Chinese New Year
Classroom Activities for Children

Paint Chinese Characters

Activity  Children can practice copying or writing some of the Chinese characters and symbols in this book. The activity leader will model how to paint them.

Materials
• White butcher paper, cut into 1-by-3 foot sections (two or three pieces per child)
• Black, gold, and/or red watercolor or tempera poster paint
• Paintbrushes for each child
• Water for each child

Procedure
1. Read aloud Beyond the Great Mountains.
2. Spend time looking at the illustrations and their corresponding characters.
3. Talk about how the characters look like the things that they mean.
4. Paint a few characters from the book slowly on butcher paper so all of the children can see.
5. Have children paint on the butcher paper as you paint (or copy carefully from the book).
6. Once they have mastered this, put up a new banner with “Gung Hay Fat Choy” written in Chinese characters. See the example to the left. This is a traditional saying for this time of year, meaning something akin to “Best wishes and congratulations for a prosperous new year.”
7. Have children paint their own Gung Hay Fat Choy banner (copying from your banner) on their own pieces of butcher paper.

Visit www.chroniclebooks.com/teacher/ for more information and links!
Lanterns and Lucky Envelopes

**Activity** Make Chinese lanterns (instructions are in the *Ruby’s Wish* teacher’s guide available at www.chroniclebooks.com/teachersguides/). Read *Ruby’s Wish* and *Round Is a Mooncake*. Both books show traditional lanterns.

**Activity** Make lucky red envelopes. Both *Ruby’s Wish* and *Round Is a Mooncake* show how lucky red envelopes are used during this holiday.

The illustrations and text in *Ruby’s Wish* richly document the calligraphy and artwork that was part of a child’s traditional education in China. Children will learn to make lucky red envelopes (*lai see*) similar to the one Ruby receives her lucky money in, decorated with Chinese stamps from the kit, *Chinese Characters: 20 Rubber Stamps*. Instead of money, you can fill them with written messages that say “Gung Hay Fat Choy!” or “Happy New Year!”

**Materials**
- Red construction paper (8½ x 11 inches, at least two for each child)
- *Chinese Characters: 20 Rubber Stamps*
- Extra stamp pads (with black or gold ink) as needed

**Procedure**
1. Read aloud *Ruby’s Wish* and *Round Is a Mooncake* and discuss the meaning of the lucky red envelopes.
2. Have children hold the paper vertically.
3. Have them fold the paper not quite in half, so that 1 inch is left at the top.
4. Children should fold the 1-inch flap over to create an envelope.
5. Glue or tape the sides down, but not the top!
6. Have the children decorate the envelopes with stamps from the *Chinese Characters* stamp kit.
7. Fill them with Happy New Year and Gung Hay Fat Choy messages.
Chinese New Year Greetings

Activity  Children can create bright red New Year’s banners like those in *One Is a Drummer*: “Two are the greetings on our wall ‘Luck’ and ‘Fortune’ for us all.”

Materials
- Red construction paper (cut into squares or diamonds, two or three pieces for each child)
- Black or yellow watercolor or tempera paint as needed
- Paintbrush for each child
- Water for each child

Procedure
1. Read aloud *One Is a Drummer*.
2. Discuss the meaning of Luck and Fortune, and talk about different ways of wishing people good luck and good fortune at the time of the Lunar New Year.
3. Demonstrate painting the Chinese character symbols that represent Luck and Fortune for the children.
4. Hand out the paper to each child, show them how to turn the paper so it looks like a kite or diamond shape, as in the book.
5. Encourage children to practice making the characters with pencil first.
6. Let children paint over the pencil marks with the paint. Encourage them to try as many times as they like.

Have a Parade  Encourage the children to carry their Chinese lanterns or their bright red banners around the classroom. Lead them on a route around the school grounds. Everybody loves a parade!

Decorate your classroom  For a longer banner, attach them to strings and drape them across the room or along a wall.

These lively concept books by Roseanne Thong and illustrated by Grace Lin show that the world around us is filled with things to count and things with different shapes and colors. Many objects are Asian in origin but all are universal in appeal. (Ages 4—8)

Spot illustrations by Grace Lin from *Red Is a Dragon*. 
The Year of the Dog

In addition to banners and wall hangings wishing prosperity and luck, decorations relating to the incoming zodiac animal are also typically displayed at this time of year.

Activity As 2006 is the Year of the Dog, what better activity than to have children draw their own favorite dog. Instruct them to draw a festive New Year’s background environment for their dog. As an alternative, download Grace Lin’s Dalmatian puppy from One Is a Drummer. Print a copy for each child to color and decorate. You can find it here: www.chroniclebooks.com/teacher/

Materials
• Paper and assorted crayons or markers, glitter pens, or any other appropriate art materials you have on hand.

Chinese Culture from Chronicle Books

Books for children
• Beyond the Great Mountains by Ed Young 0-8118-4343-2 • $17.95 HC
• Ruby’s Wish by Shirin Yim Bridges, illustrated by Sophie Blackall 0-8118-3490-5 • $15.95 HC
• The Cable Car and the Dragon by Herb Caen 0-87701-390-X • $12.95 HC 0-8118-1054-2 • $6.95 PB

Books by Roseanne Thong, illustrated by Grace Lin:
• Round Is a Mooncake: A Book of Shapes 0-8118-2676-7 • $14.95 HC
• One Is a Drummer: A Book of Numbers 0-8118-3772-6 • $14.95 HC
• Red Is a Dragon: A Book of Colors 0-8118-3177-9 • $14.95 HC

For Vietnamese New Year celebrations:
• Ten Mice for Tet by Pegi Deitz Shea and Cynthia Weill, illustrated by To Ngoc Trang, embroidered by Pham Viet Dinh 0-8118-3496-4 • $15.95 HC

More Chinese themed books and gifts
• Lucky Cat: He Brings You Good Luck 0-8118-4121-9 • $14.95
• Five-Fold Happiness: Chinese Concepts of Luck, Prosperity, Longevity, Happiness, and Wealth 0-8118-3526-X • $18.95
• Five-Fold Happiness Notecards 0-8118-4371-8 • $13.95
• The Buddha Box 0-8118-1950-7 • $22.95
• The Laughing Buddha Box 0-8118-4558-3 • $14.95
• Chinese Characters: 20 Rubber Stamps 0-8118-2609-0 • $19.95
• Hong Kong Comics Journal 0-8118-4782-9 • $9.95 PB
• Hong Kong Comics 30 Postcards ISBN 0-8118-4784-5 • $8.95
• China Blossoms Journal 0-8118-4982-1 • $10.95
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• Chinese Proverbs 0-8118-3683-5 • $12.95
• The Spirit of the Chinese Character: Gifts from the Heart 0-8118-0142-X • $14.95
• The Nature of Chinese Character: Gifts from the Earth 0-8118-3268-6 • $14.95
• Made in China 0-8118-4202-9 • $14.95
• China Obscura 0-8118-4461-7 • $24.95

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