

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **The History of New Year's Day**

Did you know people celebrated New Year's Day four thousand years ago? In fact, New Year's Day is one of the oldest holidays on record (that we know about).

The new year didn't always begin on January 1st. A long time ago, people started their year on the first new Moon. The new moon occurs when the Moon, in its monthly motion around the Earth, lies between the Earth and the Sun. In ancient times, they considered it a new Moon when they saw the first visible crescent of the moon. This happened in the Springtime.

Beginning the new year in spring was logical. It's thought of as the time of rebirth, when people plant new crops, and flowers blossom. Today, we celebrate the new year beginning on New Year's Eve (the night before New Year's Day), and continue celebrating on New Year's Day. Thousand of years ago, people celebrated the new year for eleven days.

In 153 BC, the Roman Senate set January 1st as the beginning of the new year. We've been celebrating New Year's Day on January 1st ever since. Over time, we've developed traditions for celebrating the new year. Has your mom served you black-eyed peas for good luck and cabbage to bring you money? Do you watch college football on New Year's Day? Did you make your New Year's resolution? Did you stay up until midnight to ring in the New Year? These are some of the things people do today to start of their year.

One popular way to ring in the new year is to sing the song, "Auld Lang Syne" at midnight on New Year's Eve. This is an old Scottish song that means the "good old days." Happy New Year!

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Read the questions. Circle the answer you think is correct. You may look back in the passage to find evidence to prove your thinking.

1. Ancient people celebrated New Year's Day in the -

- a. Winter
- b. Spring
- c. Summer
- d. Fall

2. The new moon occurs when -

- a. people begin planting crops and flowers blossom.
- b. in ancient times people celebrated the new year.
- c. the Moon lies between the Earth and the Sun.
- d. the Moon rises in the sky at night.

3. The word ancient means -

- a. a long time ago in the past
- b. very old people
- c. celebrations a long time ago
- d. the old new year

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4. The word rebirth means -

- a. a baby is born
- b. a new start
- c. the old moon
- d. the first new moon

5. The word tradition means -

- a. a celebration
- b. the new moon
- c. a new year
- d. something handed down

6. The word resolution means -

- a. to set a goal
- b. to start a tradition
- c. to celebrate a new year
- d. to sing a song

## Answers

1. b

2. c

3. a

4. b

5. d

6. a