

Name : _____

Class: _____

The New Year: a worldwide holiday

The New Year is a holiday which is celebrated at the beginning of the year. It is celebrated in many places all over the world; mostly in Christian countries with parties and social gatherings with usually a lot of fireworks and noise.

New Year's eve (evening) is celebrated on December 31st, the final day of the year according to the Gregorian calendar.

Throughout antiquity, civilizations around the world developed increasingly sophisticated calendars. The first day of the year became an agricultural or astronomical event. In Egypt, for instance, the year began with the annual flooding of the Nile, which coincided with the rising of the star Sirius. The first day of the Chinese new year, meanwhile, occurred according to the moon, between the end of January till mid of February.

In 46 B.C the emperor Julius Caesar introduced a calendar which closely resembles the more modern Gregorian calendar that most countries around the world use today. As part of his reform, Caesar instituted January 1 as the first day of the year, partly to honor the month's namesake: Janus, the Roman god of beginnings, whose two faces allowed him to look back into the past and forward into the future.

In the United States of America, New York people gather in Times Square just before midnight in the last minute of the countdown to see the "ball dropping". The celebration is also associated with parties in other parts of the world. In France, for instance, food is prepared accompanied by champagne. People also go to the Eiffel Tower in Paris to see a fireworks display. In Japan, people traditionally clean their home. Buddhist temple bells are rung 108 times at midnight. In Brazil, the beach of Copacabana is considered by many to be the place of the most beautiful fireworks show in the world.

On New Year's Eve in most of the places in the world, people commit themselves to resolutions. These are made to reform a habit and should go into effect and remain until fulfillment.

תרבות, ציוויליזציה - civilization

מסורת - tradition

הציג - introduced

ספירה לאחור - countdown

פירוטים - fireworks

ימי קדם - Antiquity

שינוי - Reform

הגשמה - fulfillment

Part a

1. A New Year's _____ (Circle ONE) resolution/ goal, tradition is a promise which a person makes to do an act of self-improvement . (3 points) ראש השנה

2. What "drops" at midnight in Times Square? (2.5 points)

- a. a ball
- b. a clock

3. Where is the biggest New Year's Eve party in the USA? (2.5 points)

- a. New York
- b. Los Angeles
- c. Washington

4. Where do temple bells ring 108 times? (2.5 points)

- a. Japan
- b. Brazil
- c. France

5. New Year's Eve is celebrated in countries all over the world (2.5 points)

- a. in the same way.
- b. in different ways.

5. **What is New Year's? When is it celebrated?** (10 points)

6. **According to which calendar is New Year's celebrated?** (5 points)

- a. the Gregorian
- b. the Roman
- c. the Egyptian
- d. the Julian

11. Circle true (T) or False (F): (3 points)

- a. Some people celebrate New Year's with fireworks and parties. T/ F
- b. People eat turkey on New Year's. T/ F
- c. A tradition on New Year's is to make a resolution. T/ F

Part B

Analyze information from the text

7. In lines 7-9 it mentions "Throughout antiquity, civilizations around the world developed increasingly sophisticated calendars..." Give TWO examples from the text to prove this claim. (12.5 points)

a. _____

b. _____

13. According to paragraph 5, upon which god is the month of January called and why? Please quote from the text. (12.5 points)

Part C

What do you think?

8. In Israel, some people celebrate New Year's by going to parties and dinner. What do you think about celebrating New Year's in Israel despite the fact that it is not a Jewish holiday? Are you for or against celebrating this holiday? Explain. (10 points)

9. If you celebrate New Year's, how would you celebrate it?

(10 points)

10. If you made New Year's resolutions, what would they be? List three. (15 points)
