

CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Lesson Plan

Family Fables

Lesson Plan for *Lunar New Year*
Grade 3

Objective

To help students explore the origin story of Lunar New Year using a text and a video, and to create an origin story for a tradition of their own.

Things Needed

- *Lunar New Year* book
- Access to the “Lunar New Year” web page on the Pop! website:
<https://popbooksonline.com/cultural-celebrations/lunar-new-year>
- Paper and pencils

Before the Activity

Read *Lunar New Year* out loud to students. Then open the “Lunar New Year” web page on the Pop! website and select the “Explore Links” tab. Click on the link for the PBS Kids video called “Chinese New Year.” This video can also be found here:
<https://tpt.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/68938b4e-1e68-4727-8f2d-cc341ed93b11/chinese-new-year-all-about-the-holidays/#.XqcG5GhKiUI>

Activity

Play the “Chinese New Year” video for students to watch. Both the book and the video tell the story of Nian, an ancient Chinese monster. Ask students the following questions:

- What did Nian do during the Lunar New Year? (Answer: It attacked villages. It ate crops and livestock.)
- What was Nian afraid of? (Answer: It was afraid of loud noises, fire, and the color red.)
- How did the villagers scare Nian away? (Answer: Villagers wore red and hung red lanterns and banners on their homes. They clanged cymbals and lit firecrackers.)



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This legend about Nian is said to be the beginning of the Lunar New Year traditions that people still celebrate today. Ask students to think about some of the traditions their families do each year. Students should write a story explaining how one tradition started. This story does not have to be realistic. But it should include the actions that their family does each year and a possible reason explaining them. For example, if some students dye eggs bright colors to celebrate Easter, they could write a story explaining how one year, all the birds left the town where the family lived because it had no flowers. So, the family painted the eggs bright colors and put them outside to trick the birds into thinking the eggs were flowers. The birds came back, and the family has done the same thing ever since. (Note: If students have trouble thinking of their own traditions, they can come up with an alternate story for the traditions of Lunar New Year.)

Allow students time to write and imagine their stories. Then invite a few volunteers to read their stories aloud to the class.

Evaluation

Could students recall the details about Nian's story from the video and book? Could they use it as an example to write their own story explaining the origins of a personal tradition?

Standards

This lesson plan may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational texts, grade 3 (RI 3.1), and writing standards, grade 3 (W 3.3).

