

# Chinese New Year

## YEAR OF THE RAT

### LEARN IT

The Chinese New Year is also known as the Spring Festival marking the end of the coldest days. Just like the American New Year, people are recognizing new beginnings and fresh starts. Historically, in a culture where the predominant profession is farming, a good planting and harvest is prayed for. While the holiday follows the lunar calendar, it can be held anywhere between January 21<sup>st</sup> to February 19<sup>th</sup>.

### SNACK IT

In Southern China, especially Hong Kong and other Cantonese speaking regions, the Kumquat is a popular fruit where the golden rich color represents wealth and fortune. Not only are these delicious fruits meaningful, they pack a nutritional punch. They are loaded with antioxidants and Vitamin C. Don't have a Kumquat in your local grocery? Try a tangerine or mandarin orange which are popular for the same reasons.

### READ IT

Share these favorite Chinese New Year selections during circle time to learn more about the holiday.

*Bringing in the New Year* by Grace Lin

*The Dancing Dragon* by Marcia K Vaughan

*Dragon Dance* by Joan Holub

*Lanterns and Firecrackers* by Jonny Zucker

*A New Year's Reunion* by Yu Li-Qiong

### YEAR OF THE RAT

2020 is known as the Year of the Rat. While the rat is not considered favorable by most, it actually ranks first on the Chinese Zodiac signs. The legend is that the Jade Emperor determined the order of Zodiac signs based on their arrival to his party. Somehow the Rat tricked the Ox into giving him a ride to the party and just as they arrived, Rat jumped off and rushed in ahead of Ox becoming the first to arrive. Rat shows characteristics of spirit, wit, alertness, delicacy, flexibility and vitality.

### PLAY IT

#### Chinese New Year Zodiac Signs

**Charades** There are twelve Zodiac signs for the Chinese culture. Have children split into groups and have them act out each one and guess what they are. Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, Pig

### SING IT

#### Chinese Dragon Song (Sung to 'Frere Jacques')

Chinese dragon, Chinese dragon,  
Breathing fire, breathing fire...

Happy, happy new year,  
Happy, happy new year.

Gung Hay Fat Choy,  
Gung Hay Fat Choy.

Gung Hay Fat Choy means ...

'Best wishes and Congratulations.  
Have a prosperous and good year.'



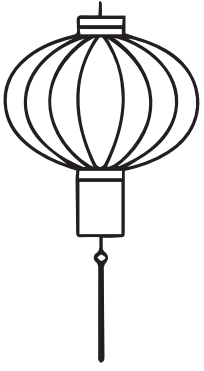
### CRAFT IT

The Bolang Gu, a pellet drum, is a traditional Chinese instrument. Have kids make one by first painting the outside of two paper plates red and gold, with decorations as they choose. Once the paint is dry, attach a dowel rod on the inside of the plate long enough to extend about 6 inches out one end. Tie two bells each onto a 4" string and tape that on the inside too. Staple the other plate on top, sandwiching the dowel rod and strings. To make your drum work, roll the dowel rod in between your hands and the bells will begin to rhythmically hit the plate making music.



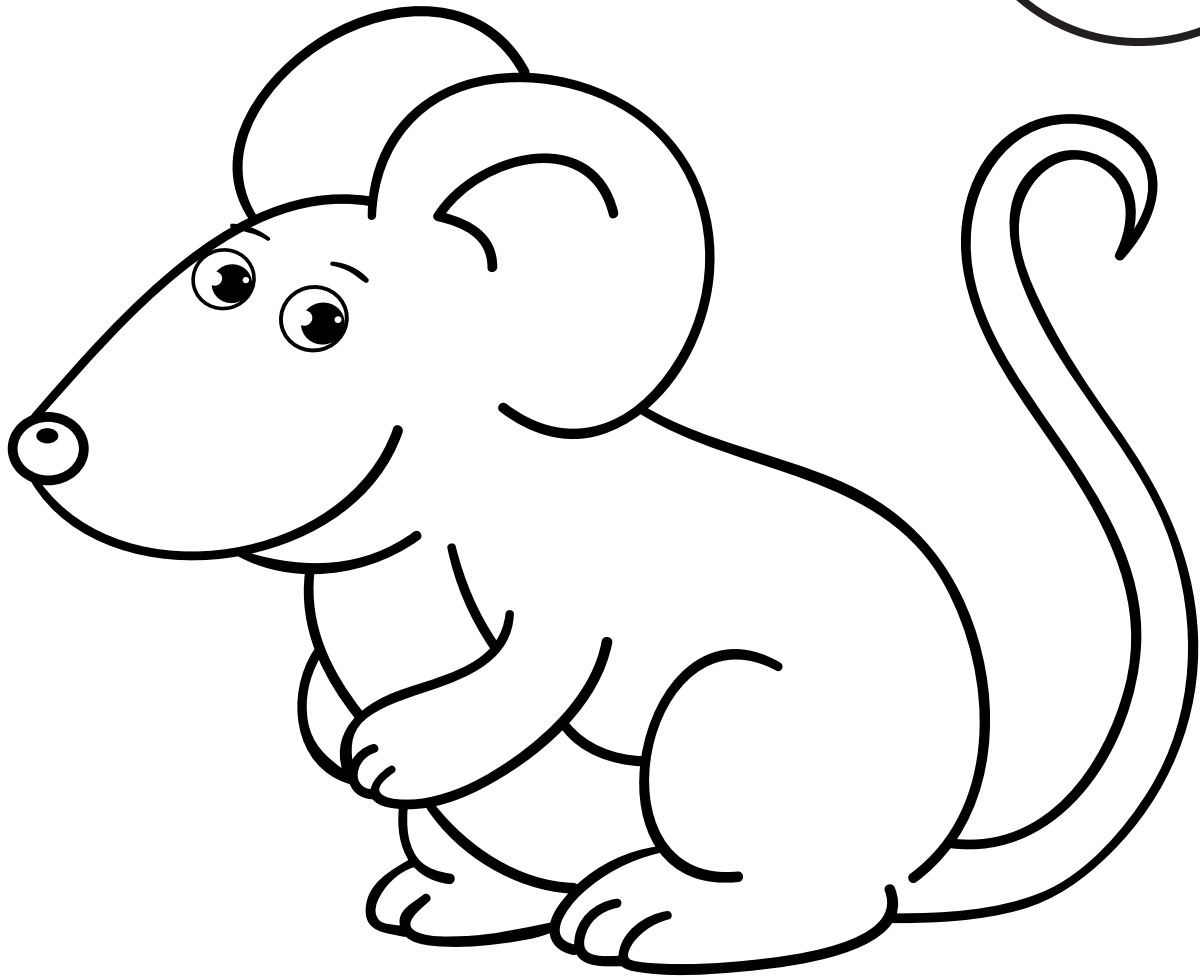
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# Year of the Rat

COLOR ME and learn to say Happy New Year in Chinese.



## Happy New Year

# 新年快乐

Xin nián kuài lè!