



Effortless English

New Year's Resolutions

resolutions: decisions; plans; goals

formal: official; very clear

vague: not clear

tradition: historical action; history; something done for a long time; ritual

mythical: imaginary; religious

at the head of: at the top of; at the beginning of

ancient: very old

exchanged: traded; gave to each other

cultures: countries; societies

solar: sun

Julius Caesar: a famous Roman Emperor (leader)

accurately: correctly; closely

reflect: copy; imitate

seasons: changes of climate and weather: Spring, Summer,....

guardian: protector

depicted: shown

tradition: a habit; a ritual

sacred: holy; religious; special

fortune: luck

imprinted: printed; written; engraved

commitment: strong decision to do something

interpreted: understood as

advantageous: good; helpful; beneficial

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So, have you made your New Year's **resolutions**? What are your goals for the coming year? Do you have **formal**, written resolutions- or just a **vague** plan?

The **tradition** of the New Year's Resolutions goes all the way back to 153 BC. Janus, a **mythical** king of early Rome was placed **at the head of** the calendar.

With two faces, Janus could look back on past events and forward to the future. Janus became the **ancient** symbol for resolutions and many Romans asked for forgiveness from their enemies and also **exchanged** gifts before the beginning of each year.

The New Year has not always begun on January 1, and it doesn't begin on that date everywhere today. It begins on that date only for **cultures** that use a 365-day **solar** calendar. January 1 became the beginning of the New Year in 46 B.C., when **Julius Caesar** developed a calendar that would more **accurately reflect** the **seasons** than previous calendars had.

The Romans named the first month of the year after Janus, the god of beginnings and the **guardian** of doors and entrances. He was always **depicted** with two faces, one on the front of his head and one on the back. Thus he could look backward and forward at the same time. At midnight on December 31, the Romans imagined Janus looking back at the old year and forward to the new. The Romans began a **tradition** of exchanging gifts on New Year's Eve by giving one another branches from **sacred** trees for good **fortune**. Later, nuts or coins **imprinted** with the god Janus became more common New Year's gifts.

A New Year's resolution is a **commitment** that an individual makes to a project or a **habit**, often a lifestyle change that is generally **interpreted** as **advantageous**. The name comes from the fact that these

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go into effect: begin; start
remain: stay; don't change or leave

achieved: reached; done

set: made; created

maintaining: keeping

peak: top; best

vitality: health; strength

to reduce: to lessen; to make less

intake: input; to bring inside; eat or drink

focused: concentrated; paying attention to

sensibly: smartly; in an intelligent way

commitments normally **go into effect** on New Year's Day and **remain** until the goal has been **achieved**, although many resolutions go unachieved and are often broken fairly shortly after they are **set**.

Many New Year resolutions in the Western world involve **maintaining peak vitality**, physical fitness, or appearance. For example, one person's goal might be **to reduce** or to eliminate **intake** of alcohol or tobacco.

The most common new year's resolution is weight loss. A student may make a resolution to stay **focused** in class or to complete all of his assignments. Resolutions to eat **sensibly** or increase exercise are also quite common.

Learn More:

Janus

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janus_\(mythology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janus_(mythology))

Solar Calendar

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_calendar