



Lantern Festival

Reading Worksheet — Level F | tahricteaches.com

The Lantern Festival, known in Mandarin as Yuanxiao Jie, marks the final day of the Lunar New Year celebrations and falls on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month. Although its precise origins remain a subject of scholarly debate, the festival is widely believed to have **originated** during the Han Dynasty more than two thousand years ago, when emperors are said to have lit lanterns in honor of the Buddha or to venerate Taiyi, the deity of heaven.

In contemporary East Asia, the festival is observed with remarkable enthusiasm across China, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, and various diaspora communities worldwide. Streets and temples are **adorned** with thousands of intricately crafted lanterns, ranging from simple paper spheres to elaborate sculptural installations depicting zodiac animals, mythological figures, and contemporary cultural icons.

One of the most cherished customs involves the consumption of tangyuan, glutinous rice balls filled with sweet sesame, peanut, or red bean paste. Their round shape is widely regarded as a **symbol** of family unity and harmonious togetherness, reflecting the broader cultural emphasis on reunion that pervades the holiday season.

Riddle-guessing, or caidengmi, constitutes another beloved tradition that demonstrates the festival's intellectual dimension. Participants attempt to decipher cryptic clues attached to lanterns, and successful solvers traditionally receive modest prizes. This **practice** has reinforced the festival's reputation as both a sensory spectacle and a celebration of literary wit.

In recent decades, the Lantern Festival has evolved into a major **tourist** attraction, with cities such as Pingxi in Taiwan releasing thousands of sky lanterns into the night air. While environmentalists have voiced legitimate concerns about resulting debris and fire hazards, organizers have begun adopting biodegradable materials. The festival thus continues to balance ancient ritual with modern innovation, offering an enduring window into the values and aesthetic sensibilities of Chinese-speaking cultures.

A. Vocabulary

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|-------------------------|--|
| 1. originated _____ | a. regard with deep respect or reverence |
| 2. adorned _____ | b. valued and treated with great care |
| 3. symbol _____ | c. decorated to make more attractive |
| 4. practice _____ | d. figure out meaning of something difficult to understand |
| 5. tourist _____ | e. able to be broken down naturally by living organisms |
| 6. venerate _____ | f. relating to people who travel for pleasure |
| 7. intricately _____ | g. in very detailed and complicated way |
| 8. cherished _____ | h. began or started in particular place or time |
| 9. decipher _____ | i. object or sign that represents idea or quality |
| 10. biodegradable _____ | j. custom or activity done regularly |

B. True or False

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| ___ 1. The Lantern Festival takes place on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month. | ___ 2. Scholars have reached complete agreement about the exact origins of the festival. |
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- ___ 3. The festival is believed to have originated during the Tang Dynasty.
- ___ 4. Tangyuan are glutinous rice balls that can be filled with sweet sesame, peanut, or red bean paste.
- ___ 5. The round shape of tangyuan symbolizes wealth and prosperity.
- ___ 6. Caidengmi is a tradition that involves solving riddles attached to lanterns.
- ___ 7. Pingxi in Taiwan is famous for releasing sky lanterns during the festival.
- ___ 8. Environmentalists have raised concerns about debris and fire hazards from sky lanterns.
- ___ 9. The festival is only celebrated in mainland China.
- ___ 10. Organizers have begun using biodegradable materials in response to environmental concerns.

C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: originated, adorned, symbol, practice, tourist, decipher, cherished, biodegradable

1. The festival _____ during the Han Dynasty more than two thousand years ago.
2. Temples and streets are _____ with thousands of intricately crafted lanterns.
3. The round shape of tangyuan is regarded as a _____ of family unity.
4. Participants attempt to _____ cryptic clues attached to lanterns to win modest prizes.
5. Organizers now use _____ materials to reduce environmental harm from sky lanterns.



D. Comprehension Questions

1. Why is the round shape of tangyuan considered culturally significant during the festival?
2. How does the tradition of caidengmi demonstrate the intellectual side of the festival?
3. What environmental concerns have arisen from sky lantern releases, and how are organizers responding?

E. Discussion Questions

1. Do you think traditional festivals should adapt to modern environmental concerns, even if it changes long-standing practices? Why or why not?
2. How do festivals like the Lantern Festival help preserve cultural identity in increasingly globalized societies?



Answer Key

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A. Vocabulary: 1-h, 2-c, 3-i, 4-j, 5-f, 6-a, 7-g, 8-b, 9-d, 10-e

B. True/False: 1-T, 2-F, 3-F, 4-T, 5-F, 6-T, 7-T, 8-T, 9-F, 10-T

C. Fill Blanks: 1-originated, 2-adorned, 3-symbol, 4-decipher, 5-biodegradable

D. Comprehension:

1. Its round shape symbolizes family unity and harmonious togetherness, reflecting the festival's emphasis on reunion.
2. Participants must decipher cryptic riddles attached to lanterns, showcasing the festival as a celebration of literary wit alongside visual spectacle.
3. Environmentalists have raised concerns about debris and fire hazards, prompting organizers to adopt biodegradable materials.