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PRESENTS

The Lunar New Year Early Years learning resource

Aim:

To promote culturally sensitive, informative and age-appropriate activities that educate on the meaning and purpose of Lunar New year (LNY).
This information resource aims to provide support and activity suggestions to EY educators. This pack is divided into 7 sections with information, activity descriptions and resources. When carried out as intended, these activities actively discourage stereotypes, tokenism and cultural appropriation.

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Why is LNY a good cultural festival to acknowledge in EYFS?

- It's a festive and fun time of year
- It's an opportunity to learn about a cultural festival
- Concepts such as goodwill, appreciating familial relationships, respecting nature and tidiness are promoted.

Notes for practitioners:

- Avoid wearing "costumes". More information about cultural appropriation in kidswear can be found in this article. Instead, show pictures or display traditional cultural clothing on mannequins.
- Avoid generic activities that condense ESEA cultures into singular tokens without an understanding of their history (e.g. sensory play with rice and chopsticks)
- Avoid making LNY sino-centric (focussed on China). It is celebrated in a number of countries in different ways, not only in China.

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What is Lunar New Year?:

- Lunar New Year kicks off on the first new moon of the lunisolar calendar, which is based on the cycles of the moon and ends on the next full moon fifteen days later.
- It is celebrated all around the world, particularly China (ChūnJié), Hong Kong, Mongolia (Tsagaan Sar), Indonesia (Imlek), Malaysia (Hokkien: Chap Goh Mei), Singapore, South Korea (Seollal), Taiwan, Vietnam (Tết) and the Philippines.

Seollal family meal in South Korea

Credit: Korea Tourism Organisation

The history of LNY broadly centred around creating offerings and enacting traditions that would bless the food harvests for the new year. Today, festivities often involve coming together with loved ones, enjoying good food, viewing a lion dance, making loud noises (traditionally to scare away bad spirits) and spring cleaning.

Lion dance

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Countries where LNY is a national holiday:
Although LNY is a national holiday in many countries, it is celebrated worldwide because people from those countries have travelled all over the world. It is ok for anyone to celebrate LNY, even if you're not from that country or from a particular culture, as long as it is respectful.

Activity sheet: Flags
Encourage children to identify where they live on the world map. Children can practise writing the names of the countries in the following sheets.

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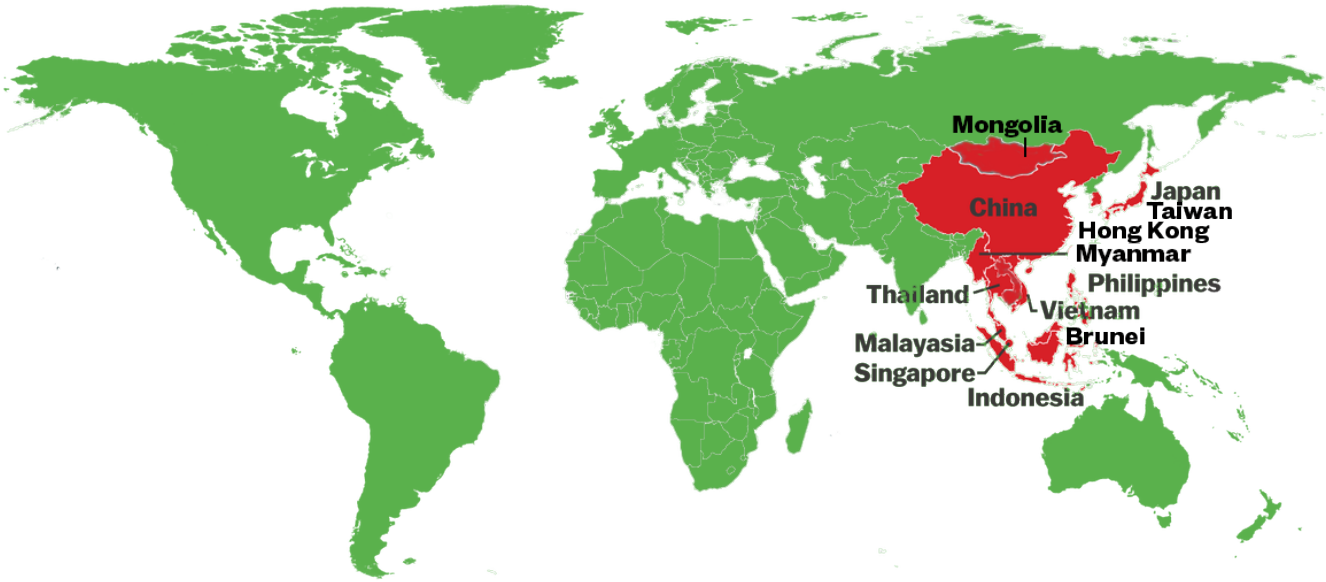
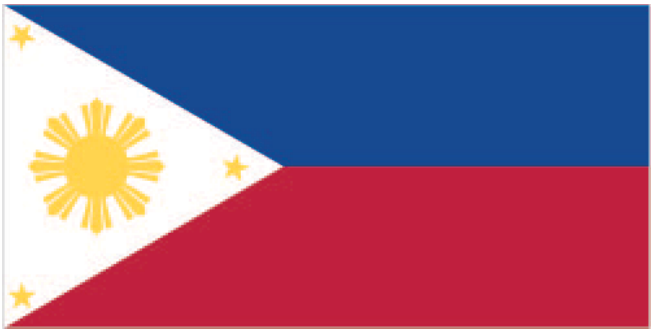
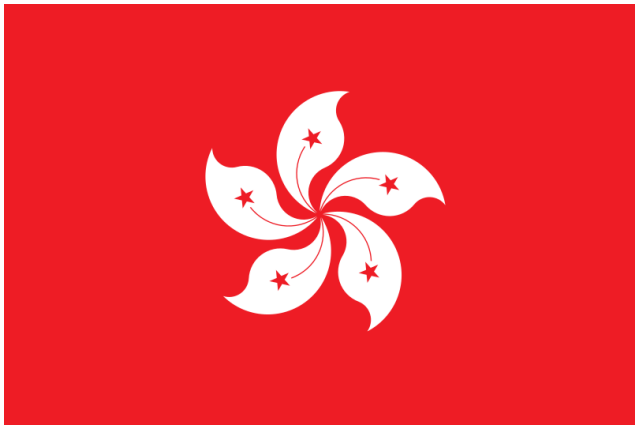
World flags

Lunar New Year is celebrated in many countries. Here are some of them.
Can you write the names of the countries?







Philippines Hong Kong

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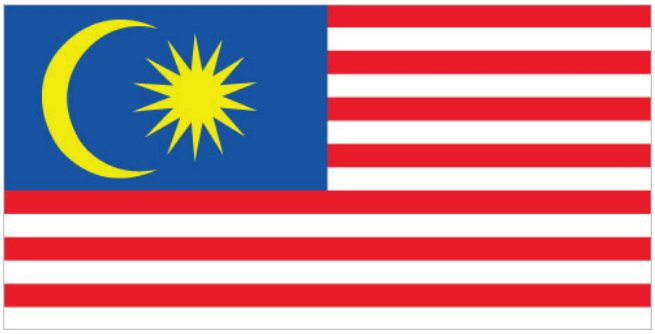
Mongolia



Malaysia

Singapore

Thailand

Vietnam

Cambodia

Indonesia

Brunei

South Korea

Myanmar

China

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Fireworks:
It is traditional to hold fireworks displays to welcome the LNY.

Activity suggestion:
Children can use a paintbrush or a toilet roll with the ends cut to create a stamp to dab different colour paints and create their own fireworks artwork.

Credit: Kids Activities with Alexa

Credit: Amy Phung/besea.n

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Activity sheet:
Follow the instructions on the next page where children can create their own red envelopes and paper lanterns.

Objects of LNY: Red envelopes
People from countries such as Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, South Korea, Philippines, China and Malaysia present red envelopes as gifts at social and family gatherings such as weddings or holidays such as Lunar New Year.

Objects of LNY: Lanterns
Lanterns are often hung to celebrate LNY. The lantern festival takes place on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, and it marks the end of the New Year celebration. Big displays of colourful lanterns are built showing different creatures, objects and scenes for people to view.

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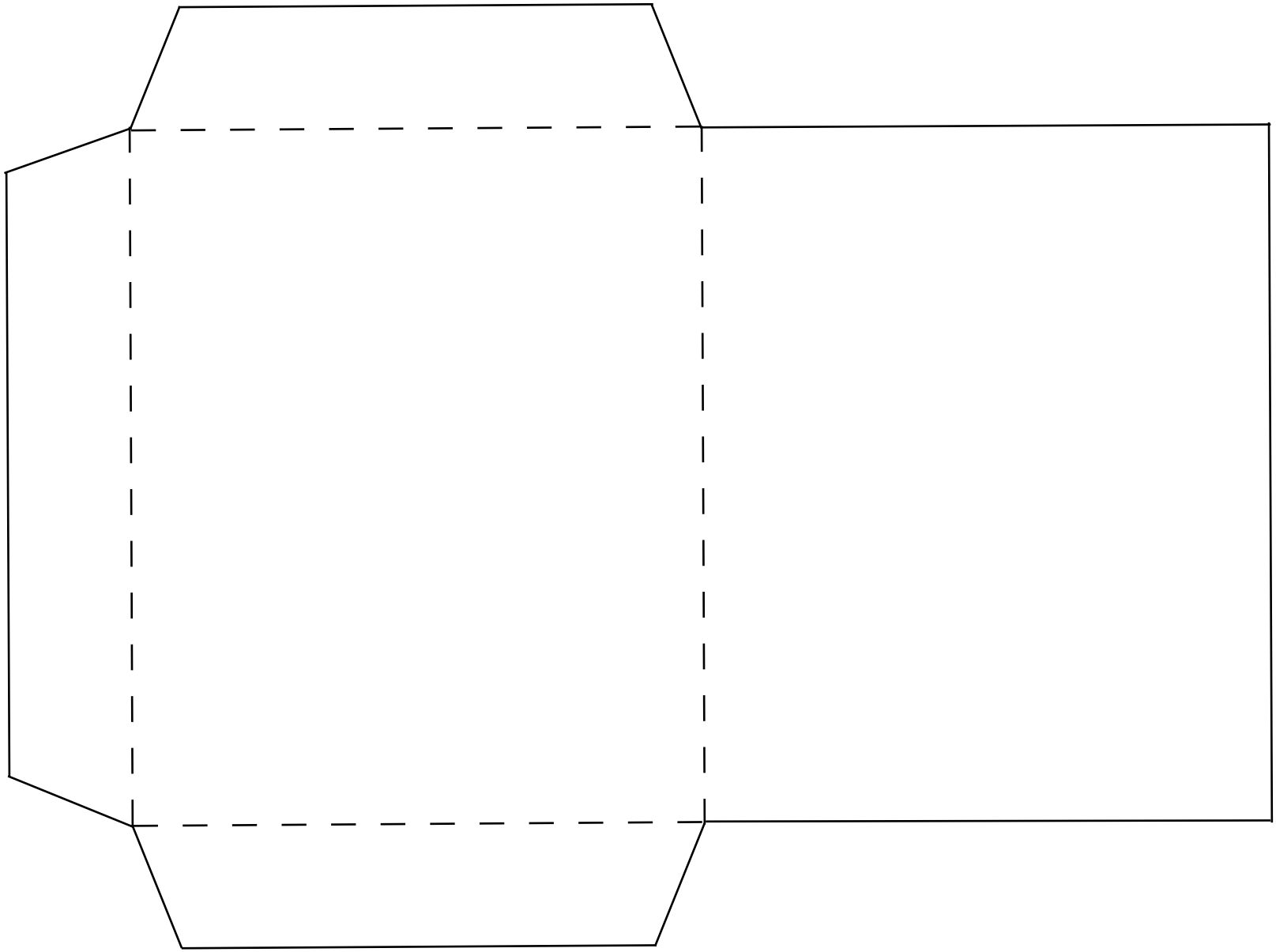
Red envelope template

Cut out the template and score along the dotted lines. Colour and decorate with red pens and gold glitter. Fold along the dotted lines and stick down the flaps, leaving one flap open. Put a token or chocolate coins inside and give to your friends!

Tip: Try printing on red paper.



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Lantern making instructions:

1. Cut off the end of the paper. Put this aside to use as the handle.
2. Decorate the paper with pens, stickers, tissue paper and glitter.
3. Fold in half along the dotted line.
4. Cut the marked lines along the sheet.
5. Unfold the paper.
6. Roll the paper around and match the short edges.
7. Stick ends together with tape to create a roll.
8. Staple the handle to the top of the lantern.

Video instruction: click here.

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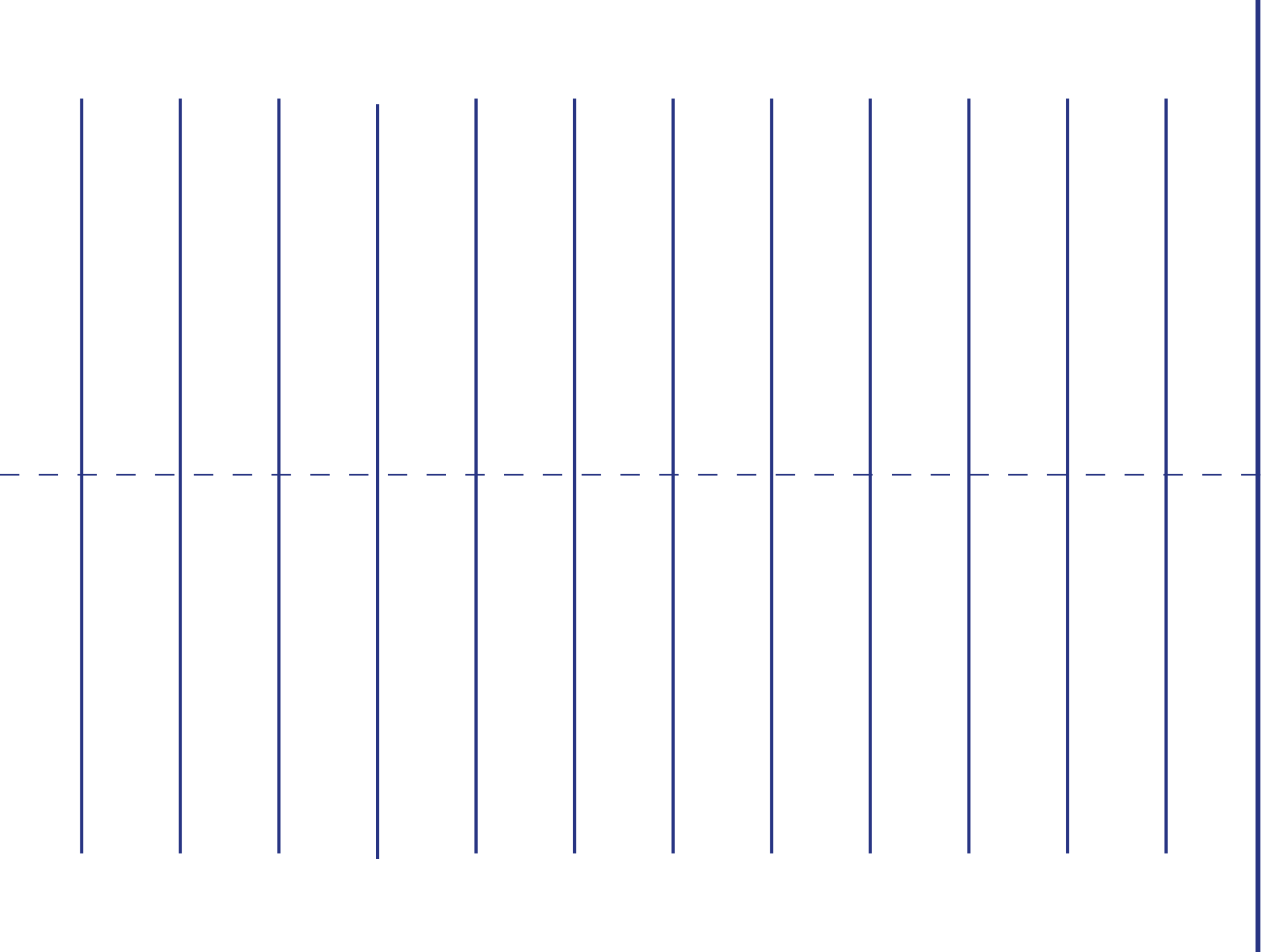

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The lion dance:
This performance is a form of traditional dance in various ESEA countries in which performers mimic a lion's movements in a lion costume to bring good luck and fortune. The lion dance is usually performed during the LNY and other cultural and religious festivals.

Activity sheet:
Two templates are included in this pack, one with a puppet lion to create, suitable for preschoolers or Year 1, and a 2D lion mask more suitable for toddlers. Encourage children to look at videos or photos of lion dances and to decorate their puppets/masks with pens and tissue paper.

Lion dance or múa lân dance in Vietnam

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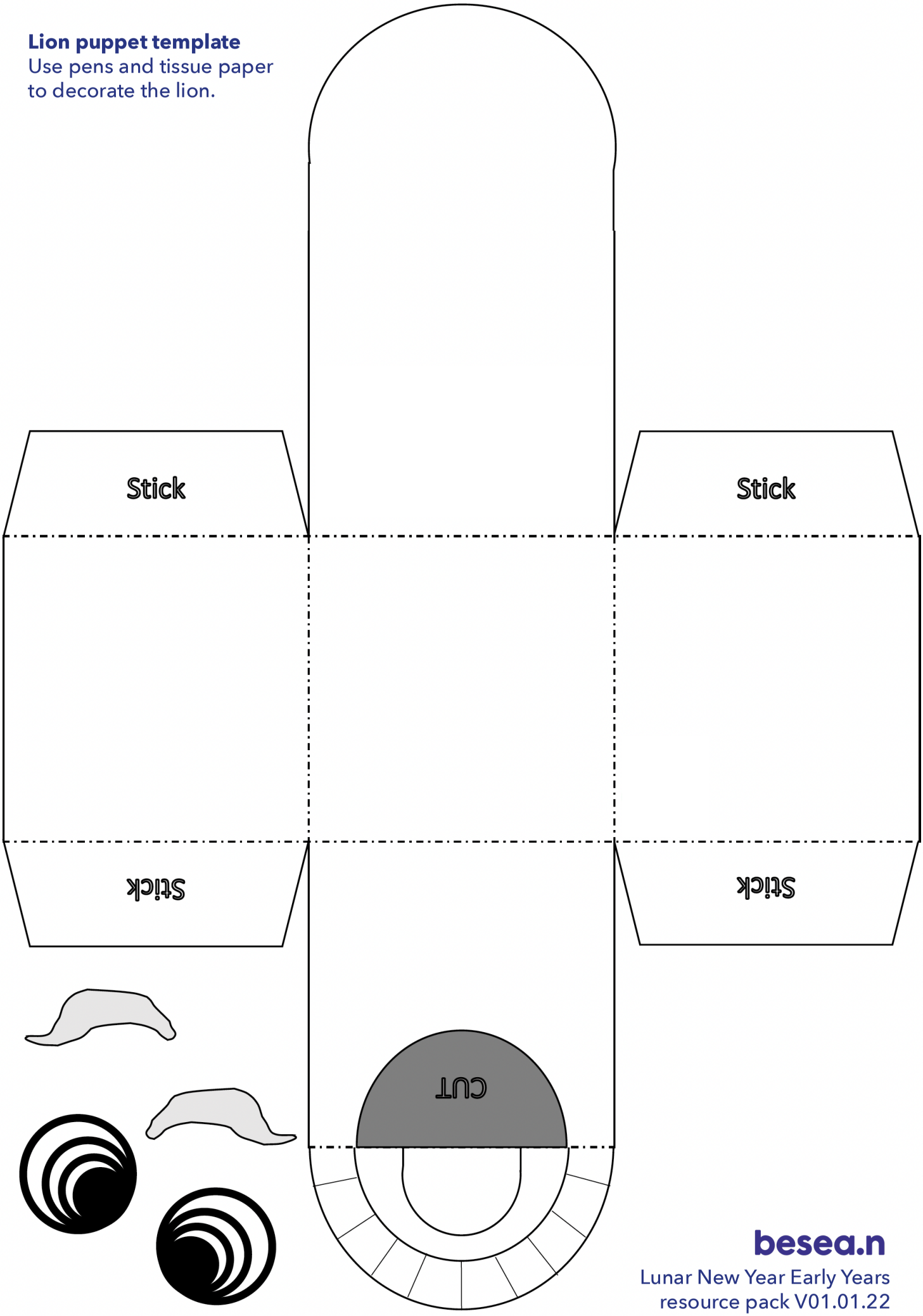
Lion puppet template
Use pens and tissue paper to decorate the lion.



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Lion mask template

Use pens and tissue paper to decorate the lion.

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Lunchtime:
Lunchtime is also an opportunity to incorporate LNY traditions. Prepare the following food which is often eaten during LNY.

- Spring rolls
- Trays of cut fruit
- Shred vegetables to imitate Prosperity Salad
- Sticky rice dumplings

Longevity noodles (recipe)

Credit: The Woks of Life

Tangerines/oranges

Dumplings

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Zodiac story:
The ESEA zodiac is a classification scheme based on the lunar calendar that assigns an animal and its reputed attributes to each year in a repeating twelve-year cycle. Originating from China, the zodiac and its variations remain popular in many East Asian and South East Asian countries, such as Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand.

Recommended books:
The Great Race
Ruby's Chinese New Year

Read-aloud links:
CBeebies Zodiac story
Ruby's Chinese New Year

NOTE:
Zodiac animals can differ depending on the country, e.g. the Ox is replaced by a Water buffalo and Rooster is replaced by a Chicken in the Vietnamese zodiac.

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Which year were you born? Find out your zodiac animal!

RAT	OX	TIGER	RABBIT	DRAGON	SNAKE	HORSE	GOAT	MONKEY	ROOSTER	DOG	PIG
2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947
1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923
1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911

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Music time:
Setting off firecrackers and banging drums is aimed at warding off bad luck and welcoming the new year. The lion dance is usually performed to a steady drum beat.

Lion dance with firecrackers in the Philippines

Chinese toy drum (not suitable for under 3)

Activity suggestion:
Make music and loud noises, bang drums to welcome in the new year. Encourage children to dance and be active. If they have made lion heads for the art activity, encourage them to use them as part of their dance.

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End of the day:
New year symbolises new beginnings. People traditionally sweep and clean up their homes.

Cleaning toy

Activity suggestion:
Encourage children to tidy the classroom. Use toys such as sweeps or cloths to clear surfaces.

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About besea.n

besea.n, Britain's East and South East Asian Network, is a non-profit, grassroots organisation founded by six East and South East Asian (ESEA) women, whose mission is to promote positive representation of ESEA people in the UK and tackle discrimination at all levels in our society.

Keep up to date with our work by visiting our website: **besean.co.uk**. Follow us on **Instagram** or **Twitter** and if you have any questions, send us an email at **hello@besean.co.uk**. Thank you!

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