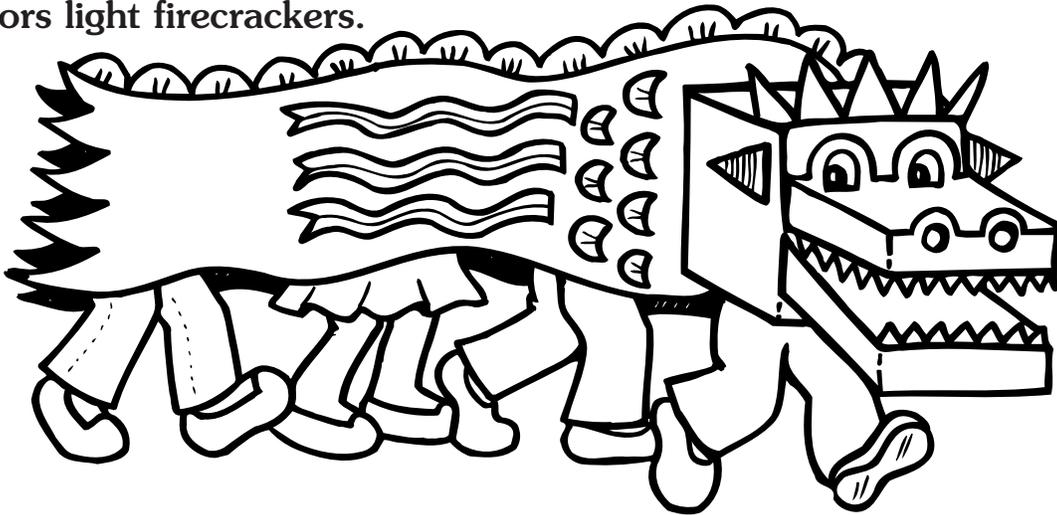


New Year's Dragon!

On the third day of the New Year, the Feast of Lanterns is held throughout China. Lanterns of all shapes, colors and sizes are hung along the streets and in the homes of families. The New Year's Dragon leads a wonderful parade down the city's busiest street.

According to Chinese legend, the Dragon is not a horrible monster but rather a protector against evil spirits. He is the symbol of goodness and strength. This great New Year's Dragon is made of silk and paper and is brightly painted. The head is a large mask, made of papier-mache and bamboo. The men of the town put on the Dragon costume and weave up and down the street, puffing smoke as spectators light firecrackers.



Your students can make their own New Year's Dragon with imagination and a few simple materials.

Cover a large cardboard box with brightly colored paper. Cut another box or two box halves in half and cover them with paper as well. Insert the two halves into an open end of the first box and glue in place, as shown in the illustration. Decorate with colored paper, glitter, tempera paint, etc.

Long sections of colored butcher paper can be used for the Dragon's tail. Staple the top edge of two sections of butcher paper and add a spiny paper ridge or fringe. Glue the tail to the back of the Dragon's head. (The Dragon's tail can be made as long as you like, depending on how many children will be inside the costume.) Decorate the tail in the same way as the head.

Children ringing bells and tapping tambourines can provide the music for your parade. Other children can hold class-made paper lanterns during the procession. No doubt about it, your Chinese New Year parade will be the hit of the school.