

New Year's Resolutions

Festivals & Holidays

- Teacher's Insights -

This multi-level speaking-based class talks about the New Year's celebrations and encourages students to talk about celebrations in their own country. It can take from 30 to 60 minutes, or longer if you add on the speaking questions at the end of this version

Introduction: **Ask and answer the questions as a group.**

As usual, these questions are designed to introduce the topic. On this occasion, they also introduce the underlined vocabulary; point it out to your students and help them to understand it. If you have more a longer class time, allow each question to become a conversation.

1. Do people celebrate the New Year's Day on the 1st of January in your country?
2. Do people usually get together to celebrate on New Year's Eve?
3. Is there anything special that people do when the clock strikes midnight?
4. What is your favourite way to ring in the new year?
5. Do you agree with the expression "In with the new, out with the old"?
6. Do you see the new year as a chance to turn over a new leaf?

Vocabulary: **What are the things in the pictures?**
Are they usually included in your celebration of the new year?



Shown are (from top left, clockwise): people watching the TV together, people singing and dancing or throwing a house party, people playing music on the beach (remember it is hot in many countries at this time of year!), people with sparklers, some kind of buffet (finger buffet, party food, party spread), fireworks, twelve grapes*, and a present**.

*In Spain, people usually eat 12 grapes at midnights, one each time the clock chimes.

**In Greece, gifts are traditionally given on the 1st of January (St. Basil's Day). Also, in Scotland, gifts are often given as part of the New Year's celebrations, known as Hogmanay.

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Reading & Speaking: **Read the text and answer the questions.**

This text is a simple introduction to the speaking activity which follows.

As many people are getting themselves ready for New Year's Eve, many others are beginning to think of something else: their New Year's resolutions.

New Year's resolutions are a tradition in many countries, including the UK and US. It is where a person makes a decision to make some sort of positive change the next year. Common New Year's resolutions are to eat more healthily, do more exercise, study harder, or give up a bad habit.

This tradition may be 4,000 to 5,000 years old, as many believe that the ancient Babylonians and the ancient Egyptians made New Year's resolutions.

One problem is that they are often broken too soon. Some people make unrealistic resolutions, others never keep track of them, and others forget about them altogether!

So, what makes a good New Year's resolution? Well, some experts say it is best to choose one goal, to include a plan, to choose something with specific and achievable milestones, and to make sure it is a resolution you can keep.

So, what will your New Year's Resolution be?

1. Write a New Year's resolution that you would like to make for the upcoming year.
2. Make a small plan and set some milestones.
3. If you would like to, share your resolution with the rest of the group to make it more real.

Encourage your students to think of productive and creative New Year's resolutions. They could be related to their English, or they could be something totally different! If any student wishes to keep their resolution a secret, we recommend respecting their wish.

Extra Speaking: **Ask and answer the questions if you have extra time.**

1. If you had to choose one word to define the following, which word would you choose...
 - a. last year?
 - b. the coming year?
 - c. your New Year's resolution?
2. What was one of the best things that happened to you last year?
3. What do you hope will happen in the upcoming year?
4. What do you think will change over the next year?
5. How could you help yourself to keep your New Year's resolution?
6. How could you help others to keep their New Year's resolutions?