
Key Stage 2: Celebrating China Gallery Session

The final page of these notes can be copied and given to students who you think may need additional support during the workshop or to adult helpers.

Gallery sessions

- All gallery sessions take place in the main rooms of the British Museum and provide an opportunity for students to work with objects on display in the Museum's galleries.
- The sessions last for about 45 minutes and are led by members of the Department of Learning and Audiences. All accompanying teachers and adult helpers must remain with the group throughout the session.
- You will receive information regarding the meeting point for the start of your gallery session when booking in at the Ford Centre for Young Visitors at the beginning of your visit to the Museum.

Before your visit: preparing for your workshop

- Discuss what the students already know about China and how they know this information (e.g. TV, local knowledge, restaurants). Highlight the importance of Chinese New Year and discuss why it falls at a different time of year. Try to find out about where there are local celebrations for Chinese New Year.
- Look at a physical map of China and describe the different environments (desert, mountains etc)
- Key vocabulary includes tradition, ritual, celebration, decoration, motif, ancient, modern. You might like to discuss these words before the session.
- Use the Explore function to search the Museum's collections on-line for objects from China at www.britishmuseum.org

Celebrating China continued

During your visit

- This educator-led session involves a sequence of activities which will enable students to learn about the origins Chinese New Year celebrations. They will use this traditional story as a basis to explore the Chinese section of the Asia gallery, learn about the meanings and symbols on Chinese objects and see how these are a part of contemporary life in China.
- The session provides a chance to discuss, debate and investigate through a mixture of whole group and independent small group activities.
- Rooms with objects relating to the session include:
Room 33: China, India, South Asia and Southeast Asia gallery
Room 33b: Chinese Jade

After your visit: follow-up activities

- Find out about the other traditions that make up the Chinese New Year festival, such as the Kitchen God. Create your own display that describes and illustrates these traditions.
- Use the theme of Dragons and investigate how they are depicted in other cultures, e.g. European and Indian.
- Students can use the *Explore* function on the British Museum website to find pictures from the Chinese collections: www.britishmuseum.org There are two British Museum websites dedicated to exploring Chinese history and culture: www.ancientchina.co.uk - for example explore Chinese writing www.earlyimperialchina.co.uk – for example take the theme of Food and Drink

Curriculum links

- **National Curriculum for Citizenship at KS2:** Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people: *Pupils should be taught to think about the lives of people living in other places and times, and people with different values and customs.*
- **National Curriculum for Art and Design at KS2:** Exploring the art, craft and design of different cultures.
- **National Curriculum for Religious Education at KS2:** The role of festivals.

In this workshop you will learn about:

- the origins of the New Year festival in China and how it is celebrated
- how symbols and images linked with festivals can be seen on objects throughout China's history.

Key words

celebration

festival

symbol

continuity

object

ancient and modern

tradition

What do we know about China?

- You will consider what is your idea of China and if this is accurate or not.

The origins of New Year

- You will hear the ancient story about the dragon, Nian, and how this explains the origins of the traditions of the Chinese New Year festival nowadays.
- You will look for objects in the gallery which show these, such as dragons and lanterns.

Symbols ancient and modern

- You will discover how the animals were chosen which give their names to the years in China.
- You will see how these animals have been depicted on objects for thousands of years and are still used nowadays.