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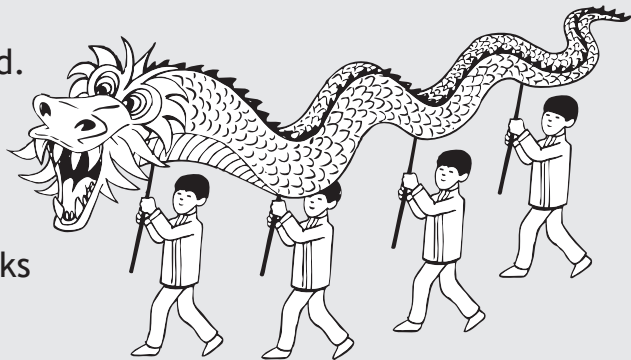
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# Chinese New Year

## The First Day of the Chinese Calendar— Late January or Early February

Whoa, look out for the dancing dragon! It's Chinese New Year! Chinese New Year marks the beginning of a brand new year on the Chinese calendar. During this holiday, people say goodbye to the old and hello to the new. They wish for good luck in the coming year. They clean their homes and may even get new haircuts. Chinese New Year lasts for 15 days, and on each day, a different festival is celebrated.

During this special holiday, people visit with friends and family, enjoy traditional foods, and give gifts of money. They celebrate with fireworks and festivals that feature loud drum music and lion and dragon dances.



## Summary of Activities

### Reading: Literature

*The Favorite of Fortune and the Child of Ill Luck*—Chinese fairy tale with a story-mapping activity

### Reading: Informational Text

*Lucky Charms*—nonfiction passage with comprehension questions

### Writing

*Good-Luck Charms: Where Do You Stand?*—activity in which students write about whether they believe in the power of good-luck charms

### Speaking & Listening

*Traditional Chinese Music*—Have students listen to recordings of traditional Chinese New Year music. An Internet search will yield several appropriate results.

**Vocabulary:** amulet, artifacts, China, Chinese, fortune, talisman



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Lucky Charms

**Directions:** Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Everybody wants to be lucky. People all over the world wish for good luck. There are lots of different ways that people think they can increase the good luck in their lives. One way is to carry a lucky charm or two.

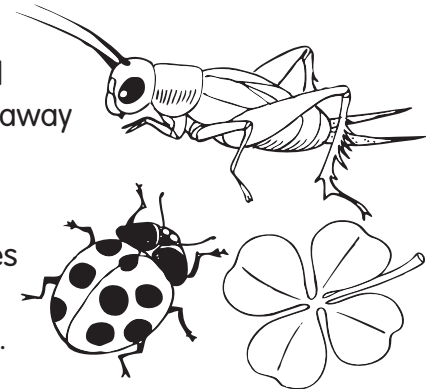
A lucky charm is an item that is supposed to bring you good luck. Lucky charms are also called amulets or talismans. Lucky charms can be plants, animals, or artifacts (things made by humans). People have been using lucky charms for thousands of years.

The ancient Egyptians used to place amulets into the linen wrappings of mummies. They were thought to give the deceased some good luck in the afterlife. One of the most important amulets that they used was the heart scarab. It was placed over the heart of the mummy.

In Asian countries, like China, crickets are thought to bring good luck. Crickets are thought to be watchdogs. When a cricket stops chirping, it can often be a sign of danger. It is considered very unlucky to kill a cricket, even by accident.

Ladybugs are another insect that people think can bring you good luck. It is said that if one lands on you when you are sick, it will take away your illness.

Legend has it that one of the luckiest things that you can find is a four-leaf clover. Clover is a green plant that is plentiful in many places all over the world. Most of the clover that you find, however, will only have three leaves. Three-leaf clovers are also called shamrocks. Four-leaf clovers are not as common, so if you find one, you are very lucky indeed. The four leaves of the clover stand for faith, hope, love, and luck.



Whether these items can really bring you good luck or not is only a matter of opinion. Luck is not something that can be proven scientifically. Many people will say that believing in the power of lucky charms is just superstition. Then again, there will be others who think the complete opposite.

1. What are artifacts?
  - a. lucky charms
  - b. things made by humans
  - c. talismans
2. On the back of the page, explain why you think a cricket stops chirping when it senses danger.
3. Why is believing in the power of a good-luck charm an opinion?
  - a. It is bad luck to believe otherwise.
  - b. There are too many different kinds of good-luck charms.
  - c. Good luck can't be proven scientifically.

