

# Year of the Dragon



Once every twelve years, the lunar calendar celebrates the majestic Year of the Dragon, an event deeply entrenched in tradition and rich with symbolism. It stands out, revered and embraced with fervor, perhaps more than any other sign in the zodiac cycle. Those born in the Dragon year are often thought to embody the creature's potent and auspicious attributes. They are considered to have natural authority, brimming with vitality and charisma, which sets them apart in a society that values leadership and confidence. The dragon itself, a mythological being, symbolizes strength, fortune, and prosperity—qualities that fortify its esteemed status amongst the twelve zodiac animals.

The Dragon year incites grand celebrations, cascading across various cultures that observe the lunar calendar. Streets become rivers of red, with banners, lanterns, and dragons made of silk and paper undulating to the rhythm of drums and gongs. People exchange pleasantries and gifts, many involving the symbol of the dragon, to cultivate good luck and dismiss wayward spirits. This spirit of celebration stretches far beyond a single day; it permeates weeks of festivities and activities meant to honor tradition while looking ahead to a year of bounteous opportunities. These celebrations not only unite communities but also connect generations, weaving a rich tapestry of shared stories and customs that traverse time.

In acknowledging the significant influence of the lunar calendar, one appreciates the harmony it seeks with the natural world, an embodiment of a more rhythmic and cyclical approach to time. The twelve-year cycle mirrors the pace of nature, with each year assigned an animal that offers guidance and perspective for the months that unfold. The dragon, though not a creature found in

nature, occupies a seminal place in folklore and minds, illustrating that myth can be as influential as reality in shaping cultures and beliefs.

The origin of the zodiac and its incorporation into the lunar calendar are shrouded in antiquity, with many stories weaving together threads of myth and history. It is believed that the Jade Emperor summoned all creatures to participate in a race, with the first twelve to cross a river immortalized in the zodiac. The dragon, known for its might and speed, could have easily won but chose to help others during the race, revealing a spirit of benevolence.

Such tales underscore the profound meanings and life lessons imbued within these zodiac signs, passed from one generation to the next. Parents recount these stories, imparting wisdom and fostering a sense of continuity and belonging, while also instilling traditional values in their children. The Dragon year thus becomes a time not just for festivity, but for the reaffirmation of societal and familial bonds.

A considerable part of the allure surrounding the Dragon year is the opportunity to reset and start anew. Similar to the mythical Phoenix, the Dragon inspires rebirth and transformation—a powerful metaphor for personal and communal growth. It is a time when individuals reflect on the past year's achievements and shortcomings, setting goals and intentions for the new cycle. Businesses, too, often capitalize on this sentiment, promoting themes of renewal and prosperity in their offerings and advertisements.

The fusion of the old and the new is visible as time-honored practices mesh with contemporary festivities, illustrating the ever-evolving nature of tradition. Dragon dances become more elaborate with advances in technology and artistry, merging ancient symbolism with modern aesthetics. Yet, the essence remains unchanged, preserving the core of what the Dragon represents: the potential for greatness and the pursuit of excellence.

As the Dragon year draws to a close, individuals and communities partake in reflective practices, giving thanks for the blessings and lessons of the year. The anticipation builds again as the cycle progresses, awaiting the next animal in the sequence to impart its unique influence on the collective consciousness. And thus, the perpetual dance of the zodiac spins on, a celebration of the past, an embrace of the present, and a hopeful gaze toward the future.

## CEFR Level Card

**General Level:** C1.1

**Vocabulary:** C1.5

**Verb Forms:** A2.8

**Sentences:** B2.4

## Vocabulary

**aesthetics** NOUN +∞ 1

Definition (En):

**n.** (art) the branch of philosophy dealing with beauty and taste (emphasizing the evaluative criteria that are applied to art)

**allure** NOUN C2 1

Definition (En):

**n.** the power to entice or attract through personal charm

**anew** ADV +∞ 1

Definition (En):

**r** again but in a new or different way

**antiquity** NOUN C2 1

Definition (En):

**n.** the historic period preceding the Middle Ages in Europe

**n.** an artifact surviving from the past

**auspicious** ADJ C2 1

Definition (En):

**a.** auguring favorable circumstances and good luck

**bounteous** ADJ +∞ 1

Definition (En):

**s** given or giving freely

**brim** VERB C2 1

Definition (En):

**n.** the top edge of a vessel or other container

**n.** a circular projection that sticks outward from the crown of a hat

**v.** be completely full

**v.** fill as much as possible

**cascade** VERB C2 1

Definition (En):

- n.** a small waterfall or series of small waterfalls
- n.** a succession of stages or operations or processes or units
- v.** rush down in big quantities, like a cascade
- v.** arrange (open windows) on a computer desktop so that they overlap each other, with the title bars visible

**cultivate** VERB C1 1

Definition (En):

- v.** foster the growth of
- v.** prepare for crops

**entrenched** ADJ +∞ 1

Definition (En):

- s.** dug in
- s.** established firmly and securely

**lantern** NOUN +∞ 1

Definition (En):

- n.** light in a transparent protective case

**partake** VERB C2 1

Definition (En):

- v.** have some of the qualities or attributes of something
- v.** have, give, or receive a share of
- v.** consume

**summon** VERB C2 1

Definition (En):

- v.** call in an official matter, such as to attend court
- v.** ask to come

**undulate** VERB +∞ 1

Definition (En):

v. increase and decrease in volume or pitch, as if in waves

s. having a wavy margin and rippled surface

## Phrases

PHRASE	COUNT	SENTENCES
brim with (something)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They are considered to have natural authority, <b>brimming with</b> vitality and charisma, which sets them apart in a society that values leadership and confidence.</li> </ul>
capitalize on (something)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Businesses, too, often <b>capitalize on</b> this sentiment, promoting themes of renewal and prosperity in their offerings and advertisements.</li> </ul>
draw to a close	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the Dragon year <b>draws to a close</b>, individuals and communities partake in reflective practices, giving thanks for the blessings and lessons of the year.</li> </ul>
good luck	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People exchange pleasantries and gifts, many involving the symbol of the dragon, to cultivate <b>good luck</b> and dismiss wayward spirits.</li> </ul>
look ahead to (something)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This spirit of celebration stretches far beyond a single day; it permeates weeks of festivities and activities meant to honor tradition while <b>looking ahead to</b> a year of bounteous opportunities.</li> </ul>
mesh with (someone or something)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fusion of the old and the new is visible as time-honored practices <b>mesh with</b> contemporary festivities, illustrating the ever-evolving nature of tradition.</li> </ul>

partake in	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the Dragon year draws to a close, individuals and communities <b>partake in</b> reflective practices, giving thanks for the blessings and lessons of the year.</li> </ul>
pass from (something)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Such tales underscore the profound meanings and life lessons imbued within these zodiac signs, <b>passed from</b> one generation to the next.</li> </ul>
reflect on (someone or something)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a time when individuals <b>reflect on</b> the past year's achievements and shortcomings, setting goals and intentions for the new cycle.</li> </ul>
shroud (something) in (something else)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The origin of the zodiac and its incorporation into the lunar calendar are <b>shrouded in</b> antiquity, with many stories weaving together threads of myth and history.</li> </ul>

# Reading Comprehension Exercises

## True / False / Not Given

1. The Dragon is seen as the most highly regarded of all the zodiac signs due to its attributes.
2. During the Dragon year, celebrations last for only a day across the different cultures that follow the lunar calendar.
3. The lunar calendar's twelve-year cycle is said to be representative of the natural cycle of the world.
4. In the race that determined the animals of the zodiac, the Dragon won by taking advantage of its superior abilities.
5. Traditions related to the Dragon year are handed down solely through written texts.
6. Businesses engage with the theme of renewal during the Dragon year to encourage consumerism.
7. The dragon dance is losing its traditional significance with the advent of modern technology.
8. Dragon year festivities include the use of firecrackers to ward off evil spirits.
9. The Dragon year offers a chance for people to look back on past mistakes and improve themselves.
10. The cultural practices of the Dragon year remain static and are not influenced by modern changes.



## Multiple Choice

1. What is the primary reason the Dragon year is described as a time for societal and familial reaffirmation?
  - A) Because of the widespread celebrations
  - B) Due to the personal growth it inspires
  - C) Owing to the storytelling that imparts wisdom
  - D) As a result of business promotions
2. How does the text illustrate the influence of myth on culture?
  - A) By describing the Dragon's presence in nature
  - B) Through the events of the zodiac race
  - C) By outlining the transformation into a Phoenix
  - D) By highlighting the technological advancements in dragon dances
3. Why is the dragon considered to have a 'natural authority' among those born in its year?
  - A) Because of the colors and decorations used in celebrations
  - B) Due to the narrative of the zodiac race
  - C) Owing to its mythological symbolism of strength and fortune
  - D) As a consequence of the harmony with the natural world
4. What does the text suggest about businesses during the Dragon year?
  - A) They reduce operations during festivities
  - B) They participate in the tradition of storytelling
  - C) They offer discounts to promote sales
  - D) They tailor themes of renewal and prosperity in their marketing
5. Based on the text, what role do the dragon and other zodiac animals play in the lunar calendar?
  - A) They serve as mere symbols without deeper meaning
  - B) They are fictional characters for entertaining children
  - C) They guide and offer perspectives for each lunar year
  - D) They represent technological and artistic advancements
6. What does the 'fusion of the old and the new' in celebrations signify according to the text?
  - A) The rejection of ancient practices
  - B) An unchanging essence of cultural traditions
  - C) The decreasing popularity of lunar celebrations
  - D) The incompatibility of myth and reality
7. Why are dragon motifs prevalent in festivities during the Dragon year?
  - A) To encourage renewal and personal reflection
  - B) To create a sense of competition similar to the zodiac race
  - C) To cultivate good luck and deter negative spirits
  - D) To solely provide entertainment and visual appeal
8. What is the impact of the lunar calendar celebrations on the community as depicted in the text?
  - A) They cause a disruption in the pace of nature
  - B) They increasingly engage children in storytelling
  - C) They bring together individuals and unite generations
  - D) They are overshadowed by the commercial aspects of the event



9. The Dragon year is compared to the Phoenix because both symbolize what aspect?
- A) Speed and might
  - B) Benevolence and assistance to others
  - C) Rebirth and transformation
  - D) Harmony with nature's pace
10. Why does the Dragon year stand out in the zodiac cycle according to the text?
- A) Because it is the final year of the cycle
  - B) For its lesser known myths and tales
  - C) Due to the revered and fervent manner it is celebrated
  - D) Because it solely fosters commercial opportunities

## Short Answer

1. Why is the Dragon year considered more revered than other zodiac signs?
2. What qualities do people born in the Dragon year supposedly possess?
3. How do the celebrations of the Dragon year contribute to societal bonds?
4. What does the Dragon symbolize in the context of the zodiac?
5. What is the purpose of the stories and myths associated with the zodiac?
6. Why is the Dragon year a significant time for personal reflection and goal-setting?
7. Which aspect of the Dragon makes it different from the other zodiac animals?
8. What does the lunar calendar's twelve-year cycle symbolize in relation to time?
9. How does the telling of zodiac stories affect children?
10. What do businesses typically promote during the Dragon year?

## Multiple Choice Cloze

Once every twelve years, the lunar calendar celebrates the majestic Year of the Dragon, an event deeply \_\_\_1\_\_\_ in tradition and rich with symbolism. It stands out, revered and embraced with fervor, perhaps more than any other sign in the zodiac cycle. Those born in the Dragon year are often thought to embody the creature's potent and auspicious attributes. They are considered to have natural authority, \_\_\_2\_\_\_ with vitality and charisma, which sets them apart in a society that values leadership and confidence. The dragon itself, a mythological being, symbolizes strength, fortune, and prosperity—qualities that fortify its esteemed \_\_\_3\_\_\_ amongst the twelve zodiac animals.

The Dragon year incites grand celebrations, cascading across various cultures that observe the lunar calendar. Streets become rivers of red, with banners, lanterns, and dragons made of silk and paper undulating to the rhythm of drums and gongs. People exchange pleasantries and gifts, many involving the symbol of the dragon, to cultivate good luck and dismiss \_\_\_4\_\_\_ spirits. This spirit of celebration stretches far beyond a single day; it \_\_\_5\_\_\_ weeks of festivities and activities meant to honor tradition while looking ahead to a year of bounteous opportunities. These celebrations not only unite communities but also connect generations, weaving a rich tapestry of shared stories and customs that \_\_\_6\_\_\_ time.

In acknowledging the significant influence of the lunar calendar, one appreciates the harmony it seeks with the natural world, an embodiment of a more rhythmic and cyclical approach to time. The twelve-year cycle mirrors the pace of nature, with each year assigned an animal that offers guidance and perspective for the months that unfold. The dragon, though not a creature found in nature, occupies a \_\_\_7\_\_\_ place in folklore and minds, illustrating that myth can be as influential as reality in shaping cultures and beliefs.

The origin of the zodiac and its incorporation into the lunar calendar are shrouded in antiquity, with many stories weaving together threads of myth and history. It is believed that the Jade Emperor \_\_\_8\_\_\_ all creatures to participate in a race, with the first twelve to cross a river immortalized in the zodiac. The dragon, known for its might and speed, could have easily won but \_\_\_9\_\_\_ to help others during the race, revealing a spirit of benevolence.

Such tales underscore the profound meanings and life lessons imbued within these zodiac signs, \_\_\_10\_\_\_ from one generation to the next. Parents recount these stories, imparting wisdom and fostering a sense of continuity and belonging, while also instilling traditional values in their children. The Dragon year thus becomes a time not just for festivity, but for the reaffirmation of societal and familial bonds.

1) A. entrenched   B. separated   C. divided   D. dissolved

2) A. brimming   B. lacking   C. dripping   D. leaking

- 3) A. profit B. status C. growth D. history
- 4) A. joyous B. elated C. wayward D. cheerful
- 5) A. proclaims B. permits C. permeates D. precludes
- 6) A. trivialize B. traverse C. abolish D. shorten
- 7) A. seminal B. obsolete C. negligible D. diminished
- 8) A. extinguished B. summoned C. constructed D. commanded
- 9) A. refused B. elected C. delayed D. ceased
- 10) A. passed B. neglected C. predicted D. suppressed

# Exercise Answers

## True / False / Not Given Answers

### 1. True

Explanation: The text states that the Dragon year stands out, revered and embraced with fervor, perhaps more than any other sign in the zodiac cycle, indicating it is the most highly regarded. ("an event deeply entrenched in tradition and rich with symbolism")

### 2. False

Explanation: The text explicitly states that the celebrations go on for weeks, not just a single day. ("This spirit of celebration stretches far beyond a single day; it permeates weeks of festivities and activities")

### 3. True

Explanation: The text indicates that the twelve-year cycle of the lunar calendar is reflective of nature's pace. ("The twelve-year cycle mirrors the pace of nature")

### 4. False

Explanation: The text reveals that despite the Dragon's might and speed, it did not win as it helped others instead. ("The dragon, known for its might and speed, could have easily won but chose to help others during the race")

### 5. False

Explanation: The text mentions that parents share these stories orally, which indicates that transmission is not limited to written texts. ("Parents recount these stories, imparting wisdom and fostering a sense of continuity and belonging")

### 6. True

Explanation: The text indicates that businesses promote themes of renewal and prosperity, which relates to encouraging consumerism. ("Businesses, too, often capitalize on this sentiment, promoting themes of renewal and prosperity in their offerings and advertisements")

### 7. False

Explanation: The text states that despite becoming more elaborate, the essence of the dragon dance remains unchanged. ("Yet, the essence remains unchanged, preserving the core of what the Dragon represents")

### 8. Not Given

Explanation: The text does not mention the use of firecrackers during the Dragon year festivities. ("N/A")

### 9. True

Explanation: The text states that individuals use the Dragon year as a time for reflection and setting new goals, implying self-improvement. ("It is a time when individuals reflect on the past year's achievements and shortcomings, setting goals and intentions for the new cycle.")

**10. False**

Explanation: The text outlines how traditional practices are blending with modern celebrations, indicating they are not static.

("The fusion of the old and the new is visible as time-honored practices mesh with contemporary festivities")

## Multiple Choice Answers

**1. C**

Explanation: The text indicates that the sharing of zodiac stories imparts wisdom and reinforces societal and familial bonds, making this the primary reason for reaffirmation.

("The Dragon year thus becomes a time not just for festivity, but for the reaffirmation of societal and familial bonds.")

**2. B**

Explanation: The dragon's significant place in folklore, despite its mythical status, shows how myths can shape cultures as much as reality can.

("The dragon, though not a creature found in nature, occupies a seminal place in folklore and minds, illustrating that myth can be as influential as reality in shaping cultures and beliefs.")

**3. C**

Explanation: The text attributes natural authority to the symbolic qualities of the dragon, such as strength and prosperity, which society values.

("They are considered to have natural authority, brimming with vitality and charisma, which sets them apart in a society that values leadership and confidence.")

**4. D**

Explanation: The text indicates that businesses take advantage of the Dragon year sentiments by aligning their marketing with themes of renewal and prosperity.

("Businesses, too, often capitalize on this sentiment, promoting themes of renewal and prosperity in their offerings and advertisements.")

**5. C**

Explanation: The text states that the zodiac animals, including the dragon, provide guidance and perspective for each lunar year.

("The twelve-year cycle mirrors the pace of nature, with each year assigned an animal that offers guidance and perspective for the months that unfold.")

**6. B**

Explanation: The text mentions that while forms of celebration may evolve, the core essence of tradition, representing the pursuit of greatness and excellence, stays the same.

("Yet, the essence remains unchanged, preserving the core of what the Dragon represents: the potential for greatness and the pursuit of excellence.")

**7. C**

Explanation: The text explains that dragon symbols are used in gifts and decorations to foster good luck and dispel negative spirits.

("People exchange pleasantries and gifts, many involving the symbol of the dragon, to cultivate good luck and dismiss wayward spirits.")

**8. C**

Explanation: The text clearly states that the celebrations unite communities and generations through shared stories and customs.

("These celebrations not only unite communities but also connect generations, weaving a rich tapestry of shared stories and customs that traverse time.")

**9. C**

Explanation: The text makes a comparison between the Dragon and the Phoenix on the grounds of their shared symbolism for rebirth and transformation.

("Similar to the mythical Phoenix, the Dragon inspires rebirth and transformation—a powerful metaphor for personal and communal growth.")

**10. C**

Explanation: The text asserts that the Dragon year is celebrated with great reverence and enthusiasm, making it distinctive among the zodiac signs.

("It stands out, revered and embraced with fervor, perhaps more than any other sign in the zodiac cycle.")

## Short Answer Answers

**1. Because it embodies potent and auspicious attributes.**

Explanation: The text implies that the prominence of the Dragon year stems from the potent and auspicious qualities the creature symbolizes.

("It stands out, revered and embraced with fervor, perhaps more than any other sign in the zodiac cycle.")

**2. Natural authority, vitality, and charisma.**

Explanation: The text lists natural authority, vitality, and charisma as attributes ascribed to those born in the Dragon year.

("They are considered to have natural authority, brimming with vitality and charisma")

**3. By uniting communities and connecting generations.**

Explanation: The text mentions that the festivities unite communities and connect different generations, thereby reinforcing societal bonds.

("These celebrations not only unite communities but also connect generations")

**4. Strength, fortune, and prosperity.**

Explanation: Strength, fortune, and prosperity are cited as the qualities that the dragon, as a symbol, represents.

("The dragon itself, a mythological being, symbolizes strength, fortune, and prosperity")

**5. To impart wisdom and traditional values.**

Explanation: The text suggests that the stories surrounding the zodiac are meant to pass down wisdom and traditional values.

("Parents recount these stories, imparting wisdom and fostering a sense of continuity and belonging, while also instilling traditional values in their children.")

**6. It is seen as an opportunity to reset and start anew.**

Explanation: The text points to the Dragon year being an opportunity for renewal and transformation, which naturally leads to self-reflection and goal-setting.

("A considerable part of the allure surrounding the Dragon year is the opportunity to reset and start anew.")



**7. It is not a creature found in nature.**

Explanation: The text differentiates the dragon from the other zodiac animals by highlighting that it is mythical and not found in nature.

("The dragon, though not a creature found in nature, occupies a seminal place in folklore and minds")

**8. A rhythmic and cyclical approach to time.**

Explanation: The twelve-year cycle of the lunar calendar is described as emblematic of a rhythmic and cyclical approach to time.

("An embodiment of a more rhythmic and cyclical approach to time.")

**9. It fosters a sense of continuity and belonging.**

Explanation: The text states that the recounting of zodiac stories to children helps to foster a sense of continuity and belonging in them.

("imparting wisdom and fostering a sense of continuity and belonging")

**10. Themes of renewal and prosperity.**

Explanation: The text indicates that businesses take advantage of the Dragon year to market themes of renewal and prosperity.

("Businesses, too, often capitalize on this sentiment, promoting themes of renewal and prosperity in their offerings and advertisements.")

## Multiple Choice Cloze Answers

**1. A**

Explanation: 'entrenched' means established very firmly in a particular area, fitting the context.

**2. A**

Explanation: 'brimming' means full or filled with, suggesting an abundance of vitality and charisma.

**3. B**

Explanation: 'status' refers to the relative social, professional, or other standing of someone or something.

**4. C**

Explanation: 'wayward' means difficult to control or predict because of unusual or perverse behavior.

**5. C**

Explanation: 'permeates' means to spread throughout something; permeates is used in the context of something continuing for a duration.

**6. B**

Explanation: 'traverse' means to travel across or through, used metaphorically here to suggest stories crossing through time.

**7. A**

Explanation: 'seminal' means strongly influencing later developments, fitting for the dragon's role in folklore.

**8. B**

Explanation: 'summoned' means authoritatively call on someone to be present.

**9. B**

Explanation: 'elected' means make a choice, especially to choose to do something.

**10. A**

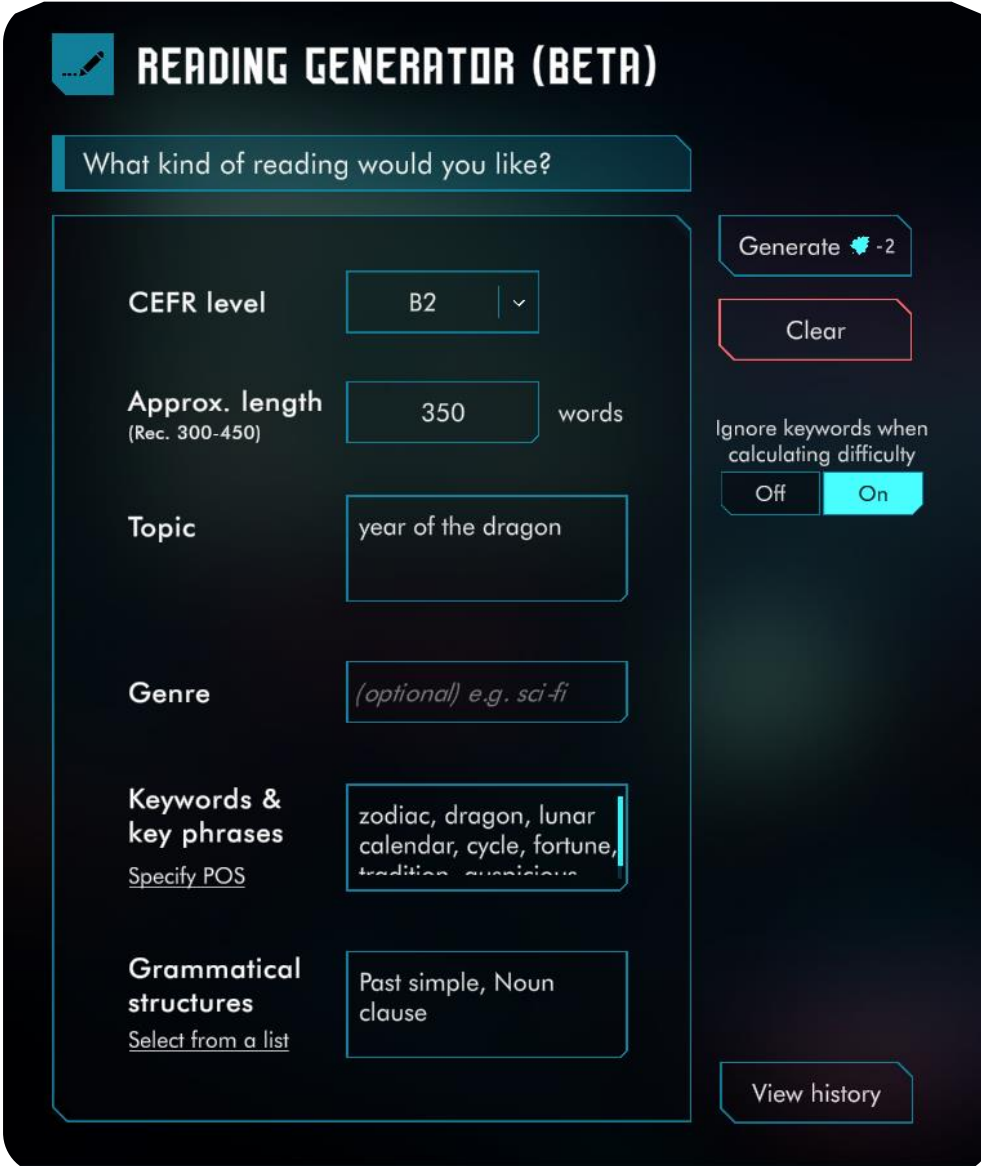
Explanation: 'passed' indicates the action of giving or handing down something, especially in terms of knowledge or tradition.

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- the length of the reading
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**READING GENERATOR (BETA)**

What kind of reading would you like?

CEFR level: B2

Approx. length: 350 words (Rec. 300-450)

Topic: year of the dragon

Genre: (optional) e.g. sci-fi

Keywords & key phrases: zodiac, dragon, lunar calendar, cycle, fortune, tradition, suspicious (Specify POS)

Grammatical structures: Past simple, Noun clause (Select from a list)

Generate ⚡ -2

Clear

Ignore keywords when calculating difficulty: Off **On**

View history