

Name: _____

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2022

At the start of each year, people all over the world take time out to think over the year that has just passed and to plan for the year to come.



Many people see the beginning of the New Year as an opportunity to "turn over a new leaf" and get a fresh start on life. This is why people make New Year's resolutions.

New Year's resolutions are promises that people make to themselves to do things differently than they have in the past. Often the promises are about being nicer to others, or about improving oneself.

As far as we know, the custom of making New Year's resolutions started around 4000 years ago with the Babylonians. The ancient Babylonians (who lived in what is now Iraq) made promises to their gods at the start of each year. The Babylonian year began in mid-March at the beginning of spring when crops were planted. The Babylonians believed that by keeping their New Year's promises they would gain favor with the gods and ensure a bountiful harvest. On the other hand, breaking their promises would put them out of favor and invite disaster.

The Babylonian practice of New Year's resolutions carried over into Roman times. The Romans moved the beginning of the year from March (named after the god Mars) to January which they named in honor of Janus, the god of beginnings and endings. Janus has two faces, one looking back into the past and the other looking forward toward the future. At the start of each year, the Romans asked for forgiveness from their enemies for past wrongs and offered promises of future good conduct to Janus.

The practice of making New Year's resolutions has continued. In the middle ages, knights took the "peacock vow" (*les vœux du paon*) at the end of each year to re-affirm their commitment to chivalry (honorable behavior). In colonial times, the Puritans, who did not take part in the festivities of the holiday season, would spend the first day of the New Year thinking about past mistakes and resolving to improve in the year ahead.

Today, instead of making promises to gods, or God, we make promises to ourselves. However, the idea behind making New Year's resolutions is still the same—to commit to being better people in the year ahead than we have been in the past.

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Your 2022 Resolutions



1. What are New Year's resolutions?
2. Why do people make New Year's resolutions?
3. With whom did the practice of making New Year's resolutions start? To whom did they make promises? Why?
4. For whom is the month of January named? By whom? Why?
5. Most people (2 out of 3) do not keep their New Year's resolutions. Do you think it is a good idea to make New Year's resolutions even if they are hard to keep and you end up breaking them? Explain.
6. Now, you are going to write your own resolutions for 2022. Think of all the ways that you can be better this year than you were last year. You might resolve to be nicer to your siblings, or not to fight on the playground, or to work harder in school, or not to complain or talk back when your parents tell you to do something, or not to eat too much junk food, etc. GOOD WRITING!