

New Year Celebrations in the USA and Around the World

Sarah E. Montgomery and Erica M. Christie

This Pullout provides further details and Handouts for Lesson 2 and Lesson 3 in the preceding article by the same authors. To prepare for Lesson 2, set up five centers in the classroom through which students can rotate in small groups.

Center 1: The Times Square Ball Drop

Students compare and contrast celebrations in Times Square in New York City from 1904 to today, noting the origins of the ball dropping and how technology has changed the celebration over time. They use primary resources, online videos, and websites.

Key resources for this lesson include:

History of New Year's Eve in Times Square, www.timessquarenyc.org/nye/nye_history.html. This website provides historical information, photographs, and an interactive timeline about the iconic ball drop and celebrations in Times Square.

Center 2: Local Celebrations

Students examine videos of local celebrations across the country (Key West, Boston, New Orleans, etc.) to gain insight into how they reflect local geography, climate, and culture.

Key resources include:

History Channel, www.history.com/topics/new-years. This website offers short videos and readings about New Year's celebrations and traditions in the United States and abroad.

Family Culture-Lunar New Year, www.familyculture.com/holidays/lunar_new_year.htm. This website offers kid-friendly information about Lunar New Year celebrations in Asia, including the Chinese New Year, Solnal in Korea, and Tet in Vietnam.

Father Time's Net, www.fathertimes.net/ Based in Australia, this website provides links to information about New Year's traditions, recipes, songs, and games in many different countries around the world.

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Center 3: Fireworks around the World

Students view online video clips of fireworks from cities such as Taipei, Sydney, and Rio de Janeiro, locating the city and specific landmarks on a world map, and noting the time zone for each city.

Key resources include:

news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8436016.stm

Countdown to New Year, www.timeanddate.com/counters. This webpage counts down the days, hours, minutes, and seconds until the next New Year. See other main menu items as well: Time Zones, Sun & Moon, etc.

Center 4: Auld Lang Syne

Students discuss the meaning of the lyrics to *Auld Lang Syne* by listening to and decoding the song. (HANDOUT A, page P2)

Center 5: Symbols of Time Passing

Students analyze the image of "Father Time and Baby New Year," discussing the meaning and symbolism of the picture, and suggesting alternative ways to symbolize endings and beginnings. (HANDOUT B, page P3)

After students cycle through the centers, the class reconvenes to draw conclusions about the larger meanings of New Year's celebrations and symbols. In pairs, students then create their own song, symbol, or celebration that reflects this larger meaning.

Lesson 3 (described in the previous article) involves students discussing and then stating personal resolutions that aim at improving the community, not just self-improvement. (HANDOUT C, page P4)

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A Popular New Year's Eve Song: *Auld Lang Syne*

Directions: Examine the lyrics (right) and answer the questions that follow.

This is a song adapted from a poem by the Scottish poet, Robert Burns (1759-1796 C.E.)

The first verse is the best known, and it is shown here. A performance this song can be viewed at Youtube, www.youtube.com/watch?v=acxnmaVTIZA

*Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!**

*Chorus:
For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne.
We'll take a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.*

* "Auld lang syne" means "Long, long ago" or "Old long since" in the Scottish language

What does the song say about "auld acquaintances"?

What do you think a "cup o'kindness" means?

Why do you think we sing this song as the old year changes into a new one?

How much thought should we give the past as we greet the New Year?

How do you think a Scottish song became an American New Year's tradition?

Where is Scotland on the globe?

Give an example from your life that connects to the song.

Source: www.carols.org.uk/auld_lang_syne_song.htm

A Popular New Year's Eve Cartoon: Father Time and Baby New Year

Who are the two figures in this picture?

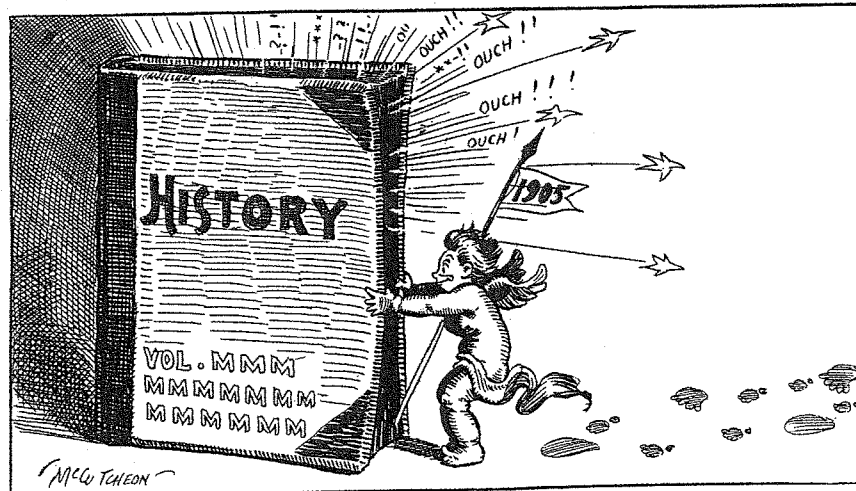
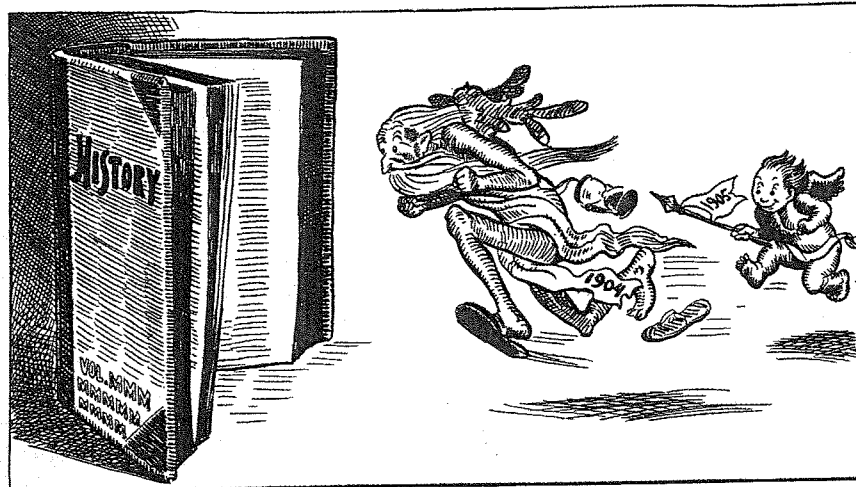
What does the book represent?

What is each person doing?

What do these characters symbolize?

Why do you think these characters are popular for the New Year's holiday?

Draw you own picture that might also communicate the significance of New Year's day.



A cartoon from the book *The Mysterious Stranger and Other Cartoons* by John T. McCutcheon, (New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1905).

From Concern, to Resolution, to Action

“Together We can Make a Difference!”

Our New Year’s Resolution for our community, or our world: Work with a partner to answer the questions below as you develop an action plan to fulfill our New Year’s resolution.



Why is this project important?

List the steps you will take to get started on your project.

Where can we learn more about this issue?

What challenges might arise as you try to fulfill your resolution?

With whom can we work to take action?

How will you know if you have been successful?

What are some ways we can fulfill our resolution?



Image found at wikimedia commons.

New Year celebration in Sydney, Australia

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“tries to have students think globally about their wishes for the world, rather than just what they would wish for themselves.” Our second strategy builds upon Witt’s ideas and supports students creating community-based resolutions and then acting upon them in their local or global community.

We begin by reading *Squirrel’s New Year’s Resolution* by Pat Miller. The story features a squirrel who learns that New Year’s resolutions are promises you make for self improvement or to help others. As squirrel walks through the woods trying to think of his personal resolution, he ends up helping various friends. When Squirrel cannot think of a resolution, his friends point out the ways that he has already helped them and that actions are more powerful than words. We use this text to help move students from the notion of personal resolutions to civically minded resolutions that can effect change in a wider community.

Students work in small groups to develop community-based resolutions that might involve their classroom, school, local area, or even places around the world. Students share their ideas with the class, identify common themes, and decide which ideas to pursue as service-learning projects. A graphic organizer (see the Pullout) helps move students through this process. A service-learning project might involve any of the activities listed in the sidebar here.

As we work with students to develop their service-learning projects, we help identify guest speakers, community and print-

based resources, and potential partnerships that will support student academic learning and civic engagement. As the service-learning projects are being implemented, we build in time for reflection, so that students can explore the value and impact of the projects.

Developing and implementing community-based New Year’s resolutions allows students to recognize that they have a voice and can effect change. This approach to the New Year’s holiday enables us to go beyond the party hats and horns to nurture young citizens who can make a difference. 📖

Notes

1. Timeanddate.com offers a table showing “when year 2012 starts around the world, that is when the clocks turn to midnight on January 1,” at www.timeanddate.com/counters/firstnewyear.html. Timeanddate.com is operated by a company near Stavanger, Norway.
2. In addition to the following Pullout, we’ve posted some supporting material (lesson plans, detailing both strategies including student handouts and teacher materials) for this article online at happynewyearncs.weebly.com/. The website www.weebly.com allows anyone to build a free website.
3. Calendars through the Ages, www.webexhibits.org/calendars/calendar.html.

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