

自分で作る年賀状

Create your own

New Year's card (*nengajō*)

In Japan it is customary to send New Year greetings cards (*nengajō*) to relatives, friends and colleagues. Decorated with special greetings and seasonal illustrations, *nengajō* are usually delivered on New Year's Day. Colour in and cut out our selection of pictures associated with the New Year season to decorate your own original *nengajō*.

明けましておめでとうございます

Akemashite omedetō gozaimasu

This is a polite Japanese greeting used to wish someone a Happy New Year. The phrase is often found on New Year cards.

鏡餅

Kagami-mochi

The *Kagami-mochi* (lit. 'mirror rice cake') decoration is usually made of two rice cakes, round like a mirror, with a bitter orange (*daidai*) on top. Additional decorations of a lobster, fern leaves, dried *konbu* seaweed and persimmons can also be added. It is often placed on the household altar where the *kami*, Shinto 'spirits' or 'gods', are enshrined.



宝船・小槌

Treasure Ship (Takara-bune) and Hammer (Kozuchi)

The Treasure Ship is loaded with coral, gold, bales of rice and jewels, and carries the Seven Gods of Fortune. It is said if you place a picture of the Treasure Ship under your pillow at New Year, you may have a lucky dream. Daikokuten, one of the Seven Gods of Fortune, carries a hammer (*kozuchi*), a symbol of wealth and good luck. If you wave the mallet while making a wish, your wish will come true.



十二支

12 Zodiac Animals (Jūnishi)

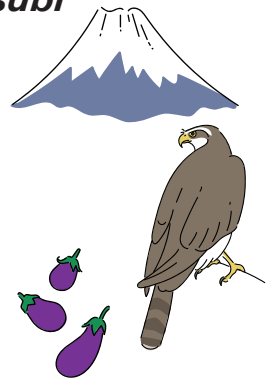
Japan follows a 12-year astrological cycle where each year is represented by a different animal. The 12 animals in order are: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Wild Boar.

Although this system originated in China, it is a large part of the New Year celebrations in Japan which occur in January in accordance with the solar calendar. The main feature for a New Year card is often the particular zodiac animal associated with the coming year.

一富士二鷹三茄子

Ichī-Fuji Ni-Taka San-Nasubi

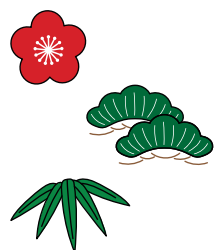
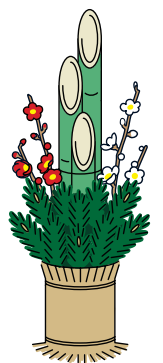
The old Japanese proverb *Ichī-Fuji Ni-Taka San-Nasubi* describes three lucky items that might appear in your first dream (*hatsu-yume*) of the new year: the first, Mt Fuji, second, a hawk (*taka*) and, third, an aubergine (*nasubi*). There are many theories why these items are considered to bring luck. One involves Japanese wordplay: *fuji* sounds like *buji* (safe), *nasubi* like *nasu* (accomplish) and *taka* can also mean high or prosperity.



門松・松竹梅

Kadomatsu and Pine, Bamboo and Plum

Kadomatsu are popular New Year decorations placed at the entrance of homes to welcome in *kami*: Shinto 'spirits' or 'gods'. *Kadomatsu* are made from pine and bamboo, often decorated with plum blossom. These three plants are known as the *Sankan-no-sanyū* (lit. 'three friends of winter'). They symbolize long-life, resilience and renewal.



- ☐ Art materials to colour in the illustrations and decorate the card
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glue
- ☐ Printer

- 1** Print the worksheet and colour in the illustrations with your art materials.
- 2** Get another piece of paper to use as a base card. It can be any colour or size you like!
- 3** Choose the animal which corresponds to the New Year and colour it in.

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- 宝
花
鳥
山
門
松
竹
餅
しめ
鐘
しめ
松
竹
餅
しめ
鐘
しめ
- 賀正
迎春
おめでと
明けまして

