



CELEBRATIONS

A. READING

Before you read

• *Work in pairs. Look at the picture and discuss the questions.*

1. What time of the year is it?
2. What are the people in the picture doing?
3. What else do you see in the picture?



● **Work in pairs.** Tell your partner which of these activities you enjoy doing most at Tet. Are there any other things you like doing?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. making <i>banh chung</i> | b. decorating the house |
| c. eating special Tet foods | d. going to the flower market |
| e. going to the pagoda | f. watching fireworks |
| g. receiving “lucky money” | h. visiting relatives and friends |

While you read

Read the text about Tet in Vietnam, and then do the tasks that follow.

Lunar New Year, or Tet, is Vietnam’s main holiday. It is the grandest and most important occasion in the year which falls sometime between 19th January and 20th February on the Western calendar. Tet marks the beginning of spring and, for agrarian people, the start of a new year.

Tet’s preparations and celebrations used to be spread over months, but nowadays the holiday is much shorter. A great deal of excitement still builds up well before Tet, however. Streets are decorated with coloured lights and red banners. Shops are full of goods. People are busy buying gifts, cleaning and decorating their houses and cooking traditional foods.

Homes are often decorated with plants and flowers at this time. Peach blossom is traditional at Tet in the North while apricot blossom is traditional in the South. The kumquat tree with its ripe deep orange fruits is popular throughout the country. One of Tet’s most special foods is *banh chung*, which is made from sticky rice, green beans and fatty pork. *Mut*, which is candied fruit such as sugared apples, plums or tomatoes, is also popular.

On the days of Tet everyone tries to be nice and polite to each other. People believe that what they do on the first day of the year will influence their luck during the whole year. Thus, only positive comments should be made. People visit other family members or friends, and they exchange New Year’s wishes. Children receive their “lucky money” inside red envelopes. Many people go to the pagoda to pray for a happy year for themselves and their family. Both children and adults take part in games and various forms of entertainment. Tet is really a time of fun and festivals throughout the country.

 **Task 1.** Find what the following words mean in the text. (Use a dictionary when necessary.)

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. grand: _____ | 2. agrarian: _____ |
| 3. banner: _____ | 4. pray: _____ |
| 5. sugared apples: _____ | 6. excitement: _____ |

 **Task 2.** Decide whether the statements are true (T) or false (F).

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Tet is always on 20 th February on the Western calendar. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. According to the text, for people anywhere in the world the beginning of spring is the start of a new year. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. <i>Tet</i> used to be longer than it is nowadays. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. According to the text, “lucky money” is given to everyone at Tet. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. Kumquat trees are popular both in the North and in the South of Vietnam. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. People try to be nice and polite to each other because they want to have good luck on New Year’s Day. | ☐ | ☐ |

 **Task 3.** Answer the following questions.

1. When is Tet holiday in Vietnam?
2. How long did Tet preparations and celebrations last in the past?
3. What do streets look like before Tet?
4. What do people often do to prepare for Tet?
5. What is *banh chung* made from?
6. What is *mut*?
7. What are some popular activities at Tet?

After you read

Work in groups. Tell each other about your last Tet holiday, focusing on the following main points:

- how you prepared for Tet
- how you decorated your house
- who you visited
- what special foods you ate
- what activities you enjoyed doing most during Tet