

# *Lunar New Year – February 12, 2021*

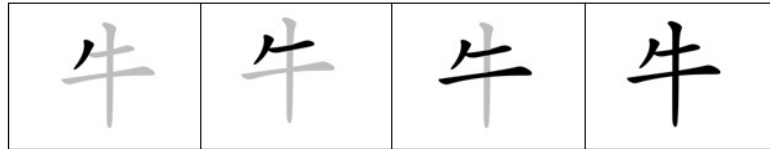
## Here are eight facts about the Lunar New Year

- 1) Chinese New Year is also referred to as the Lunar New Year.** Lunar New Year is celebrated by many countries, including China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia. Lunar New Year marks the first new moon of the lunisolar calendar, which is determined by the cycles of the moon and sun. This means that the date is always different each year (sometime between Jan 21-Feb 20).
- 2) The Chinese New Year is celebrated in 12-year cycles, with each year of the cycle represented by a different animal. 2021 is the Year of the Ox.** The Ox symbolizes such character traits as diligence, dependability, persistence, loyalty, honesty, and patience.
- 3) “Happy New Year” is pronounced differently in Mandarin and Cantonese.** The 2 dialects have the same written language, but differ in pronunciation. The traditional Chinese New Year greeting is *“Congratulations and hope you get rich.”* In Mandarin it’s *“Gong Xi Fa Cai,”* while in Cantonese it’s *“Gung Hay Fat Choy.”*
- 4) The most common Chinese New Year gifts are red envelopes.** Red envelopes typically contain money, and are gifted by older members of the family to their younger relatives.
- 5) There are specific foods in each country that are believed to bring good fortune.** Here are some examples:
  - Chinese: Fish (sounds similar to word for ‘leftover’ - symbolic for an abundance of food/wealth), radish cake (luo bo gao), long noodles (represent longevity), dumplings (resemble gold ingots), glutinous rice balls (tang yuan), spring rolls, sticky rice cakes (niangao), oranges/tangerines, prosperity cake (fagao)
  - Korean: Rice cake soup (tteokguk), dumpling soup (manduguk)
  - Vietnamese: Sticky rice cakes (bánh chưng) made with mung beans and pork and steamed in banana leaves
- 6) The origin of Chinese New Year celebrations is based on the legend of Nian, a beast that appeared at the end of each year and terrified villagers.** The villagers discovered that Nian feared the color red. Thus, red has become a lucky color, and during New Year festivities, streets, businesses, and houses are decorated with red lanterns, banners, etc. The villagers also discovered that the explosive sound created by burning dry bamboo scared Nian away. Thus, it became a tradition to set off firecrackers at midnight on New Year’s Eve to bring good luck for the new year.
- 7) Lion and dragon dances are performed in Lunar New Year parades all over the world!** Both dragons and lions are mythical, spectacularly-colored creatures, which bring good luck. Dragon dances are usually performed by 9 people holding up the dragon with poles who make the dragon move in a flowing motion, usually chasing a pearl. Lion dances are performed by martial artists, with 1 person acting as the head and front legs and a 2<sup>nd</sup> person acting as the tail and rear legs. Performed to the beat of a drum, gongs and cymbals, the 2 dancers jump and roll in unison, and perform many difficult acrobatic moves as they search for red envelopes containing money.
- 8) Chinese New Year festivities last for 15 days!** Celebrations begin with the first new moon of the lunar calendar and ends on the first full moon of the lunar calendar, 15 days later. This year, the Chinese New Year ends on Feb 26, with a Lantern Festival and beautifully-colored lanterns, lion and dragon dances, and fireworks.

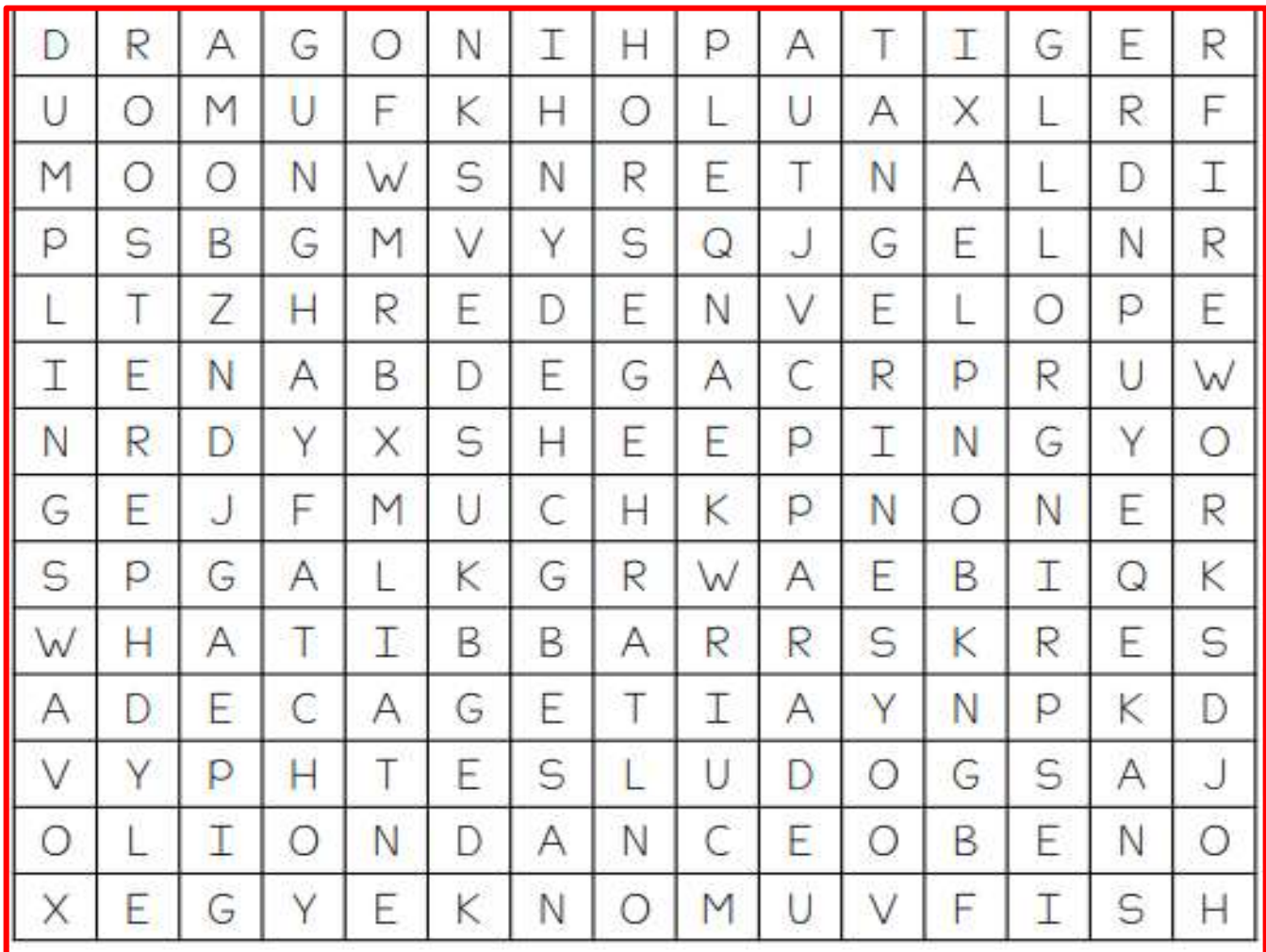
## *Chinese Calligraphy*

The Chinese character is derived from the pictogram of an ox . Stroke order for the most part always goes from left to right, top to bottom. Also, generally, when a horizontal and vertical line cross, the horizontal lines are written first.

NOTE: A great resource for stroke order rules: <https://www.writtenchinese.com/chinese-character-stroke-order-rules/>



## *Chinese New Year - Word Search*



Ox	Gung Hay Fat Choy	Dragon	Snake	Sheep
Pig	Parade	Rat	Monkey	Tiger
Rooster	Horse	Spring Roll	Dumplings	Lanterns
Lion Dance	Rabbit	Fireworks	Red Envelope	Tangerines