

SEL Activity

New Year Holidays



grades 3-5



30 minutes

Objectives

- Broaden awareness beyond US public holidays by learning about New Year holidays worldwide.
- Recognize and respect the variety of cultural beliefs and practices.

Essential Questions

- How do people celebrate the New Year holiday in different parts of the world?
- Why is it important to be aware of common cultural beliefs, practices, and differences?

Vocabulary

Holiday: noun; a special day that is celebrated for various reasons, such as commemorating a religious or historical event, expressing gratitude, or simply having fun.

Culture: noun; beliefs, behaviors, and activities that a group of people traditionally practices.

MATERIALS + MEDIA

Poster board (optional)
 Four chart papers (optional)
 New Year Holiday Signs ([PDF](#))
 Worksheet: New Year Holidays ([PDF](#))
 Nowruz: Article ([PDF](#)) | Images ([PDF](#))
 Rosh Hashanah: Article ([PDF](#)) | Images ([PDF](#))
 Gregorian New Year: Article ([PDF](#)) | Images ([PDF](#))
 Lunar New Year: Article ([PDF](#)) | Images ([PDF](#))

SEL CORE COMPETANCIES

Self-Awareness: Examining biases
 Social Awareness: Examining norms
 Relationship skills: Cultural competency

Before you Begin

- (Optional) Use the New Year Holiday Signs ([PDF](#)) and set up four stations (1/holiday).
- (Optional) Set up four chart papers, one for each New Year holiday.
- Print the Worksheet: New Year Holidays ([PDF](#)) (1/student)

Program Connections

This activity is a variation of lesson plans that introduce diversity and inclusion, found in all elementary programs. To learn more, visit our [Elementary Programs](#) page.

THINK • GIVE

Ask: How do people around the world, including here, celebrate the New Year holiday?

Explain: Let's learn about four different New Year holidays: the Gregorian calendar new year; Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year; Nowruz, the Persian new year; and Lunar New Year, celebrated in many East Asian and Southeast Asian countries.

OPTION A:

Arrange four stations in the room, each labeled a different holiday (use New Year Holiday Signs ([PDF](#))). Hand out the Worksheet: New Year Holidays ([PDF](#)) (1/student). Divide the group equally among the four stations. Provide at least two copies of the article and images related to that holiday at each station, depending on the number of students in each group.

Articles and Images:

- Nowruz: Article ([PDF](#)) | Images ([PDF](#))
- Rosh Hashanah: Article ([PDF](#)) | Images ([PDF](#))
- Gregorian New Year: Article ([PDF](#)) | Images ([PDF](#))
- Lunar New Year: Article ([PDF](#)) | Images ([PDF](#))

Students work individually or in pairs, writing five or more facts they learned from the article at their station. When ready, they move to the next station in a counter-clockwise direction.

OPTION B:

Students work in small groups. Assign each group a New Year holiday to research. Prepare four charts, labeling each with a New Year holiday. Provide copies of the article and images for each holiday, considering the number of students in each group. Students research and co-create a chart paper to present what they learned about their assigned New Year holiday.

CONNECT + CLOSE

Discuss:

- What did you find interesting about the New Year holidays? Explain.
- What similarities do New Year holidays share, and why are these important to notice?
- How does learning about other cultures benefit us? What are the consequences of not being aware of other cultures?

ACTION

Explain: In the coming days or weeks, try to learn about an upcoming holiday in the United States or in another culture. If possible, learn about this holiday from someone who observes it or for whom the holiday is a part of their culture.

REFLECTION

Students discuss or journal:

- What holiday did you learn about and from whom did you learn about it?
- How did learning about this holiday affect your relationship with this person?
- What new questions have come up for you after learning about this holiday?