

# Chinese New Year Lantern Festival

## What Is a festival?

A festival is a celebration. Festivals are fun and can be a chance for families and friends to spend time together.

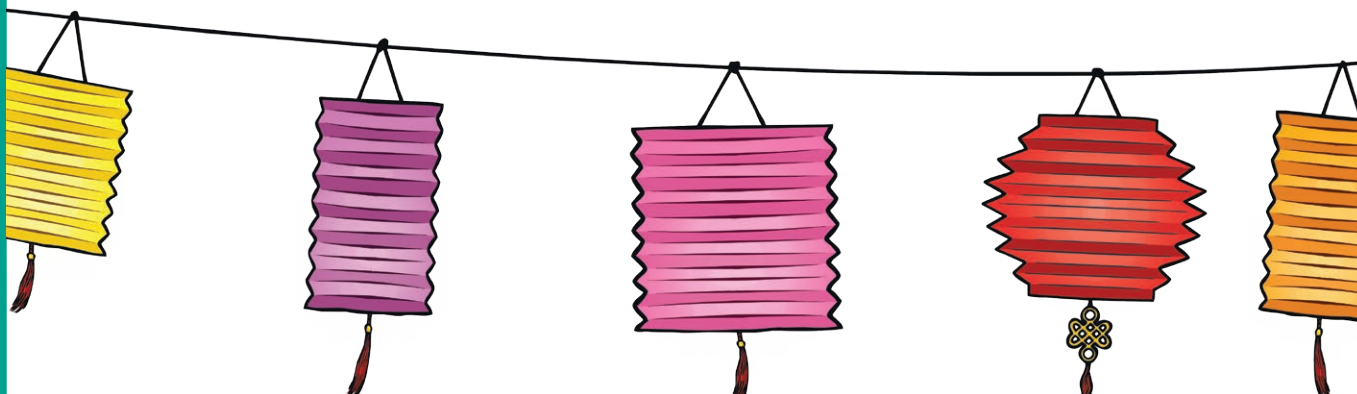


## The Chinese New Year Lantern Festival

The Chinese New Year Lantern Festival began in China but is now celebrated in different places around the world. The festival happens on the last day of the Chinese New Year celebrations.

## Lanterns

You might see lanterns hanging in shopping centres, parks and in the streets. They can be all different shapes, sizes and colours but most lanterns are red as it is thought to be a lucky colour.





### Activities

During the festival, you might eat tangyuan (sweet dumplings) and watch firework displays.

Riddles are word puzzles and they hang from lanterns. If you can answer one of the riddles, you might win a prize from the owner of the lantern.



I live in a flock.

I eat grass.

My coat is fluffy and warm.

What am I?



# Questions

1. When does the Chinese New Year Lantern Festival happen?

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2. Write down two things you might see at the Chinese New Year Lantern Festival.

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3. List two places where you might see lanterns hanging at the festival.

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4. Why are many lanterns red?

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5. What are riddles?

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6. Write down a describing word to describe this festival.

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7. Would you like to go to this festival? Why? Why not?

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# Answers

1. When does the Chinese New Year Lantern Festival happen?

**The festival happens on the last day of the Chinese New Year celebrations.**

2. Write down two things you might see at the Chinese New Year Lantern Festival.

**Various answers including two of the following: (red) lanterns (of different shapes and sizes), fireworks, tangyuan, riddles hanging from lanterns.**

3. List two places where you might see lanterns hanging at the festival.

**Various answers including two of the following: shopping centres, parks and in the street.**

4. Why are many lanterns red?

**Many lanterns are red as red is thought to be a lucky colour.**

5. What are riddles?

**Riddles are word puzzles.**

6. Write down a describing word to describe this festival.

**Various answers.**

7. Would you like to go to this festival? Why? Why not?

**Various answers.**

# Chinese New Year Lantern Festival

A festival is a celebration. Festivals take place all around the world for different reasons. They are fun and can bring families and friends together.

The Chinese New Year Lantern Festival began in China but is now celebrated in different places around the world. In London, it is called the Magic Lantern Festival.

The festival is the final day of the Chinese New Year celebrations and usually takes place in February or March.



## How Did It All Start?

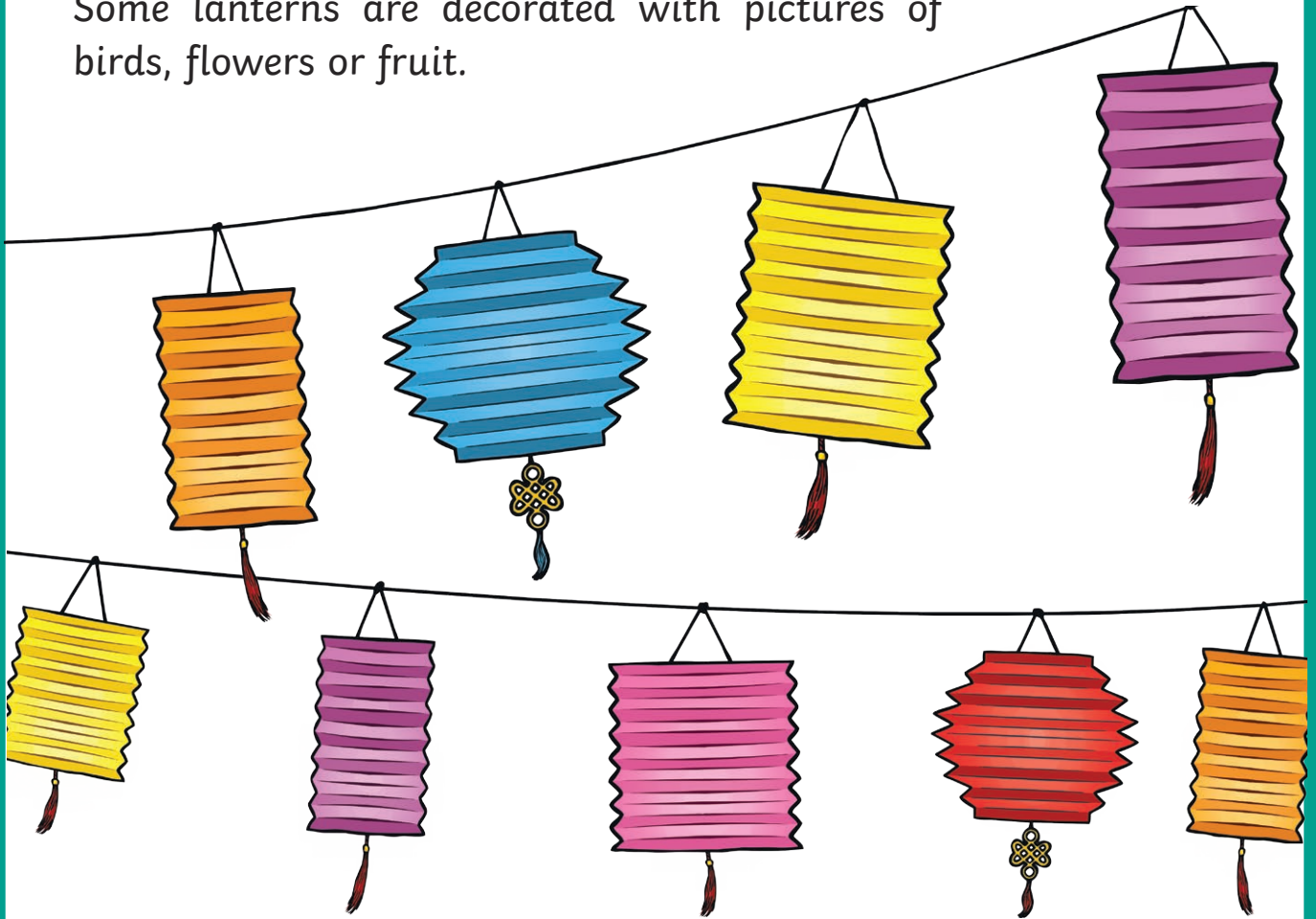
Many people have different ideas about how this festival began. Some people think the first festival was a way of keeping a Chinese city safe from the God of Fire. All over the city, people lit red lanterns and set off firecrackers to distract the god. The plan worked and the city was saved.



### Lanterns

Lanterns of all shapes, sizes and colours can be seen in homes, shopping centres, parks and streets, but most lanterns are red as this is thought to be a lucky colour.

Some lanterns are decorated with pictures of birds, flowers or fruit.



### Activities

During the festival, you might eat tangyuan (sweet dumplings) and watch firework displays.

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### Riddles

Riddles hang from lanterns. If you can solve the riddle, you could win a prize from the lantern owner.

Can you solve these riddles?



I'm an arch.  
I am different colours.  
What am I?



I live in a flock.  
I eat grass.  
My coat is fluffy and warm.  
What am I?

At the festival,  
you may also  
see a lion or  
dragon dance.



# Questions

1. Using the text, what is another word for a festival?

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2. In which country did this festival first begin?

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3. When does the Chinese New Year Lantern Festival take place?

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4. What is the name of the lantern event in London?

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5. Give two examples of pictures you might see on lanterns.

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6. What might you see hanging from lanterns?

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7. What are tangyuan?

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8. What do some people think is the reason for the first ever lantern festival?

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9. Write down an adjective to describe this festival. Why did you choose that word?

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# Answers

1. Using the text, what is another word for a festival?  
**Another word for a festival is a celebration.**
2. In which country did this festival first begin?  
**This festival first began in China.**
3. When does the Chinese New Year Lantern Festival take place?  
**The festival usually takes place in February or March.**
4. What is the name of the lantern event in London?  
**The lantern event in London is called the Magic Lantern Festival.**
5. Give two examples of pictures you might see on lanterns.  
**Various answers including two of the following: birds, flowers, fruit.**
6. What might you see hanging from lanterns?  
**You might see riddles hanging from lanterns.**
7. What are tangyuan?  
**Tangyuan are sweet dumplings.**
8. What do some people think is the reason for the first ever lantern festival?  
**Some people think the first festival was a way of keeping a Chinese city safe from the God of Fire.**
9. Write down an adjective to describe this festival. Why did you choose that word?  
**Various answers and reasoning.**

# Chinese New Year Lantern Festival

A festival is a celebration. Festivals take place all around the world for different reasons. They are fun and can be an opportunity for families and friends to spend time together.

The Chinese New Year Lantern Festival originated in China but is now celebrated in many places around the world. In London, it is called the Magic Lantern Festival. The festival is the final day of the Chinese New Year Celebrations and usually takes place in February or March.



Many people have different ideas about how this festival began. Here is one of them:

Long ago in ancient China, there lived a palace maid named Yuanxiao. The emperor didn't allow her to leave the palace which meant that she missed her family very much.

Yuanxiao had a friend called Dongfang Shuo. He told the emperor that the God of Fire had ordered the city to be set on fire on the fifteenth day of the first month of the lunar year. The emperor needed to stop this from happening. Shuo told him that the only solution was to let off fireworks and hang red lanterns all around the city as the God of Fire liked to watch a fire show. When the time came, the people let off firecrackers and the lanterns shone brightly. Yuanxiao also helped by making dumplings for the god to eat; she hoped it would distract him and save the city from the fire.



Luckily, the plan worked and the city was saved.

Yuanxiao was allowed to leave the palace and see her family. This is why the festival has become a time for families and friends to be together.

The emperor enjoyed the display so much that he announced that there would be a lantern festival every year. This meant that Yuanxiao could visit her family again.

### Lanterns

Lanterns of various shapes, sizes and colours can be seen in homes, shopping centres, parks and streets. Most lanterns are red as this is believed to be a lucky colour. Some lanterns are decorated with pictures of birds, flowers or fruit.



### Activities

During the festival, you may see firework displays. Tangyuan (sweet dumplings) are eaten and riddles are attached to lanterns. If you can solve a riddle, you could win a prize from the lantern owner.

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## Riddles

Can you solve these riddles?



I'm an arch.  
I am different colours.  
Many believe you'll find a pot of gold at the end of me.  
What am I?



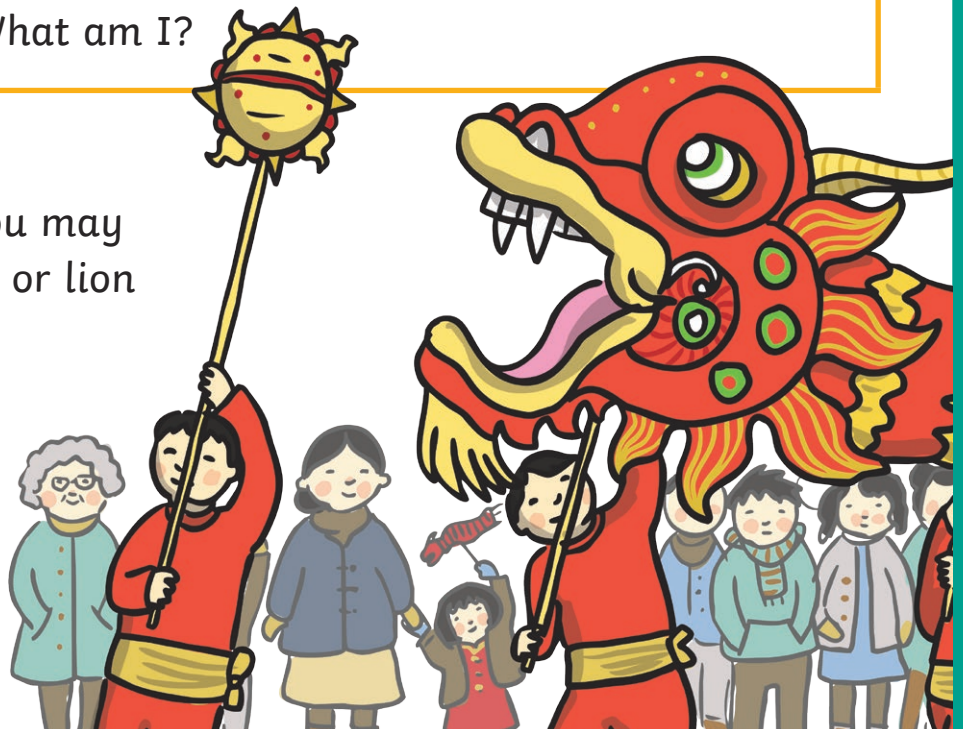
I live in a flock.  
I eat grass.  
My coat is fluffy and warm.  
What am I?



I am many colours or only one.  
I was a home but now I'm not.  
You might hear the sea in me.  
What am I?

At the festival, you may also see a dragon or lion dance.

The lion is a symbol of strength and bravery.



# Questions

1. Using the text, give a synonym of the word 'festival'.  

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2. Why do you think different people have different ideas about how the festival first started?  

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3. Why was Yuanxiao sad at the beginning of the story?  

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4. What was the name of Yuanxiao's friend?  

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5. Why was she happy at the end of the story?  

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6. When does the festival usually take place?  

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7. What is a riddle?  

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8. What could have happened if the God of Fire hadn't been distracted by the fireworks, lanterns and dumplings?  

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9. Why are lanterns mainly red?  

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10. What does the lion symbolise?  

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## Extension Task

Write your own riddle. Can a friend solve it?

# Answers

1. Using the text, give a synonym of the word 'festival'.  
**A synonym of the word 'festival' could be 'celebration'.**
2. Why do you think different people have different ideas about how the festival first started?  
**Various answers (Different people have different ideas about how the festival first started because it began so long ago that there is no one still alive today to ask.)**
3. Why was Yuanxiao sad at the beginning of the story?  
**Yuanxiao was sad at the beginning of the story because the emperor didn't allow her to leave the palace which meant that she missed her family very much.**
4. What was the name of Yuanxiao's friend?  
**Yuanxiao's friend was called Dongfang Shuo.**
5. Why was she happy at the end of the story?  
**She was happy at the end of the story because she had seen her family. As the emperor had enjoyed the display so much, he announced that there would be a lantern festival every year which meant that Yuanxiao could visit her family again.**
6. When does the festival usually take place?  
**The festival marks the final day of the Chinese New Year celebrations and usually takes place in February or March.**
7. What is a riddle?  
**Various answers (A riddle is a word puzzle.)**
8. What could have happened if the God of Fire hadn't been distracted by the fireworks, lanterns and dumplings?  
**If the God of Fire hadn't been distracted, he would have set the whole city on fire.**

9. Why are lanterns mainly red?

**Lanterns are mainly red as it is believed to be a lucky colour.**

10. What does the lion symbolise?

**The lion symbolises strength and bravery.**