



CHINESE NEW YEAR



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Chinese New Year is also called Lunar New Year because it follows the moon, not a calendar. The date changes every year.



Red is the lucky colour. It stands for happiness, good fortune and protection. You will see it everywhere, from lanterns to envelopes.

It lasts 15 whole days, ending with a magical Lantern Festival.



Every year has an animal from the Chinese Zodiac. There are 12 of them.

Chinese New Year FACTS

Fireworks are set off to scare away bad luck and naughty spirits.



People decorate with paper cuttings of animals, flowers and lucky symbols.

Children get red envelopes filled with money called hongbao.



Oranges and tangerines are lucky because their names sound like "wealth" and "success" in Chinese. Dumplings are a lucky food because they look like ancient gold coins.



The dragon is the only imaginary animal in the zodiac and it symbolises strength, wisdom and good luck.

Chinese Zodiac Signs

Rat: Clever, curious and quick-thinking. Rats love solving problems and spotting little details.

Ox: Strong, steady and reliable. Oxen keep going even when things feel hard.

Tiger: Brave, bold and full of energy. Tigers love trying new things and leading adventures.

Rabbit: Gentle, kind and thoughtful. Rabbits like calm spaces and helping others feel safe.

Dragon: Confident, powerful and full of sparkle. Dragons believe in themselves and lift others up too.

Snake: Quiet, wise and careful. Snakes think before they move and make clever choices.

Horse: Fast, free and full of excitement. Horses love to move and explore.

Goat (Sheep): Creative, caring and sensitive. Goats notice feelings and love to make things beautiful.



Monkey: Playful, cheeky and smart. Monkeys love puzzles, jokes and learning through fun.

Rooster: Organised, confident and proud. Roosters like to be ready and do things properly.

Dog: Loyal, kind and protective. Dogs are wonderful friends who look after everyone.

Pig: Warm, honest and generous. Pigs enjoy sharing and making people feel happy.

Activities:

Lucky Lanterns story:

- Use the Dragon's Lucky Lanterns story sheet. and work through "jobs".

Zodiac River Challenge:

- Use 12 zodiac animals sheet /cards for the different animal moves.

Use the movement cards of the 12 different animals (2x cubes needed).

Lucky Flowers

- Using the floating Blossom flowers - back progressions. Children say a wish whilst holding a flower.

Decorate the Dragon / Horse / Lantern:

- Using the dragon/horse/lantern play mat and various loose play materials (e.g red & yellow pom poms, gems, sensory scarves, ribbons).

Dragon Tail Follow

- One swimmer is the Dragon head, others follow holding noodles (body). The Dragon must move together to stay strong. Encourage directional work.

Dragon Matching Game:

- Using the Dragon cards, place them at the opposite end to the swimmers starting point. on top of a kick board facing down. The swimmers are in 2x teams, they swim down and try to find the matching pairs by flipping them over. They have 1 go and then swim back to next swimmer.

Drum Dragon Game:

Add extra Drum signals - a great non verbal game

- 1 beat = arms only
- 2 beats = kick only
- 3 beats = turn (forward or backwards, log roll)
- Silence = float (front or back)

Dragon Tag game

River Flow

TUNE TO: ROW ROW YOUR BOAT

Forward and back here we move,
calm and nice and slow,
Side to side and round and round,
Watch the water flow.

Up and down here we go,
calm and nice and slow,
lets go swimming and have fun,
Kick and splash we go!

Floating Lantern

TUNE TO: TWINKLE TWINKLE



Floating, floating, like a light,
Lantern glowing soft and bright,
Water holds you, calm and slow,
Watch the gentle lantern glow.

Breathing softly, in and out,
Floating still without a doubt,
Feel the water, safe and near,
Lantern light is shining clear.

Arms are wide and bodies still,
Floating safely, calm and chill,
Water holds us, nice and tight,
Safe and steady like a light.

Lantern, lantern, shining bright,
Floating safely through the night.



If you're a Dragon

TUNE TO: IF YOU'RE HAPPY & YOU KNOW IT

If you're a Dragon and you know it,
stomp your feet! (stomp stomp)

If you're a Dragon and you know it,
stomp your feet! (stomp stomp)

He's awake and breathing fire,
Lanterns glowing higher, higher,
If you're a Dragon and you know it,
stomp your feet! (stomp stomp)

If you're a Dragon and you know it,
splash the water! (splash splash)

If you're a Dragon and you know it,
splash the water! (splash splash)

Moon River's shining bright,
Everything feels just right,
If you're a Dragon and you know it,
splash the water! (splash splash)



If you're a Dragon and you know it,
turn around! (turn around)
If you're a Dragon and you know it,
turn around! (turn around)
Round and round the river flows,
Watch the lanterns as they glow,
If you're a Dragon and you know it,
turn around! (turn around).

If you're a Dragon and you know it,
breath out fire (blow bubbles)
If you're a Dragon and you know it,
breath out fire (blow bubbles)
Big breath in, then blow out slow,
Watch the fire start to glow,
If you're a Dragon and you know it,
breath out fire (blow bubbles).

Now the Dragon's very tired
It's time to say goodbye
The Dragon is going to sleep,
Goodnight (wave good bye).





The Dragon's Lucky Lanterns

A Chinese New Year swim story

"Swimmers... today we are travelling to the Moon River, where a friendly Dragon lives.. Chinese New Year is almost here, but the Dragon is still asleep. When the Dragon sleeps, the lanterns stay dark. When the Dragon wakes, his fire breath lights the lanterns and the celebrations can begin.

But the Dragon cannot wake up until the river is ready.

The water must be calm.

The lucky colours must be gathered.

The river must be full of kindness, care and gentle movement. The Dragon has left some special jobs for you to help prepare the Moon River. When the jobs are finished... the Dragon will wake... and light the Lucky Lanterns with his fire breath.

Will you help?"

Job 1: Find the Red Flowers

(Red toys, flower shapes or pom poms placed around the pool)

"Red is the colour of luck and bravery.

Swim like sneaky Dragons and find the red flowers."

Job 2: Blow Bubbles for the Dumplings

"The dumplings have sunk to the bottom.

(Use sinkable toys)

To lift them, we must blow magic bubbles!"



Job 3: Find & Float Like a Lantern

"The lanterns must put in place to glow on the Moon River.

They only glow when they float calmly and still."

(Use the red lantern shapes)

Swimmers float on their backs with the lanterns.

"Hold still... feel the water... "

Job 4: Carry the Lucky Oranges

"Swimmers... the Dragon needs lucky oranges.

They bring happiness and good fortune, but they roll away if you are not careful."

(Use orange balls, floating toys or hoops)

Swimmers must carry or push an orange across the water without dropping it.

Job 5: Wake the Dragon

"The Dragon is asleep.

We need strong kicking and splashing to wake him."

Finish with:

"The Dragon is awake!

He breathes fire across the Moon River...

and one by one, the lanterns glow.

Chinese New Year can begin."





Chinese Zodiac Signs

The Zodiac River Challenge

The Dragon needs all 12 Zodiac Animals to cross the Moon River. Each animal has a special way to travel through the water. The swimmers must become the animals to help them cross.

How to play:

Lay out 12 animal pictures, toys or cards on poolside at starting point. The teacher calls out an animal. The swimmers swim across the pool moving like that animal. When they reach the other side, they swim back (either in animal mode or choice stroke).

The 12 Animal Movements:

Rat: Tiny fast paddles with quick kicks
→ short front swim or doggy paddle

Ox: Slow, strong pushes through the water
→ resistance walking or pushing a float

Tiger: Big powerful arms and long kicks
→ front crawl style arms

Rabbit: Small bouncy jumps or quick scoops
→ bobbing and hopping in shallow water



Dragon: Long, flowing body with waves

→ body undulation or dolphin kicks holding a noodle

Snake: Smooth side-to-side movement

→ sideways kicking or sculling

Horse: Fast galloping kicks

→ strong flutter kick holding the wall or a noodle

Goat: Careful stepping and balancing

→ walking along the pool floor or balancing on a noodle

Monkey: Climbing and pulling

→ hand-over-hand along the pool wall or rope

Rooster: Tall and proud posture

→ upright kicking with hands on hips or noodle under arms

Dog: Happy paddling

→ doggy paddle or front paddle

Pig: Relaxed floating

→ back float or starfish float



Kat



**SMALL FAST PADDLES
WITH QUICK KICKS**

Ox



**SLOW, STRONG PUSHES
THROUGH THE WATER**

Tiger



**BIG POWERFUL ARMS
AND LONG KICKS**

Rabbit



**SMALL BOUNCY JUMPS
OR QUICK SCOOPS**

Dragon



**LONG, FLOWING BODY
WITH WAVES**

Snake



**SMOOTH SIDE-TO-SIDE
MOVEMENT**

Horse



FAST GALLOPING KICKS

Goat



**CAREFUL STEPPING AND
BALANCING**

Monkey



CLIMBING AND PULLING

Rooster



**TALL AND PROUD
POSTURE**

Dog



HAPPY PADDLING

Pig



RELAXED FLOATING

Pretend to be a



RAT

Pretend to be a



OX

Pretend to be a



TIGER

Pretend to be a



RABBIT

Pretend to be a



DRAGON

Pretend to be a



SNAKE

Pretend to be a



HORSE

Pretend to be a



GOAT

Pretend to be a



MONKEY

Pretend to be a



ROOSTER

Pretend to be a

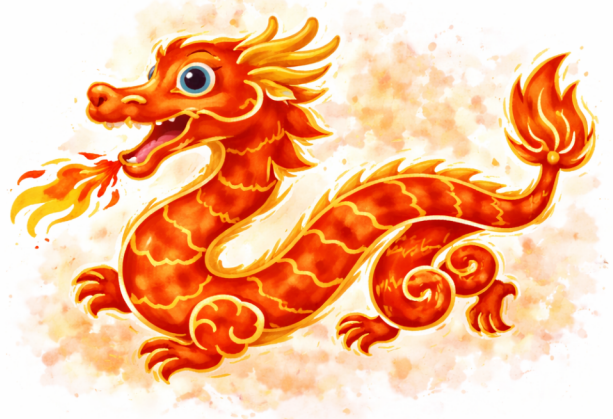
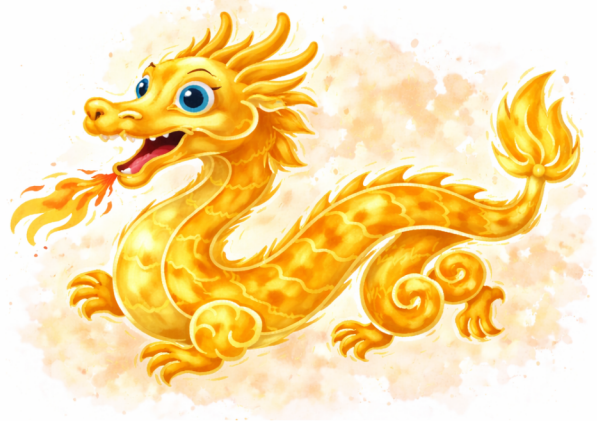
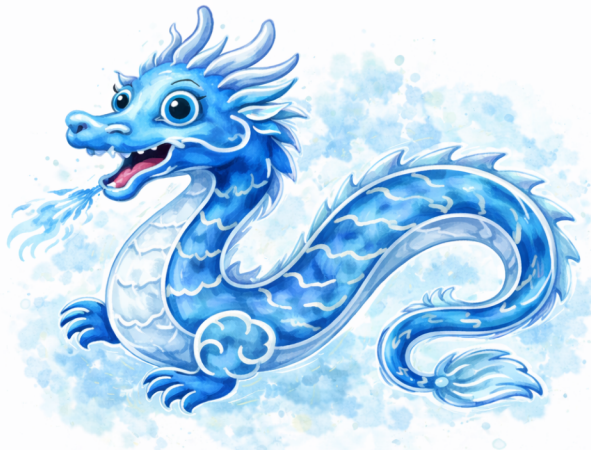


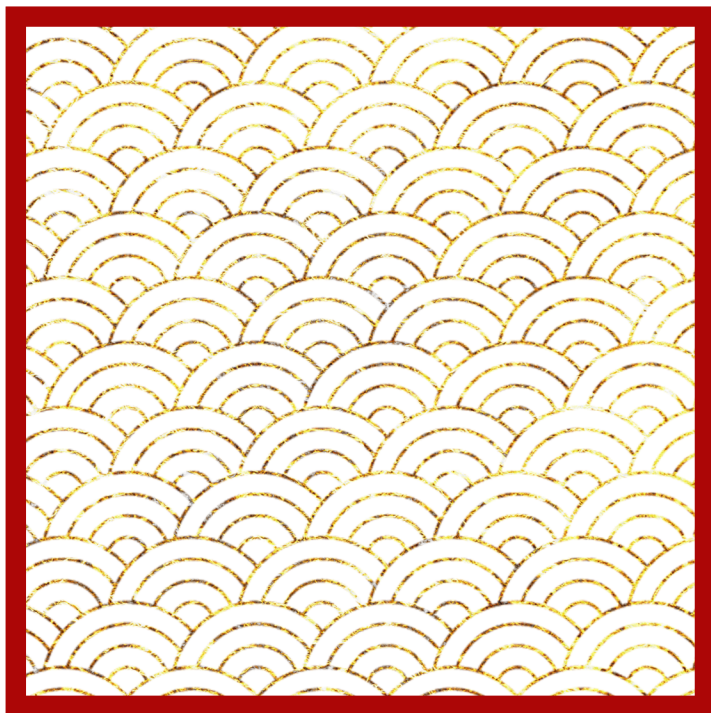
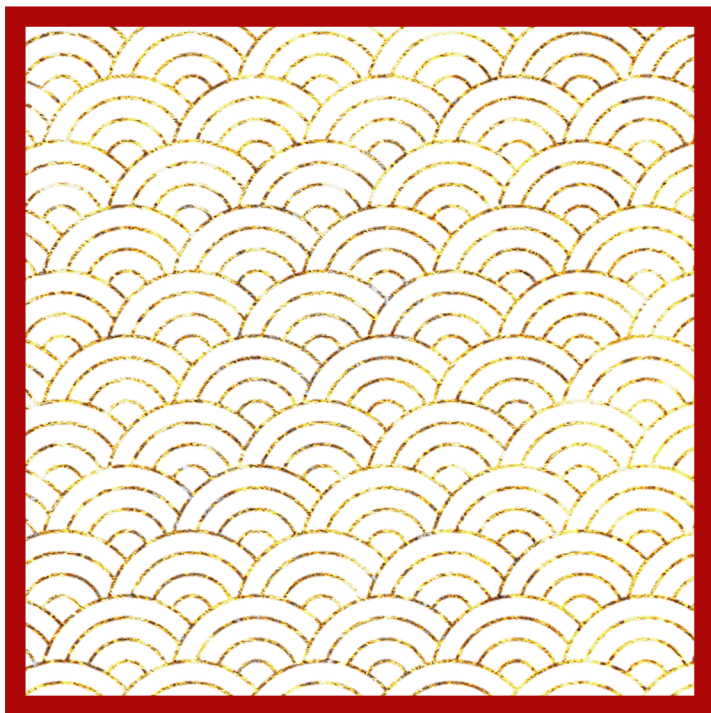
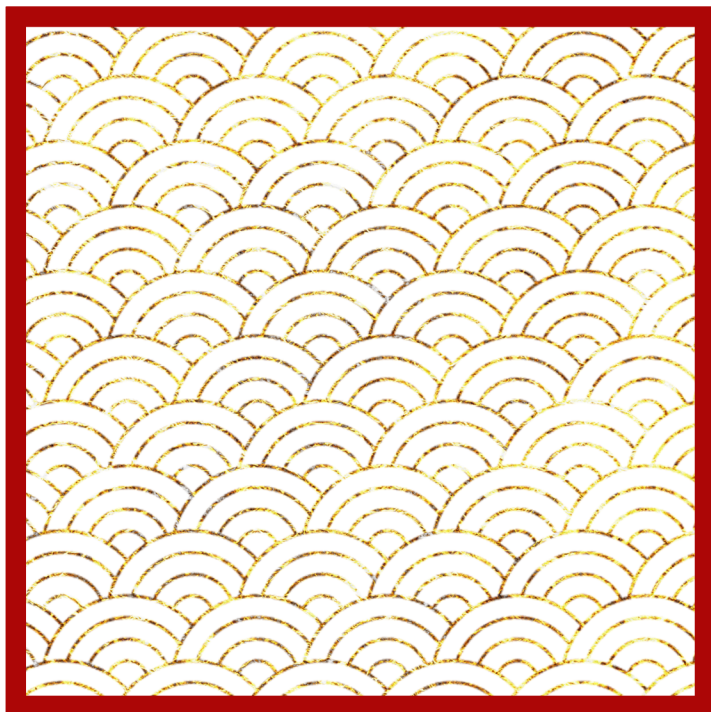
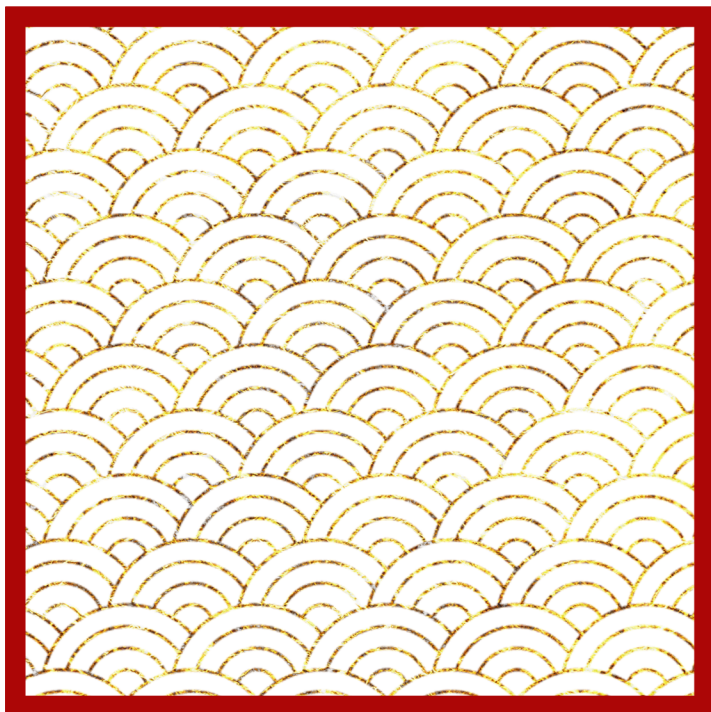
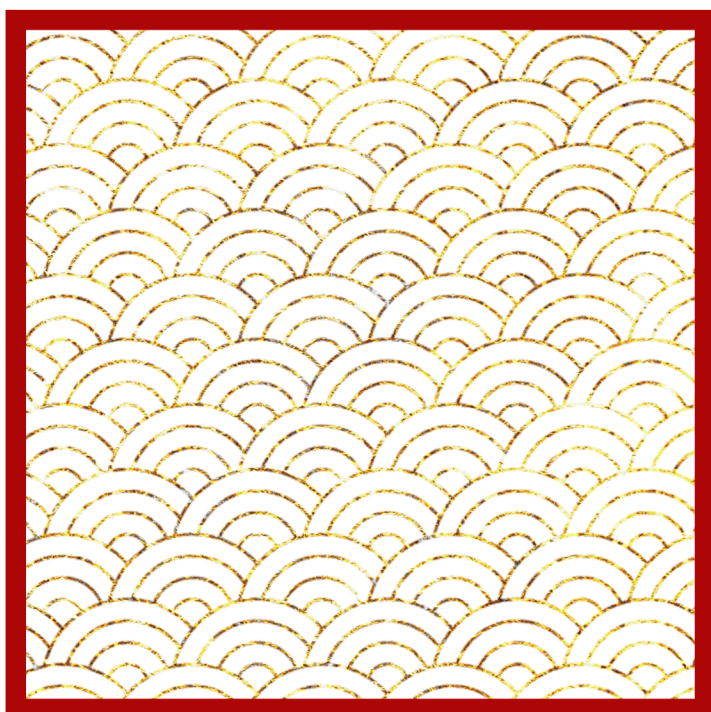
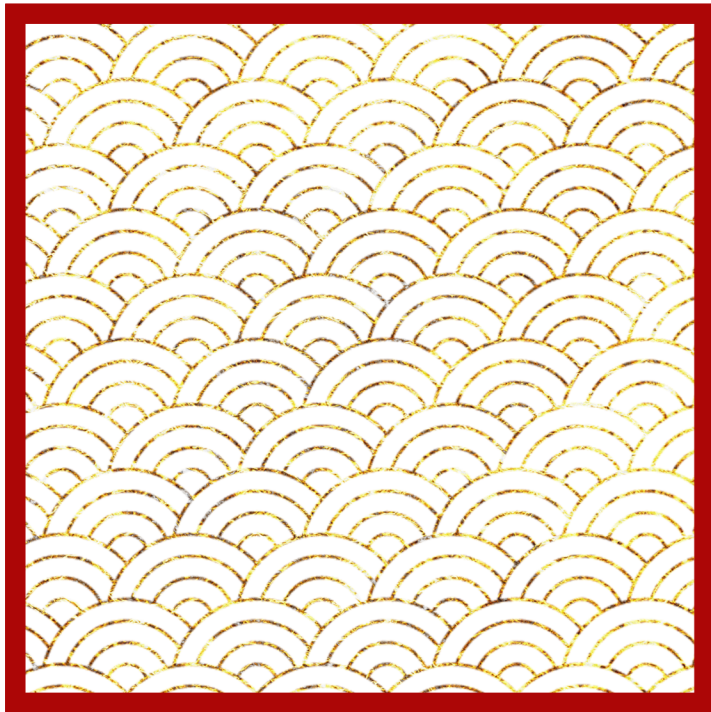
DOG

Pretend to be a



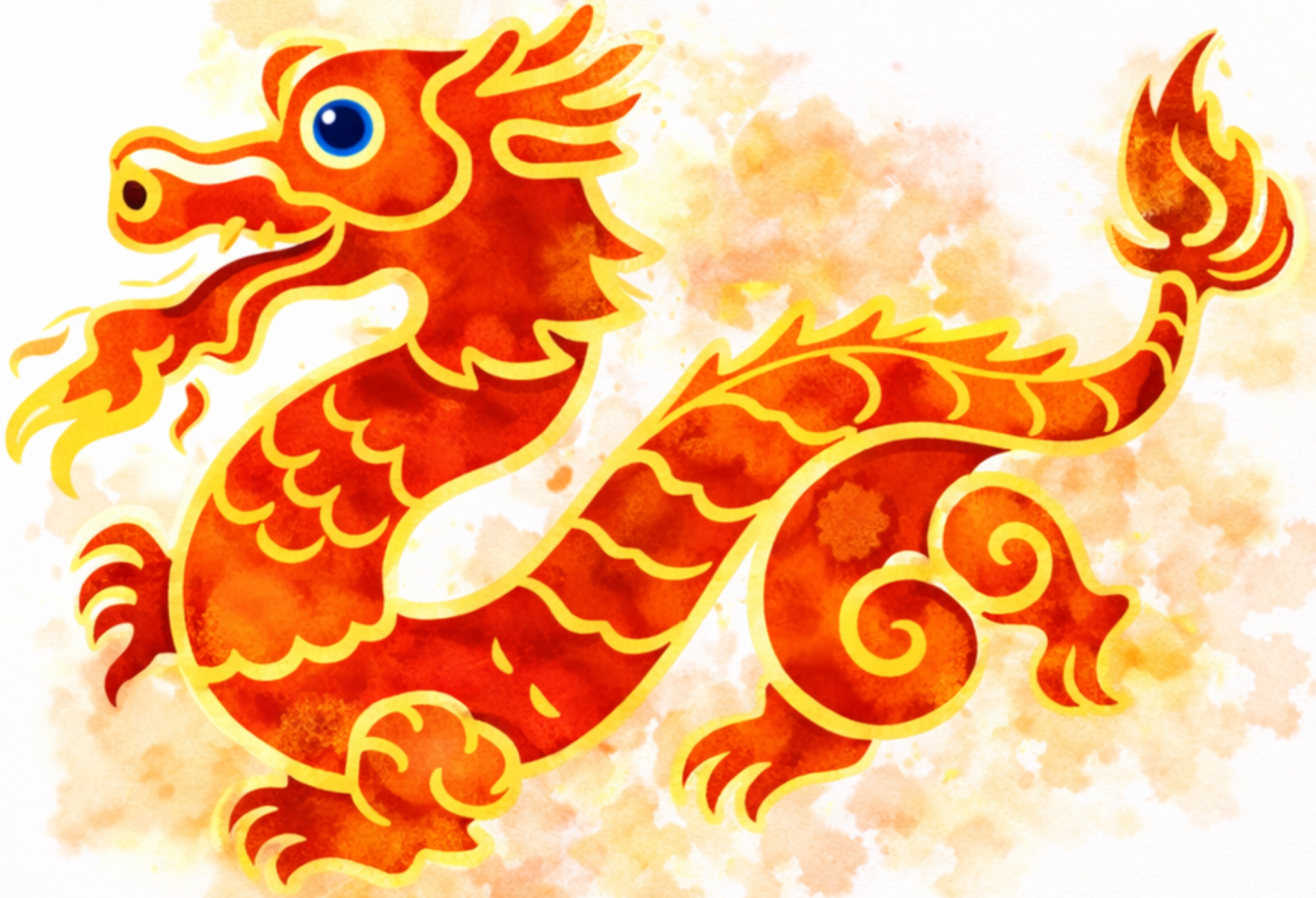
PIG





Decorate the Dragon

Collect loose part play materials to add to the Dragon



Decorate the Horse

Collect loose part play materials to add to the Horse



Decorate the Lantern

Collect loose part play materials to add to the Lantern



DRUM DRAGON

The Teacher or a chosen swimmer is the Dragon.
They hold a drum (tap a bucket or tap the side of the pool).
The swimmers line up at one end of the pool.

The drum rules:

- One slow beat

Swimmers move slowly and smoothly
→ gliding, gentle paddling, quiet kicks

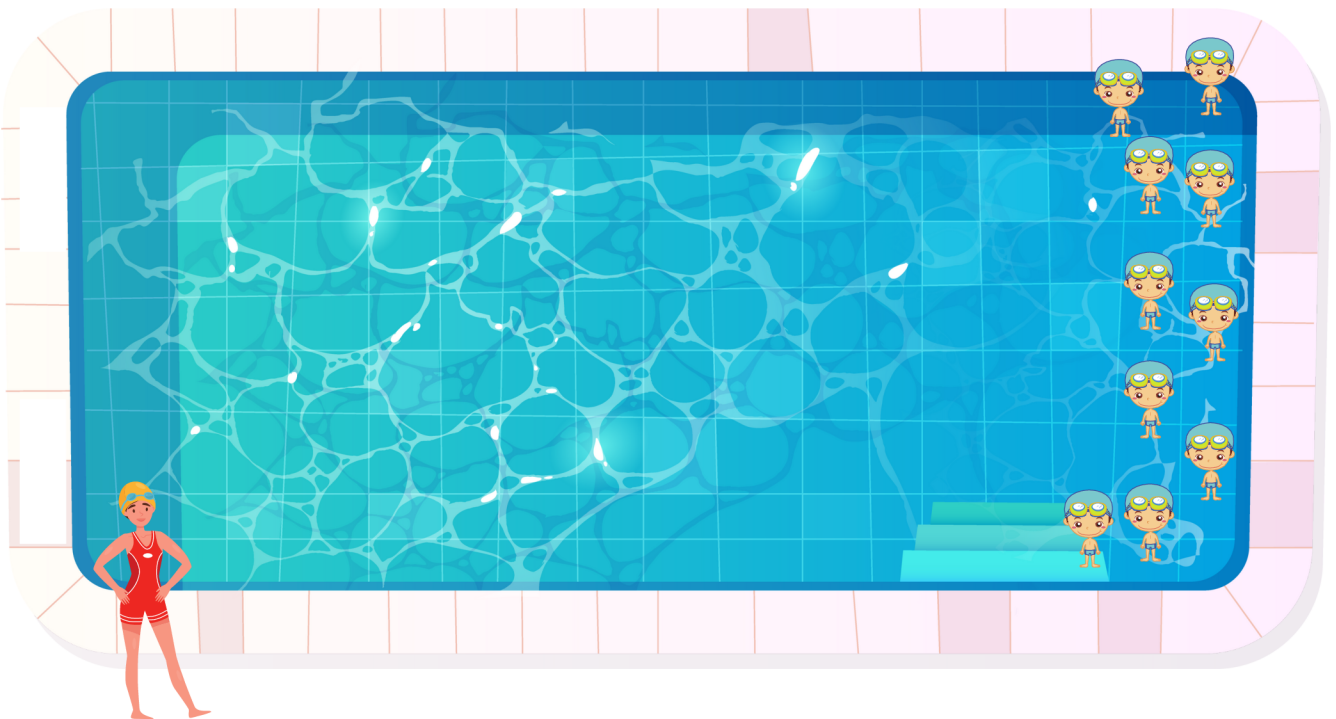
- Fast drum beats

Swimmers use strong, powerful movements
→ big kicks, fast arms, splashes

- No drum sound

Freeze like a sleeping lantern
→ floating, stillness, body control

If a swimmer moves when the drum is silent, the Dragon “wakes” and gently roars, and everyone floats to calm the water again.



DRAGON TAG

A swimmer is the tagger (the dragon).

The dragon swims around to tag a swimmer. If they get caught they join forces and the dragon grows bigger.

They have to hold a noodle to stay as one.

They both then try to tag another swimmer.

They keep going until there is 4, they then break in to 2 dragons (2 and 2).

They then go off and tag.

When each of them tag 4 they break in to another team (2 and 2).

This keeps going until there is one swimmer remaining.

