Ringing in the New Year

The Life and Times of…the New Year

Descriptive writing

Ring in the new year with a writing project that chronicles the future year from infancy through retirement. Write the names of the 12 months across the chalkboard. Ask your students to brainstorm three or four major events that they predict will occur in each month of the new year. (Expect students to name catastrophes, kinds of weather, political changes, sporting events, new discoveries, inventions, etc.) As an event is named, list it under one of the months. Divide students into 12 groups; then assign each group a month. Ask each group to contribute an illustrated chapter that describes in detail the predicted events assigned to its month. When the chapters are complete, assemble them into a class book. Share a chapter each day with your class; then circulate the book for other classes to enjoy.

Happy Birthday, New Year!

Writing poetry

For thousands of years, people welcomed the new year in the spring—as some countries still do—because that’s when nature comes to life again after the winter. Some religious groups—like the Jews, Muslims, and Hindus—set their own dates for celebrating the new year. But most people recognize New Year’s Day as the first day of January in each calendar year.

Have each student create a birthday card for the new year. Ask the student to write a verse inside that’s similar to a Japanese new year’s ode—a short poem consisting of just 31 syllables—as shown. Then string the birthday cards around your classroom door.

New Year, what will you bring?
Three hundred sixty-five new opportunities?
A chance to start over again?
That’s great! I need it!

by Peggy W. Hambright

Thematic Activities for Welcoming a Brand-New Year

New Year’s Day—probably the oldest holiday in the world—ushers in the beginning of a year full of new hopes and opportunities. Steer students toward making the most of the year ahead with this refreshing collection of activities.
Good-Luck Fare  
Collecting and graphing data

Does eating hopping john (black-eyed peas cooked with rice) on New Year’s Day bring good luck throughout the coming year? Many people believe that eating certain foods on New Year’s Day brings good luck. Have students survey one another about the foods they and their families eat on New Year’s Day to guarantee good fortune. Instruct students to display the collected data on a graph.

Keys to a Successful New Year  
Understanding character traits

Unlock the door to a successful new year with this goal-setting bulletin board! Enlarge and color the five keys on page 13, programming them with the character traits shown. Arrange the keys on a bulletin board. Make a copy of page 13 for each student. Direct each child to complete the identification tag for his key ring. Then have the student write two ways he plans to be successful in each area listed on the five keys. After each student has lightly colored, cut out, and hole-punched the keys, give him a length of colorful yarn on which to string them. Have the student loop the identification tag’s flap over the yarn and glue it in place. Display the key rings on a bulletin board as shown.