

## Welcoming the New Year



How do you celebrate New Year's Eve and New Year's Day? Do you make New Year's resolutions? This month's 'Did you know?' looks at what happens between the 31st December and 1st January in different parts of the world. Read on to find out more about how we welcome the new year...

As soon as Christmas is over, we'll again look forward to the beginning of another year. New Year's Eve is traditionally a celebration which we spend with friends and the last day of the old year is a good chance to look back at the previous twelve months and think about what we would like to change in the year to come. Read about the New Year celebrations in Scotland, teach your students the words of *Auld Lang Syne*, see if your New Year's resolution is among the most popular ones we have listed and try our little quiz on who around the globe celebrates New Year first.

### Hogmanay

This is the Scots word for the last day of the year. *Hogmanay* is one of the most important celebrations of the year for Scottish people and festivities last through the night of the 31st December, into the 1st and sometimes even into the 2nd January, which is a public holiday in Scotland.

One of the Hogmanay traditions is 'first footing', which begins immediately after midnight of the 31st. The aim is to be the first person to cross the threshold of friends' or neighbours' houses. 'First footers' bear a gift of salt, whisky, coal, shortbread or a black bun (each of these presents is supposed to bring a different type of luck) and are given food and drink. Tall, dark men are preferred as 'first footers'. This is a remnant of times when a blond stranger entering your house in the middle of the night was probably a Viking, and therefore not good news!

To find out **more about 'first footing'** just click here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A10358165>

## Auld Lang Syne

This poem by Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) has been set to music in the 18th century and is now popular all over the world. It's traditionally sung on New Year's Eve, with people interlocking their arms as they sing.

Why not sing this traditional with your students in your last lesson. Here's the text:

1. Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
and never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
and days of auld lang syne?

*For auld lang syne, my dear,  
for auld lang syne,  
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,  
for auld lang syne.*

2. And there's a hand, my trusty friend,  
and gie's a hand o' thine,  
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,  
for sake of auld lang syne.

*For auld lang syne, my dear, ...*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acxnmaVTIZA>

## New Year Resolutions

January is named after 'Janus', a Roman god who had two faces, one looking into the past and one looking into the future. Many people use the opportunity of the changing year to look back at things they want to change and to make New Year's resolutions for the future. Here are some of the most popular ones – is yours there too? Which resolutions do your students like best?

- Give up smoking
- Lose weight
- Donate more to charity
- Join a gym
- Spend more time with friends and family
- Learn something new
- Change job
- Eat more healthily
- Get out of debt
- Get organised

## Quotes

Lots of people have something to say about the New Year and especially about new year resolutions. Have a look at our selection of quotes about this time of year. Do you have a favourite one?

- "A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other." (Author Unknown)
- "Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each new year find you a better man." (Benjamin Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States)
- "Never tell your resolution beforehand, or it's twice as onerous a duty." (John Selden, English jurist)
- "New Year's eve is like every other night; there is no pause in the march of the universe, no breathless moment of silence among created things that the passage of another twelve months may be noted; and yet no man has quite the same thoughts this evening that come with the coming of darkness on other nights." (Hamilton Wright Mabie, American essayist, editor, critic, and lecturer)
- "Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true."  
(Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Victorian Poet Laureate, 1850)
- "People are so worried about what they eat between Christmas and the New Year, but they really should be worried about what they eat between the New Year and Christmas." (Author Unknown)

Find more New Year quotes by just clicking here:

<http://www.quote garden.com/new-year.html>