

# Write a New Year's Card

## 年賀状

## THE JAPANESE HOUSE ACTIVITIES

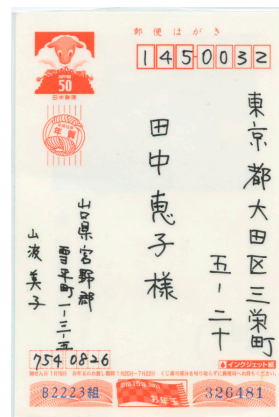


Learn about the custom of *nengajo* (Japanese New Year greeting cards) and create your own.

### 1. Learn about *Nengajo*

A *nengajo* is a New Year's greeting postcard. Japanese people send these to their relatives, friends, and colleagues as the first greeting of the New Year. People usually prepare and drop off their *nengajo* cards in the mailbox before December 25<sup>th</sup>. All the *nengajo* cards are stored in the post office until New Year's Day and on the morning of January 1<sup>st</sup>, they are delivered to everyone all at once. *Nengajo* have a variety of messages, such as wishes for a happy New Year, New Year's resolutions, and more. Often, they include an illustration of the zodiac animal of the coming year.

The 12-animal zodiac calendar is used in many countries in Asia, although it originally came from China. Each country has developed a slightly different set of animals relevant to that country. For example, the Japanese zodiac set has boars instead of pigs. Around the New Year in Japan, you will see many decorations with the animal of the year; both the animal of the year and the people who were born under that animal are celebrated.



**TIME:**  
20 minutes

- MATERIALS:**
- *Nengajo* activity sheet
  - Pens or pencils
  - Colored pencils, markers, or crayons for drawing

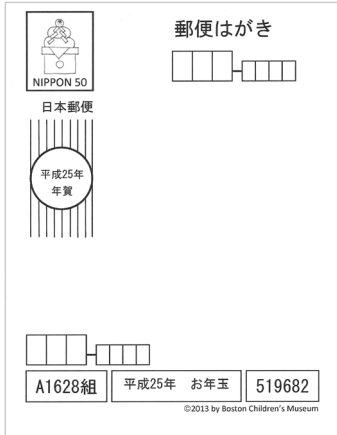
**PRONUNCIATION GUIDE:**  
*Nengajo*: Nay-n-gah-joe



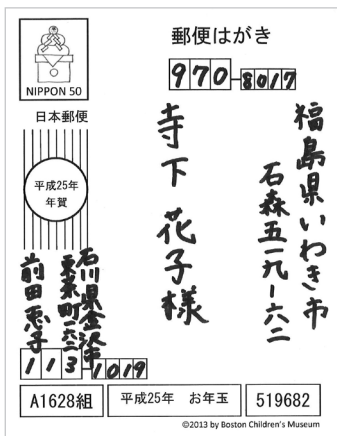
## 2. Make Your Own Nengajo

*Before you start*—Check the zodiac animal chart and find out the animal of the year for the coming year.

1. Cut out the cards and turn it over to the blank side. Draw the animal of the year and write your New Year's greeting message.



2. Write the recipient's address on the other side of the card.



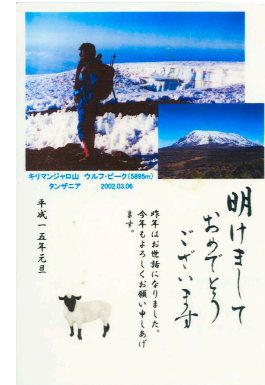
Written for a Japanese address



Written for an American address

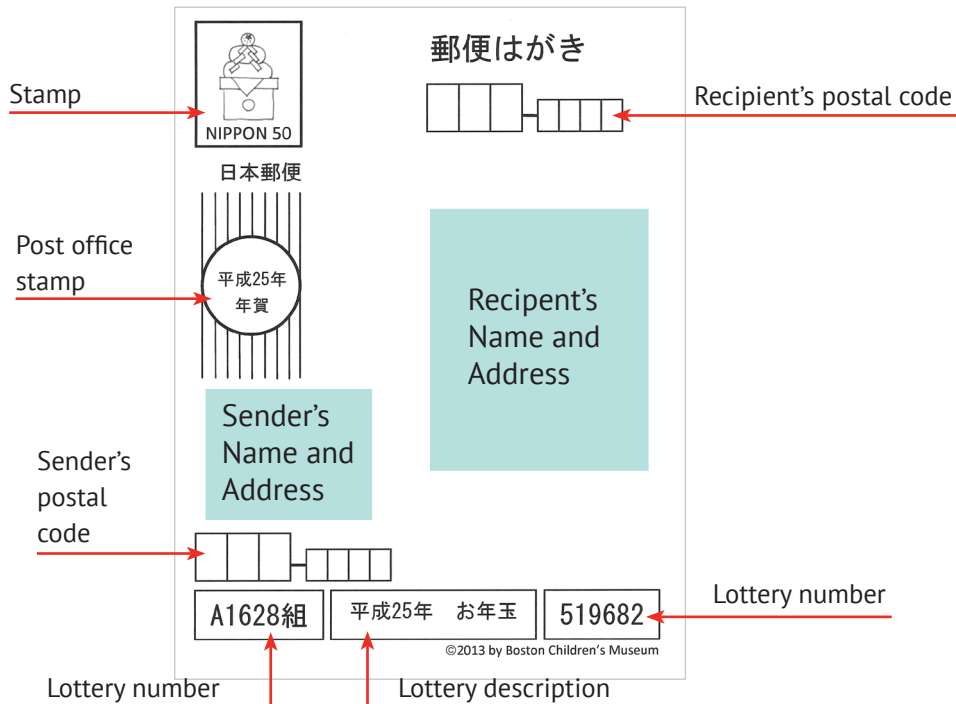
### 3. Things to Talk about

- Let's say "Happy New Year" together; in Japan you would say: "Akemashite omedetou gozaimasu!"



akemashite: ah-kay-mah-she-tay  
 omedetou: oh-may-day-toe-oooh  
 gozaimasu: go-zah-ee-mah-sue

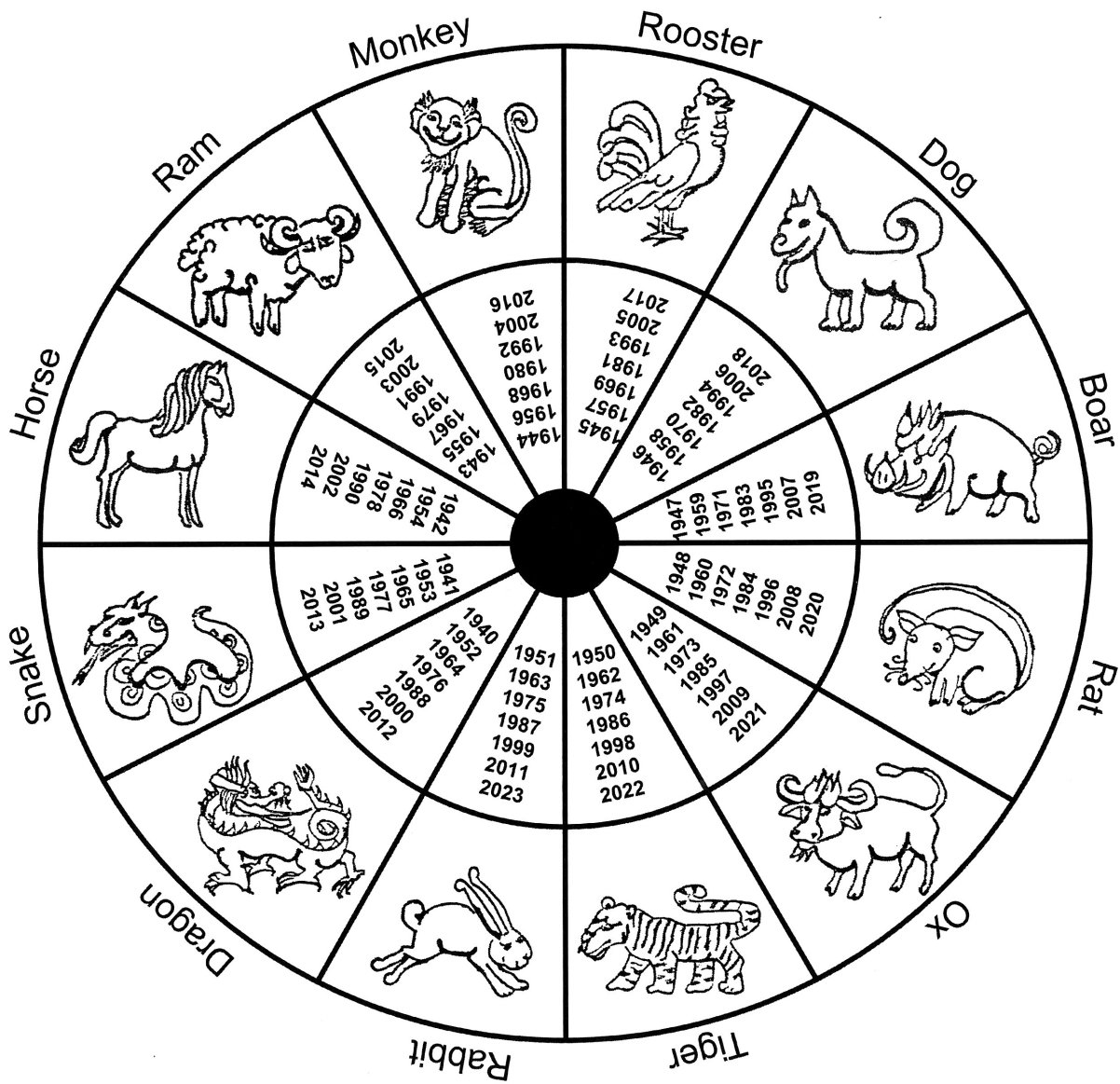
- In Japan, the *nengajo* have numbers written on the bottom that correspond to a lottery number. Each card has a different number so everyone who receives *nengajo* is entered into the lottery to win prizes. Prizes can range from small toys to refrigerators and cash! The more *nengajo* you receive the better your chances of winning!

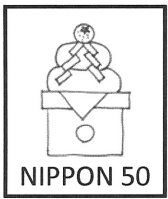




- Everyone has a zodiac animal! What is the animal for the year you were born in?
- All of the animals have very different personalities that make them either fast friends or rivals! Does your animal match your personality?

**Ox:** Loyal in friendship and hardworking, they are very patient in all aspects of life, preferring a “slow-and-steady” pace. But they can also be very stubborn.

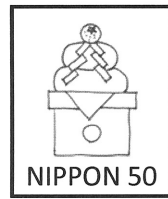




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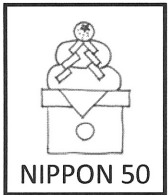
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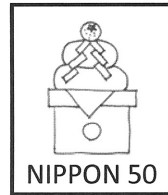
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