the clock strikes at midnight.



In Romania, children can sometimes be found dressing up in bear costumes and dancing. This is traditionally believed to help ward off evil spirits as the new year begins.

In some areas of South America, some people choose to carry an empty suitcase around with them on New Year's Eve. This is believed to symbolise that the new year ahead will be full of adventure.



Questions

1. In which country can children sometimes be found dressing up in bear costumes for the new year? Tick one.

- Scotland
- Japan
- Spain
- Romania

2. When is Songkran traditionally celebrated? Tick one.

- 1st January
- between January and February
- 13th April
- 13th December

3. Why do some people in Scotland choose to take a piece of coal with them during 'first footing'?

4. Fill in the missing words.

During _____, adults and children can often be found outside enjoying a _____ party.

5. Look at the section titled **Shōgatsu**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'first'.

6. Summarise what you have learnt about Hogmanay using 20 words or fewer.

7. Do you think that any of these traditions will change in the future? Explain your answer.

8. **New year festivals are celebrated all over the world and often involve traditions which aim to bring good fortune into the new year.**

Find evidence from the text which supports this statement.

9. Which new year celebration would you least like to take part in? Fully explain your answer.

Answers

1. In which country can children sometimes be found dressing up in bear costumes for the new year? Tick one.

- Scotland
- Japan
- Spain
- Romania**

2. When is Songkran traditionally celebrated? Tick one.

- 1st January
- between January and February
- 13th April**
- 13th December

3. Why do some people in Scotland choose to take a piece of coal with them during 'first footing'?

The coal symbolises their wish for the house to remain warm for the coming months.

4. Fill in the missing words.

During **Songkran**, adults and children can often be found outside enjoying a **street** party.

5. Look at the section titled **Shōgatsu**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'first'.

initial

6. Summarise what you have learnt about Hogmanay using 20 words or fewer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Hogmanay is celebrated in Scotland. Some people take part in 'first footing' and bring small gifts for the new year.

7. Do you think that any of these traditions will change in the future? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I do not think that any of these traditions will change in the future because they have already been around for a long time and probably haven't changed very much. You can tell this because nobody is certain where the name 'Hogmanay' came from which shows that it's been used for a long time without changing.

8. **New year festivals are celebrated all over the world and often involve traditions which aim to bring good fortune into the new year.**

Find evidence from the text which supports this statement.

Pupils' own responses, such as: In Japan, people visit temples and ask that the new year is filled with good health. In Romania, children dress up to ward off evil spirits which is helping to start the new year without anything bad.

9. Which new year celebration would you least like to take part in? Fully explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I would least like to take part in the tradition in Siberia of jumping into a frozen lake. This is because it sounds very cold and dangerous and I don't think I'd enjoy it.

New Year Celebrations Around the World

New year festivals are celebrated all over the world and often involve traditions which aim to bring good luck and good fortune into the year ahead. Interestingly, the new year is celebrated at different times around the globe in various cultures and religions. While many countries see in the new year on 1st January — the first day of the Gregorian calendar — the Chinese New Year, for example, begins between the end of January and the middle of February in accordance with the lunar calendar.

Many countries choose to celebrate the new year with elaborate firework displays. Thought to have been first used to ward off evil spirits with fire and loud noises, these displays are often streamed online so that people from all across the globe can enjoy the incredible spectacle. In more recent years, hundreds of illuminated drones have been used to create moving images up to 150 metres above the ground. Choreographed using artificial intelligence, these displays can create images such as the words 'Happy New Year' in giant letters across the night sky.

Hogmanay



In Scotland, many people celebrate Hogmanay which begins on 31st December and lasts for two to three days.

Although the origin of the word 'Hogmanay' is disputed, it is thought that it may have come from the French word 'huginane' which translates to mean 'gala day'. If this theory is true, the term is likely to have been picked up by Mary, Queen of Scots following her return to Scotland from France in 1561. During Hogmanay celebrations, some people also take part in 'first footing': a tradition in which people visit friends and family to be the first person in their house after the first stroke of midnight. Some people take a piece of coal with them to signify their wish for the house to remain warm for the coming months — others bring small gifts to celebrate the new year.

Shōgatsu

Shōgatsu — also known as Oshōgatsu — is the name given to the Japanese holiday in which many people celebrate the new year. The celebrations begin on 1st January and end on 3rd January.



On New Year's Eve, temple bells in Japan can be heard ringing 108 times. It is believed that eight rings are to show out the new year with the remaining 100 being used to ring in the new year. During this celebration, many people visit shrines or local temples with their friends and family and ask that the new year will be prosperous and filled with good health. On the first day of the new year, many people choose to wake up early to watch the first sunrise.

Songkran



Songkran is a water festival that celebrates the Thai new year in accordance with the Buddhist calendar. Beginning on the 13th April, this national holiday typically lasts for three days.

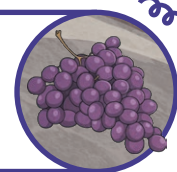
Believed to help wash away the previous year so that the new year can start afresh, water plays a significant part in the festival of Songkran. Traditionally, families will visit a Buddhist temple and pour water over statues of Buddha; this represents good fortune and purification. Many people also take part in cleaning houses and public spaces in preparation for the new year. During Songkran, the streets outside can often be found full of adults and children enjoying a street party accompanied by a giant water fight.

More Traditions from Around the World



In Siberia, a few brave people take part in a new year's day tradition of diving into a frozen lake or body of water. Incredibly, some people have even taken this tradition further and challenged themselves to plant a 'yolka' (a type of evergreen tree) at the bottom of the lake.

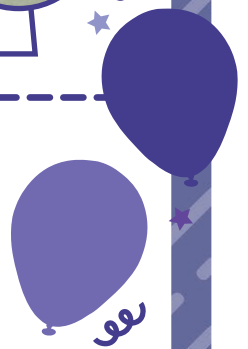
In Spain, some people believe that eating a grape each time the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve will help to bring good luck in the year ahead.





In Romania, children can sometimes be found dressing up in bear costumes and dancing. Traditionally, this is believed to help ward off evil spirits as the new year begins.

In some areas of South America, people sometimes can be seen carrying an empty suitcase around with them on New Year's Eve. This is believed to signify that the year ahead will be full of adventure.



Questions

1. ... in accordance with the lunar calendar.

Which option is closest in meaning to the phrase 'in accordance with'? Tick one.

- completely ignoring
- in line with
- in disagreement with
- if you want to

2. Which celebration typically ends on 3rd January? Tick one.

- Chinese New Year
- Hogmanay
- Shōgatsu
- Songkran

3. In which section can you find small pieces of information about several different traditions?

4. According to the text, what **two** things might someone choose to bring with them during 'first footing'?

- ---
- ---

5. Look at the section titled **Songkran**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'important'.

6. Compare the festivals of Shōgatsu and Songkran. How are they similar?

7. How does the author feel about new year celebrations? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

8. Explain how the layout of the text helps the reader to understand the information.

9. Argue that, in the future, drones will completely replace fireworks during new year celebrations.

10. Which tradition do you think is the oldest? Explain your answer fully.

Answers

1. ... **in accordance with the lunar calendar.**

Which option is closest in meaning to the phrase 'in accordance with'? Tick one.

- completely ignoring
- in line with**
- in disagreement with
- if you want to

2. Which celebration typically ends on 3rd January? Tick one.

- Chinese New Year
- Hogmanay
- Shōgatsu**
- Songkran

3. In which section can you find small pieces of information about several different traditions?

More Traditions from Around the World

4. According to the text, what **two** things might someone choose to bring with them during 'first footing'?

- **a piece of coal**
- **a small gift**

5. Look at the section titled **Songkran**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'important'.

significant

6. Compare the festivals of Shōgatsu and Songkran. How are they similar?

Pupils' own responses, such as: The festivals of Shōgatsu and Songkran are similar because they both celebrate the new year. In each festival, families visit temples and ask for good health or good fortune. They also spend time with friends and family.

7. How does the author feel about new year celebrations? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The author is excited by new year celebrations because they use lots of positive words to describe them, such as: 'elaborate', 'incredible' and 'significant'. Each section focuses on the fun, positive parts of each celebration which the author wouldn't have chosen to do had they not liked new year celebrations.

8. Explain how the layout of the text helps the reader to understand the information.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Each section is split into a small paragraph with a heading that shows which celebration it is talking about. This means that it is easy to find specific pieces of information. The introductory paragraphs provide a brief overview of new year celebrations which helps to explain the rest of the text and it makes you want to find out more.

9. Argue that, in the future, drones will completely replace fireworks during new year celebrations.

Pupils' own responses, such as: In the past few years, drones have started to become more popular which shows that people are enjoying them. Fireworks produce a lot of waste and it isn't always found because it falls from high in the air but drones do not create any litter. Drones are also a lot quieter than fireworks so people with pets will be happier to use them.

10. Which tradition do you think is the oldest? Explain your answer fully.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the tradition of Hogmanay is the oldest because in the text, it says that the origin of the name is disputed. This shows that it has been around for such a long time that there are no written records that anyone has seen that explain where the name first came from.