

Out with the old, in with the new!



Read the captions that people add to their social media photos. Then, discuss what attitude these people might have towards New Year's Eve or the New Year.

EXAMPLE: New year, new me. – It might mean that the person who posted this caption treats a new year as a new beginning. They might want to make some resolutions and change their life.

- **Cheers to 365 new chances.**
- **Everyone's out partying and this is me watching TV.**
- **Page 1 of 365.**
- **9 p.m. is the new midnight.**
- **New Year, same me. Who are we kidding, right?**

Discuss the questions.

- When is New Year celebrated in your culture?
- Do you celebrate New Year's Eve and the New Year? Which caption from ex. 1 best sums up your attitude towards them?
- Why might some people hate New Year's Eve?
- How might the things below be connected with New Year celebrations and traditions?
 - confetti
 - fireworks
 - mask
 - suitcase
 - paper lanterns
 - yellow underwear
- Do you know any New Year traditions from other cultures/countries?



1

Traditions

Read about some unusual New Year's Eve traditions which take place around the world. Complete the definitions on the next page with the underlined vocabulary.

1. On the morning of New Year's Day, some traditional families toss coins into a river. They believe this will bring them good luck throughout the coming year.
2. When the clock strikes 12, some people celebrate New Year's Eve by eating twelve grapes – one for each month of the year, and for each chime of the clock's bell. Sweet bread is baked with a coin hidden in the dough. New Year's Eve is also considered the best time to communicate with dead spirits and ask them for guidance.
3. Farmers wish their livestock a happy New Year. They believe this brings good luck and good health.
4. Some people believe that if the first visitor (especially an unexpected one) on January 1 is a man, the year will be good.
5. People believe that the color of their underwear on New Year's Eve will determine their fate in the coming year. Yellow underwear will bring happiness and money. Red will bring love and passion. Green is for prosperity, pink is for friendship, white is for hope and peace. At this time of year, yellow underwear is in big demand.
6. Some people decorate their homes with straw ropes to ward off evil spirits and welcome good luck and happiness. Buddhist temples ring their bells 108 times at midnight.
7. Some people throw crockery at their neighbor's door. The family with the largest pile of broken plates, glasses, and cups is considered to be the luckiest because it means that they have lots of loyal friends.
8. People wear polka dots and prepare tables with twelve round-shaped fruits, for example grapes, oranges, melons, and watermelons. They believe that this will bring prosperity as round shapes are associated with coins and wealth. At midnight, children jump as high as they can because they believe this will make them taller.

1. _____ : dishes, cups, and similar items made of porcelain
2. _____ : large round dots forming a pattern or an item of clothing with this pattern
3. _____ : farm animals
4. _____ : a mixture of flour and liquid, used for baking bread
5. _____ : throw casually
6. _____ : prevent something bad from happening
7. _____ : the sound that a bell makes
8. _____ : success and economic well-being
9. _____ : destiny, things that develop in the future which are outside of your control

In which countries do you think the traditions in Exercise 1 belong to?

- a. Mexico: _____
- b. Russia: _____
- c. Japan: _____
- d. Denmark: _____
- e. The Philippines: _____
- f. Bolivia: _____
- g. Belgium: _____
- h. Romania: _____

2. Watch a video (to 02:28) and discuss the questions.

- Have you heard of any of the New Year traditions presented in the video?
- Is there any special food that people eat on that day?
- What do people usually wish for at New Year? Do you think that people around the world wish for the same things? Why/Why not?

- 3.** Imagine that you can spend one New Year's Eve however you like.
You have 24 hours and unlimited money.
Describe what it would be like.

4.

New Year's Idioms

Match the underlined idiomatic expressions with their correct meaning on the next page.

1. Paul has made a lot of mistakes in his life this year. So he has decided to turn over a new leaf from January 1.
 2. We are planning a big party to ring in the New Year.
 3. We had a whale of a time on New Year's Eve.
 4. The New Year started off with a bang.
 5. Instead of making resolutions, why not start the New Year with a clean slate?
 6. In Romania, if you don't throw money into a river on New Year's Day, you will tempt fate.
 7. When I reflect back on the year, I think it was a pretty good one.
 8. I haven't traveled much this year, so next year I'm going to make up for lost time.
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- a. an exciting and enjoyable time
 - b. began with a lot of excitement
 - c. cause bad luck for yourself
 - d. celebrate the beginning of the New Year
 - e. ignore the past and start again
 - f. remember or think about something
 - g. spend a lot of time doing something because you did not have the opportunity to do it before
 - h. start changing your behavior or habits for the better

Talking point

Discuss any of the following questions:

1. How do you intend to ring in the New Year?
2. Are you gonna make any New Year's resolutions? Do you follow through on them?
3. Are there any unusual New Year traditions or superstitions in your country?
5. Do you reflect back on the year at the end of December or just move on?
6. Are you going to make up for lost time next year/this year?