

# Chinese New Year

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## Shared reading

Shared reading provides students with opportunities to behave like readers and to engage in rich conversations about texts that they are initially not able to read for themselves. It encourages enthusiasm for reading, builds knowledge, strengthens comprehension, and fosters understanding of the features of a wide variety of texts (including narrative, poetry, and non-fiction).

Shared reading involves multiple readings of a text, led by the teacher, with increasing interaction and participation by students. After many shared reading sessions, students become increasingly independent in reading the small books that accompany the big books.

## Overview

This book follows Murphy and his family as they prepare for and celebrate Chinese New Year. It describes significant aspects of the fifteen days of celebrations, including decorations, clothing, food, and special events. While this book has special significance for Chinese students, it also provides opportunities for all students to make connections to their own cultural understandings about families and celebrations, particularly New Year celebrations.

There is an audio version of the text as an MP3 file at [www.readytoread.tki.org.nz](http://www.readytoread.tki.org.nz)

## Cross-curriculum links

Social sciences: (level 1, social studies) – Understand how the cultures of people in New Zealand are expressed in their daily lives.

(level 2, social studies) – Understand how cultural practices reflect and express people’s customs, traditions, and values.

## Related texts

- Texts about cultural celebrations: *Diwali*, *Matariki Breakfast* (shared); *White Sunday in Sāmoa* (Turquoise 2); *Matariki* (Gold 2)
- Stories with Chinese content: *Let’s See Ling Lee* (Blue 2); *Two Tiger Tales* (Purple 1); “Chang-O and the Moon” (*JJ 56*); “The Race” (a play – SJ L2, May 2017)
- Stories about special family events: *Getting Ready for the Visitors* (Red 3); *Simi Helps* (Yellow 3); *Grandpa’s Birthday* (Blue 1); *Helping at the Marae* (Blue 2); *Te Pēpi Hou*, *White Sunday in Sāmoa* (Turquoise 2); *A Gift for Auntie Ngā* (Gold 1)

## Text characteristics

Unlike guided texts, shared reading texts are not levelled and may be used with a wide range of students.




The structure of the text as a report with an introduction (describing what Chinese New Year is), a series of examples of the family preparing for and celebrating New Year, and a conclusion (highlighting some special aspects)

Most content explicitly stated but also some implicit content that requires students to make predictions and inferences

Visual language features such as subheadings, text boxes, bold text for topic words, pronunciation guides, labelled photographs, a contents page, and an index

Ideas and information organised in paragraphs and several lines of text on every page

Some settings and contexts that may be outside the students’ prior knowledge but can easily be related to it

<p><b>Happy New Year!</b></p> <p>At last, it is midnight. The New Year has arrived! Everyone says, “<b>Gong Xi Fa Cai</b>” Happy New Year!”</p>  <p>Mum brings out the dumplings for everyone to eat. Yum!</p> <p><b>Gong Xi Fa Cai</b> (gong see fah tsai)</p>	<p><b>Family and friends</b></p> <p>In the morning, Murphy’s family talk to family members who are in China. They wish each other Happy New Year.</p>  <p>Over the next few days, Murphy’s family will visit their friends to say “Gong Xi Fa Cai!”</p> <p>Wai Po gives Murphy a red envelope with money inside. This is called <b>hong bao</b>. Murphy says, “Thank you, Wai Po.”</p>  <p><b>hong bao</b> (hong bow)</p>
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Shifts in time and place

A variety of sentence structures, including sentences with indicators of time (for example, “Soon”, “for fifteen days”, “In the week before”, “On New Year’s Day”, “After dinner”, “until midnight”, “Over the next few days”, “Now”) to clarify the sequence of events

Topic words including words in Mandarin (“Wai Po”, “Gong Xi Fa Cai”, “hong bao”, “tang yuan”) and in English (for example, “Chinese New Year”, “celebrate”, “good fortune”, “decorations”, “banner”, “scroll”, “dumplings”, “reunion dinner”, “travel”, “midnight”, “family members”, “China”, “envelope”, “city”, “parade”, “dragon dancers”, “Lantern Festival”, “riddles”, “guess”, “answers”, “sweet rice balls”) that are strongly supported by the context, definitions or explanations, the sentence structure, and/or by photographs and other visual language features

## Reading purposes and learning goals

(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond to, and think critically” about texts?)

**Select from and adapt** the suggestions in this teacher support material according to your students’ strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

Each reading purpose is accompanied by learning goals. The learning goals are the sorts of behaviours that you want your students to demonstrate after multiple readings of this text and when reading other texts.

Often the first reading of a shared text will be with the whole class. The focus is on making meaning. The teacher leads the reading (and invites students to join in as they feel confident) so they can focus on responding to the content and thinking about the theme or main idea. Deeper understanding of ideas and exploration of language and other text features can be developed over subsequent readings.

### A suggested purpose for the initial reading

(What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?)

To find out about Chinese New Year

Note: the students can explore the purpose and goals further in subsequent readings.

### Possible learning goals

During the first reading, the students can:

- **make connections** to their own experiences of family celebrations, including new year celebrations
- **ask questions** as they read and look for possible answers
- identify what Murphy and his family do to prepare for and celebrate Chinese New Year (**summarise**).

### Introducing the story

- Before using this book with your students, you could listen to the audio version to familiarise yourself with the pronunciation of the words in Chinese Mandarin. Also note that there is language information for teachers on the inside front cover.
- A few days before introducing this book, you could build students’ knowledge by looking at pictures together or by viewing a clip on YouTube covering a Chinese New Year celebration in New Zealand.

For example, part of this clip:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_3PslvUBHRO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3PslvUBHRO) shows a family preparing food and giving hong bao, and this clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y14vALog0RE> shows a parade in Auckland.

- Read the title and the names of the author and photographer. Use the cover photographs to draw out what the students know about Chinese New Year.
- Clarify that this is a non-fiction text and briefly discuss the sorts of features the students might expect to see (for example, photographs, a contents page, headings).
- Turn to the contents page and discuss its purpose. Read through the list of headings, making connections to the previous discussion. You could also briefly discuss what an index is and perhaps have a quick look at page 17 if this is new to the students.
- Encourage the students to share any questions they have about Chinese New Year. Support them in asking questions by modelling some of your own. *Is there special food for Chinese New Year? What is a reunion dinner?* You could record the students’ questions to refer to during the reading.
- Share the purpose for reading. (Note that this may change during the reading as the students discover further information.)

### Reading and discussing the book

- Adapt the following suggestions according to the interests, prior knowledge, and experiences of your students, including their experiences of reading non-fiction. Allow plenty of time for discussion. You may want to spread the first reading over more than one session.
- Use a pointer to help the students track the print as you read. Reread the first heading on the contents page (“Waiting for New Year”) and, if necessary, support the students to find out which page it is on. Turn to page 2 and prompt the students to notice that this has the same heading.
- Page 2 – Discuss the photograph. *What is the boy doing?* (You could point out Murphy’s name above the calendar.) Expect the students to infer that Murphy is with his father. Prompt them to make connections to any experiences they have of marking special days on a calendar (and of “waiting and waiting”). Help them to notice that this New Year falls in February. After reading the page, briefly review what this page says about why Chinese New Year is “a very special time”. If necessary, explain what “good fortune” means.
- Before reading page 3, you may want to change the reading purpose to a more specific focus on how Murphy’s family celebrates Chinese New Year.

- Page 3 – Read the heading. *What do these photos show you about what the family does to get ready?* (Prompt the students to infer that the woman helping Murphy with the vacuuming is his mother.) Encourage the students to make connections to their own experiences. After reading the page, ask them if they have found any answers to their questions or thought of any new ones.
- Pages 4 and 5 – Continue to read and discuss the information in the text and photographs, making connections to the students’ experiences and encouraging them to ask questions. Some students may notice the link to the previous page in the references to good luck. Draw attention to Murphy taking a photo (and the caption). *What might he do with the photo?* Use the photographs on page 5 to help clarify the meanings of “banner” and “scroll”.
- Page 6 – Remind the students of the previous heading (Getting ready) and encourage them to speculate about what Mum is doing and who the new character might be. As you read the page, draw attention to the bold print for Wai Po and the accompanying definition. Explain the connection between the coloured shading for this term and the pronunciation guide at the bottom of the page.
- Pages 7 to 9 – Draw attention to the new heading and point out the reference to the word “reunion” on page 7 (in bold) and its definition. As you read these pages, encourage the students to make connections to their own experiences of meeting up with extended family on special occasions, of special food, and perhaps, of staying up late.
- Pages 10 and 11 – Support the students in using the pronunciation guides on these two pages and enjoy saying these phrases together. Check if they have thought of any new questions that they would like to find answers to and note these down. (For example, *Why did Wai Po give Murphy a red envelope?*)
- Pages 12 to 15 – Encourage the students to share any experiences of a Chinese New Year parade (especially the dragon dancers), Chinese lanterns, the Lantern Festival, or tang yuan. If necessary, explain what a riddle is. Draw attention on page 15 to Murphy (again) taking photos.
- Page 16 – This page reveals why Murphy has been taking photos. Encourage the students to think critically: *Why do you think Murphy made this book? What will Wai Po say when she shows it to family in China?*
- Draw attention to the index on the inside back cover. Explain that an index lists some of the main topics in the book and shows the pages where you can find information about them. Either now or during a subsequent reading, you could demonstrate how this works.

- Refer to the questions that students asked before or during the reading and discuss any answers they have found. Identify questions the students would like to find out more about.
- Together, look back through the book to orally summarise what Murphy’s family did to get ready for and celebrate New Year. The students could draw and write about one aspect of Murphy’s New Year that they particularly liked.

## Subsequent readings

You can return to this text many times to revisit the initial reading purpose or explore different purposes. Subsequent readings of the big book may be with a group of students who have similar learning needs rather than with the whole class. **Select from and adapt** the following suggestions.

### Suggested reading purpose

To find out more about Chinese New Year and how it is celebrated in New Zealand.

To think about why Chinese New Year is special for Murphy and his family.

### Learning goals

Over a number of sessions, the students can:

- identify what Murphy and his family do to prepare for and celebrate Chinese New Year (**summarise**)
- **make connections** to their own experiences of New Year celebrations
- use information in the text and illustrations to **make inferences** about why Chinese New Year is special for Murphy and his family
- **identify and discuss some main ideas** about celebrations.

Choose one of the suggestions below for each rereading of the book.

- Have the students identify what Murphy does. You could record their findings on a chart like the one below. Then ask the students to find clues in the text and illustrations that show how Murphy feels about these activities. The students could then create their own simple graphic organiser about one or two things Murphy does and how he feels about them.

What Murphy does	How Murphy feels	Why we think this
Crosses off the calendar each day	Excited	He “is waiting and waiting”.
Helps to clean and decorate the house	Looking forward to the New Year	He cleans and tidies to make room for good luck.
Eats special food	Happy	He’s smiling, and “everyone enjoys the delicious food”.

- Ask the students to share their own experiences of New Year celebrations and discuss how they are the same as (or different from) Murphy’s experiences. They could draw and write about one aspect that is the same as their experience of New Year.

Use sentence starters to scaffold English language learners, for example:

My family celebrate \_\_\_\_\_ .  
When we celebrate \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
we \_\_\_\_\_ .

- Encourage the students to think, pair, and share about what they found most interesting or exciting about Murphy and his family’s experience of Chinese New Year.
- Have the students look closely at page 16 and think, pair, and share their opinions about why Murphy chose the photos he did for Wai Po’s scrapbook.
- Support the students in identifying some main ideas about special celebrations (such as Chinese New Year, Christmas, Easter, Diwali, Matariki, or Eid al-Fitr). Create a chart with headings such as: special clothes, family gatherings, presents, food, time of year, lights and decorations. Together, fill in the chart for these aspects of Chinese New Year, summarising information from the book. (You could use this as an opportunity to demonstrate how to use the contents page or the index to find specific information.) Then add information under each heading about another celebration that is familiar to students and discuss the similarities and differences. You could take this activity in several directions: adding information about other celebrations; focusing on just one or two aspects across celebrations, for example, special food or decorations; or creating a class mural of students’ art work (with captions added) about their own experiences.
- Ask the students to identify one or two ways in which the other people in Murphy’s family help with the celebration. The students could make connections to their own experiences by drawing and writing about what they or someone else in their family does for a similar occasion.
- Refer to the questions the students asked before or during the reading. Discuss how to find answers to any unanswered questions, for example, locating information in other books (possibly an opportunity to use contents or index pages), watching clips online of other Chinese New Year celebrations, or talking to people in the school community who celebrate Chinese New Year.

## Suggested reading purpose

To look at some of the ways this book helps us understand the information about Chinese New Year

## Learning goals

Over a number of sessions, the students can build their understanding of non-fiction text features and how they help the reader. For example, they can:

- **explore** how the contents page and the index help the reader find information
- **identify** the words in bold print and look for clues about what they mean
- **identify** the words that are in coloured boxes and the information about how to say those words
- **explore** how the photographs provide extra information
- use the headings to help identify and **summarise** main points
- **notice** words and phrases that explain the sequence of events.

Choose one of the suggestions below for each rereading of the book.

- Discuss the purpose of the contents and index pages. Support the students to find the relevant page number for a heading on the contents page or key words on the index page. They can then turn to the relevant page number(s).
- Support the students to notice and explore the extra information provided in the photographs (for example, the calendar photo on page 2 that shows Chinese New Year is in February; the photo on page 3 that shows what the boys’ new shirts look like; the photos on page 5 that show what the special decorations, especially the “banner” and “scroll”, look like; and the inset photos – and captions – on pages 4 and 12 that show us what else Murphy is doing).
- As you read the text, ask the students to identify the words in bold print and help them find their definitions. Draw attention to the placement of the definitions next to the words in bold print, the use of parentheses, and the statement “This is called” (on page 11), which all help to show that they are explaining what the words mean. You and the students could create a glossary for other interest words from the book.



- Identify the words in coloured boxes (on pages 6, 10, 11, and 15) and match them to their pronunciation guides at the bottom of the page. Practise saying the words. If necessary, clarify the different functions of bold print (which shows that the meaning of the word is explained) and a pronunciation guide (which shows how to say a word).
- Reread the book with a focus on how the text features help the reader. Build and display a chart of the features and encourage the students to find examples of these features in other non-fiction texts. For example:

<b>Non-fiction book feature</b>	<b>How it helps us</b>
Contents page	Tells us what information is in the book and what page it is on
Headings	Tell us what the section is about
Words in bold print	Show that the word is important and that it is explained in the book
Words in coloured shapes (pronunciation guide)	Help us to say words or phrases correctly
Photographs	Show us what things look like
Captions and labels	Help us understand what is in a picture or photo