

Name _____

New Years Around the World



The coming of the new year signals a new beginning. It is a chance to bid farewell to the past year and to anticipate the exciting things the next year will bring. In the United States, people stay up until midnight, throw parties, and watch fireworks displays. While the arrival of the new year is celebrated the world over, every country has its own New Year's traditions. In some countries and cultures New Year's isn't even celebrated on January 1! Whichever day it is, it is indeed special and in just about every country, it is celebrated with fireworks. Read on to learn more about how different countries celebrate the holiday.

Belgium

In Belgium children write letters to their parents. They decorate the cards with cherubs, angels and roses and make them colorful. They then read the cards aloud to their parents.

Spain

In Spain it is traditional to eat twelve grapes with each stroke of the clock at midnight. This ritual began in 1895 when some clever grape growers decided it would be a great way to use up their harvest surplus. Most families enjoy a big late night dinner before going out to celebrate.

Greece



As is true in many cultures, the Greek people use foods as symbols in holiday traditions. Greeks hang onions on their doors on New Year's Eve as a symbol of a new beginning. The pomegranate fruit is used too. It is a symbol of good luck and prosperity. Greeks commonly break one on their doorstep before entering their houses on New Year's Day. In many parts of Greece a special bread or cake is served. It contains a hidden coin that is said to bring good luck to the recipient. On New Year's morning, parents tap their children on the head to wake them before going to church.

Japan

On New Year's Eve in Japan, bells are rung 108 times in Buddhist temples to welcome Toshigami, the New Year's God. The Japanese also clean their homes. They send cards to friends and family to say thanks and to wish them a Happy New Year, in the same way that people in other parts of the world send cards at Christmas.

Denmark

A special dessert is eaten in Denmark on New Year's Eve. It is tall and cone shaped and is decorated with flags and firecrackers. Many people gather in Copenhagen to watch the Royal Guard parade in their bright red uniforms and celebrate when the town hall clock strikes midnight. On New Year's Day some Danish people throw dishes on others' doorsteps. It is thought that this will bring them many friends in the year ahead.

South Africa

Since it is warm in the southern hemisphere on January 1, many South Africans celebrate New Year's outside. As in most countries around the world, people enjoy fireworks displays at midnight. Up to 80,000 people have gathered at the foot of famous Table Mountain, which overlooks the city of Cape Town, to welcome the new year.



If you could travel to any of these countries to celebrate the new year, which one would you choose? Use details from the text to support your answer.



New Year's in My Family

List three things your family does on New Year's Eve or day. Or, list things that you enjoy about New Year's.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Put each of the items on the list into a sentence. Then add a detail sentence that tells a little more about it.

First Sentence: _____

Detail Sentence: _____

First Sentence: _____

Detail Sentence: _____

SAMPLE



First Sentence: _____

Detail Sentence: _____

On the next page, write a paragraph using the sentences above. Remember to include a topic sentence to let the reader know what to expect and a closing sentence to recap or sum-up your thoughts.

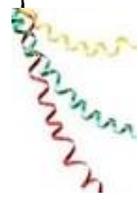
An example **topic sentence** might be, "My family has a lot of fun celebrating New Year's."

Your topic sentence: _____

An example **closing sentence** might be, "Celebrating New Year's is one of my family's many holiday traditions."

Your closing sentence: _____

When you are finished, make an illustration to accompany your paragraph.





Dig Into : Informational Text

Name _____ Date: _____

The title of this article is: _____.

The author's name is: _____.

I think this article is going to be about _____.



As you read, list any unknown or unusual words here:

pg.# _____ pg.# _____

pg.# _____ pg.# _____

pg.# _____ pg.# _____

pg.# _____ pg.# _____



After reading the article, I have decided that the main ideas are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Choose two of the words you recorded. Using the context of the sentence or article, write what you think they mean in the spaces below.



I think _____
might mean _____

or have something to do with
_____.

I think _____
might mean _____

or have something to do with
_____.

Find out exactly what the words mean and record the information in the spaces below. You may copy the definition, paraphrase it, or find a synonym for it and record that.



means _____

I found that in:
____ a dictionary
____ an online resource

means _____

I found that in:
____ a dictionary
____ an online resource

SAMPLE