

New Year's Eve and Day: Fresh Starts

B1 | Adults / Teens | Reading + Vocabulary + Discussion | 50-60 minutes

BEFORE YOU READ

Talk with a partner. Why do people like the idea of a fresh start?

1. Match the words (1-6) with the definitions (A-F).

1. **countdown**

A. think carefully about the past

2. **resolution**

B. counting the final seconds before an event

3. **midnight**

C. an action repeated on a special occasion

4. **reflect**

D. a firm decision to change something

5. **optimistic**

E. expecting good things to happen

6. **ritual**

F. twelve o'clock at night

2. Read the article. The bold words are the vocabulary from Activity 1.

1. New Year's Eve is the last day of the calendar year, and New Year's Day is the first. In many places, people meet with friends or family and wait for **midnight**. A public **countdown**, music and fireworks can make the moment feel dramatic.
2. The new year also encourages people to **reflect** on the past. They think about successes, problems and plans. Some make a New Year's **resolution**, such as exercising more, saving money or learning a new skill.
3. Not everyone makes resolutions, and many people know that plans can be hard to keep. Still, a simple **ritual** can be useful. It gives people a moment to stop, decide what matters and begin again.
4. New-year customs differ around the world. Some people eat symbolic food, clean their homes or call relatives. These traditions can make people feel connected and **optimistic**, even when the future is uncertain.

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UNDERSTAND, DISCUSS AND WRITE

3. Comprehension. Answer in complete sentences. Use the article to help you.

1. What happens at midnight for many people?

2. Why do people reflect at the new year?

3. What is a resolution?

4. Why can a ritual be useful?

5. How do customs differ?

4. Discuss. Talk in small groups. Give reasons and examples.

- Do resolutions work for you?
- What would you like to learn next year?
- Why are public countdowns popular?
- Which new-year custom would you like to try?

5. Homework: Write about a goal.

Write 120-150 words about one realistic goal for the next year and how you will work towards it.

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ANSWER KEY AND TEACHING NOTE

Vocabulary matching

1. countdown - B
2. resolution - D
3. midnight - F
4. reflect - A
5. optimistic - E
6. ritual - C

Comprehension answers

1. What happens at midnight for many people?

They welcome the new year, often with fireworks.

2. Why do people reflect at the new year?

They think about the past and make plans.

3. What is a resolution?

It is a firm decision to change something.

4. Why can a ritual be useful?

It gives people time to decide what matters.

5. How do customs differ?

People may eat symbolic food, clean homes or call relatives.

Teaching note

Compare matching answers before reading. Accept other article-supported comprehension answers; discussion and homework answers vary. Discuss customs respectfully, distinguishing religious, cultural and personal traditions.