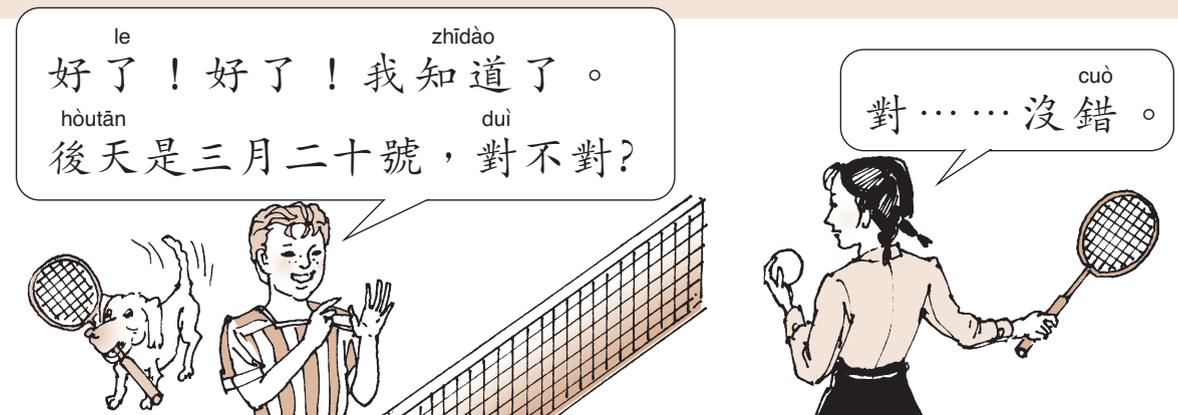


dì yī kè wǒ de shēng rì
第一課 我的生日

1 What is the date?



2 What day is it today?

Dàwěi diàoyú kěyǐ
媽，我明天和大偉去釣魚，可以嗎？

xíng yào
不行！明天要上學！



yí xīngqī
咦！今天星期幾？

今天星期四，明天星期五。

ò yǐwéi
哦！我以為今天是星期五，明天是星期六。

le hòutiān
你錯了。後天是星期六。



TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
前天	昨天	今天	明天	後天

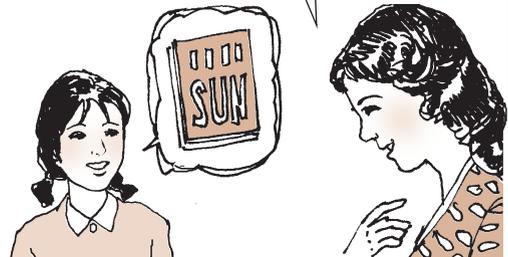


diàoyú
那麼，我星期六去釣魚，可以嗎？

那麼星期日可以嗎？

yào mǎi
也不行。你星期六要和我去買東西。

dàgài
大概可以吧！





Learn the sentences

* Asking the date

To ask *What's the date today?* say 今天是幾號? *Jīntiān shì jǐ hào?* or say 今天是幾月幾號? *Jīntiān shì jǐ yuè jǐ hào?* or more formally say 今天是幾月幾日? *Jīntiān shì jǐ yuè jǐ rì?* To answer, replace the question word 幾 *jǐ* with the number of the day and month. As 今天 *jīntiān* is the subject of the sentence, it is placed at the beginning. The Chinese like to use the concept of big to small. Dates begin with the year, followed by the month and finally the day. In spoken Chinese, the verb 是 *shì* is often omitted, but can be used for emphasis.

今天是幾號?	今天是二十五號。
今天幾號?	今天十九號。
今天是幾月幾號?	今天是三月七號。
今天幾月幾號?	十一月四號。
今天是幾月幾日?	今天是六月十八日。

To ask about *yesterday's* or *tomorrow's date*, replace 今天 *jīntiān* with 昨天 *zuótiān* or 明天 *míngtiān*. In Chinese, as tense is shown by the time stated, i.e. yesterday or tomorrow, the verb does not change for future or past tense.

zuótiān 昨天是幾月幾號?	昨天是九月四號。
qiántiān 前天是幾月幾號?	前天是九月三號。
明天是幾月幾號?	明天是九月六號。
hòutiān 後天幾月幾號?	後天九月七號。

* Asking the day of the week

To ask **What day is it today?** say 今天是星期幾? *Jīntiān shì xīngqī jǐ?* To answer, replace the question word 幾 *jǐ* with the number of the day. The Chinese use the numbers one to six for Monday to Saturday and 天 *tiān* or 日 *rì* for Sunday. Again, the verb 是 *shì*, which is used in written Chinese, is often omitted in spoken Chinese, but can be used for emphasis. To ask about yesterday or tomorrow, use the same sentence structure, but replace 今天 *jīntiān* with 昨天 *zuótiān* for yesterday or 明天 *míngtiān* for tomorrow.

今天是星期幾?	今天是星期五。
昨天是星期幾?	昨天是星期四。
前天是星期幾? <small>qiántiān</small>	前天是星期三。
明天星期幾?	明天星期六。
後天星期幾? <small>hòutiān</small>	後天是星期日。
	後天星期天。

* Asking the year someone was born

To ask **What year were you born?** say 你是哪年生的? *Nǐ shì nǎ nián shēng de?* To answer, replace the question word 哪 *nǎ* with the number of the year.

你是哪年生的? <small>nǎ</small>	我是一九六七年生的。
他是哪年生的?	他是一九五八年生的。
她是哪年生的?	她是一九八四年生的。
你姊姊是哪年生的?	她是一九七六年生的。



Something to know

✿ Chinese calendar

Since the establishment of the republic in 1912, the solar calendar has been adopted as the official calendar and all official events and holidays are practiced accordingly. However, the traditional lunar calendar, also called the agricultural calendar, is still used especially in rural areas. The lunar calendar is calculated according to the phases of the moon. A lunar month is the interval between new moons with a cycle of 29 or 30 days. There are 12 lunar months in a year with 13 months around every four years.

The calendar used today in China and Taiwan has the lunar date in small print beside the solar date, with some agricultural hints and weather indications. The current lunar month is printed on the first day of the month. The lunar dates from the first day to the 10th day have the word **chū** 初, which means beginning, placed before the number. From the 21st day to the 29th day, the symbol 廿, which is read as **èrshí**, is used instead of 二十.

二〇〇二年 二月



壬午年

星期日	星期一	星期二	星期三	星期四	星期五	星期六
					1 二十	2 廿一
3 廿二	4 立春	5 廿四	6 廿五	7 廿六	8 廿七	9 廿八
10 廿九	11 三十	12 正月	13 初二	14 初三	15 初四	16 初五
17 初六	18 初七	19 雨水	20 初九	21 初十	22 十一	23 十二
24 十三	25 十四	26 十五	27 十六	28 十七		

❁ Official holidays

Official holidays are dated in accordance with the solar calendar. Some major celebrations are: (* public holidays)

China

- * 1月 1日 New Year's Day
- * 5月 1日 Labor Day
- 5月 4日 Youth Day
- 6月 1日 Children's Day
- 9月 10日 Teacher's Day
- *10月 1日 National Day

Taiwan

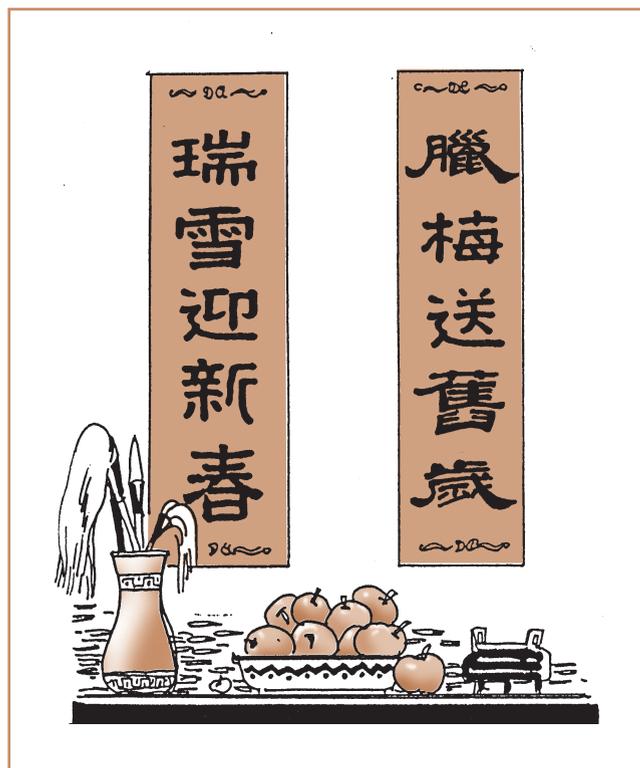
- * 1月 1日 New Year's Day
- 3月 29日 Youth Day
- 4月 4日 Women & Children's Day
- 9月 28日 Confucius' Birthday (Teacher's Day)
- *10月 10日 National Day
- 12月 25日 Constitution Day

❁ Traditional festivals

Although the solar calendar has been adopted as the official calendar, most Chinese traditional festivals are celebrated in accordance with the lunar calendar. The three most important festivals celebrated are the Chinese New Year, the Dragon Boat Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival. Christmas and Easter are not widely observed except by some Christians.

1. Chinese New Year, Xīnnián 新年, first day of the first lunar month

Chinese New Year, commonly called **Chūnjié 春節** (Spring Festival) or **guònián 過年**, is the most important and popular festival to the Chinese. During **春節**, northern Chinese eat **jiǎozi 餃子** (dumpling) and southern Chinese eat **niángāo 年糕** (sweet cake) to celebrate the festival. Words of blessing are written on red paper, called **chūnlián 春聯**, and pasted on the door for good luck. Firecrackers are lit to dispel bad luck. On Chinese New Year's Eve, all family members return to the family house to have a feast called **niányèfàn 年夜飯**. A whole cooked fish is always placed on dinner table as the word *fish*



魚 and the verb *to spare* 餘 have the same pronunciation - *yú*, and so the expression *niánnián yǒu yú* 年年有餘, implying that one wishes there will always be something to spare every year, is represented by the presence of the fish. After dinner, the children will receive *yāsùiqián* 壓歲錢, money from the elder members of the family, representing the wish that they will grow well in the coming year. On New Year's Day, people dress in their best clothes to visit friends and say congratulations, *gōngxǐ* 恭喜 or Happy New Year, *xīnnián hǎo* 新年好, to each other.

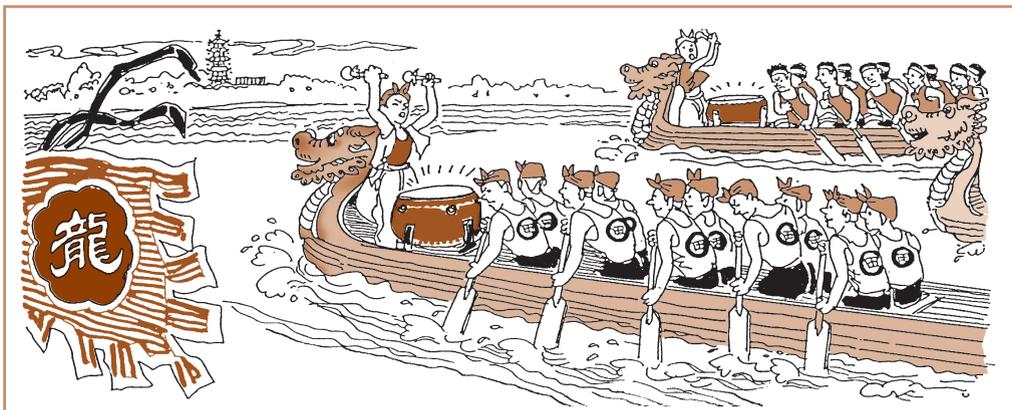


Chūnjié lasts a few days and formally ends with the Lantern Festival, *Yuánxiāojié* 元宵節, on the 15th day of the month. Nowadays, however, most people return to work much earlier. On the night of *Yuánxiāojié* children carry lanterns, *dēnglóng* 燈籠, outdoors and people visit temples or public places to admire the lantern displays. The lantern display is a spectacular event, especially in Taiwan.

There is a legend about the origin of the New Year's celebration. Long ago, in a village, a savage beast came out of a deep forest on the last day of every year to feed on the villagers and their domestic animals. People found out that the beast was afraid of the color red and loud noises, so they pasted the red couplets, *chūnlián*, on the doors and lit firecrackers, *biānpào* 鞭炮, to scare it away.



People saying Happy New Year to each other and children lighting firecrackers



Dragon boat race

2. Dragon Boat Festival, Duānwǔjié 端午節, fifth day of the fifth lunar month

It is said that the Dragon Boat Festival, Duānwǔjié 端午節, is celebrated to commemorate the patriotic poet Qū Yuán 屈原, who drowned himself in the river Mìluó Jiāng 汨羅江, in the fourth century B.C.. Qū Yuán was an official who was exiled to a distant place by the king of Chǔ 楚, who refused to take his suggestions. He was so disheartened that he tied himself to a rock and drowned himself in the river. People sailed their boats out to try to rescue him, but without success. They then threw rice into the river hoping that the fish would eat the rice instead of his body. The customs of dragon boat racing and eating zòngzi 粽子, sticky rice wrapped in bamboo leaves, are believed to have originated to commemorate his death.

3. Mid-Autumn Festival, Zhōngqiūjié 中秋節, 15th day of the eighth lunar month

This festival is also known as *the Moon Festival*. Because the lunar month starts on a new moon, it is always a full moon on this festival. On this day, people enjoy sitting outdoors admiring the full moon while eating moon cakes, yuèbǐng 月餅, and fruits such as pomelo, yòuzi 柚子.



Cháng'é 嫦娥 flying to the moon after taking pills of immortality

There is a legend that thousands of years ago, there were 10 suns in the sky and it was burning hot on earth. An archer, Hòuyì 后羿, bravely shot down nine of the suns and saved the earth from famine. He was beloved among the people, and they made him a king. He was also awarded pills of immortality by the goddess Wángmǔ Niángniáng 王母娘娘. The pills were for both him and his wife Cháng'é 嫦娥, but Cháng'é was curious and could not resist the temptation of immortality. She secretly took all the pills herself, which not only made her immortal but also floated her to the moon to live forever.