

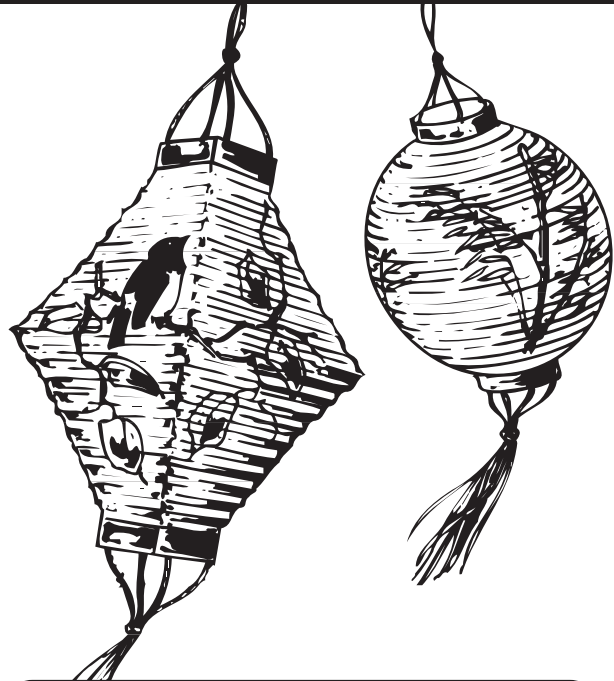
CHINESE LANTERN FESTIVAL

The **Lantern Festival** takes place 15 days after the start of Chinese New Year and marks the end of the New Year celebrations.

There are many stories about how the festival first began. Some people believe that a young girl who worked for Emperor Ming Huang tricked the Emperor into having a great festival so she could go and visit her family. The Emperor enjoyed the festival so much that he made it a yearly event. He built 30 huge lantern towers in the shape of different animals like the tiger, leopard and dragon.

The festival was also thought to have been started to celebrate the start of the better weather after the cold and dark days of winter. Another belief is that the lanterns were able to guide spirits back to the spirit world.

Today people hang lanterns everywhere to light the way to a brighter future. Children try to have the most original lanterns which are often in the shape of birds, fish or animals.



Things to Do: Make a Chinese Lantern.

You will need an A3 sheet of paper, some crayons, markers or coloured pencils, a pair of scissors and a stapler or glue stick.

- 1) **Decorate your piece of paper. Write Happy Chinese New Year on it and draw a dragon, fish or some birds.**
- 2) **Fold your piece of paper in half longways and make diagonal cuts along the fold about 4cm apart and stopping around 4cm from the edge of the paper.**
- 3) **Open out your sheet of paper and curve it round into a circle shape with the cuts going top to bottom. Staple or glue the edges together.**
- 4) **Cut a strip of paper 4cm wide and 21cm long to make a lantern handle. Staple or glue it to opposite sides on the top of the lantern.**
- 5) **Display your lanterns by hanging them around the class.**

