Tết, also called Tết Nguyên Đán, is the most important day in Vietnamese culture. It occurs in February. We know when Tết occurs depending on the lunar calendar. Tết will occur on February 10, 2024, this year. It will be the Year of the Dragon. There are 12 Vietnamese zodiac signs. The Rat, Buffalo, Tiger, Cat, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig. The Dragon is the only animal not real in the zodiac signs. Children give their elders traditional/formal wishes and wish them luck in the upcoming year. The formal wishes include leading happy, healthy lives and working successfully. They will return our wishes with their wishes, hoping we can have great health, study hard, and do well in school. After this, children will get a unique red envelope containing money, which is called lì xì. Tết is a time to visit your relatives. Vietnamese people visit their families and temples during Tết, putting the past year's problems behind them and looking forward to a brighter one. Every year, the week leading up to Tết is when Vietnam does its yearly "spring cleaning." In Vietnam, they believe that the first few days of the new year determine the entire year. Cleaning the house before the new year begins is believed to help drive out any evil spirits from the previous one. We eat many delicious foods like bánh chưng, thịt kho trứng, and bánh tét. There are many games that we play during Tết like bầu cua cá cọp. It is a Vietnamese gambling game. There are 6 images on the board; a fish (cá), deer (nai), crab(cua), shrimp (tôm), rooster (gà), and a calabash (bầu). On a board with the six animals, players make bets on which pictures will show up. The person betting gets paid the same amount as their bet if one die matches their bet. The person betting wins twice their money if two dice match their bet. The player who bets wins three times their bet if three dice match their bet. My favorite memory of Tết is watching everyone prepare for their performances. It brings everyone together. Seeing everyone put a lot of effort into the performance making sure that everything is going smoothly. I remember being eager to stay after church to practice dances. I saw all the adults working hard to cook for us and sewing our outfits to make sure that they fit us. After all this hard work, we’re able to showcase it when performing. I’m looking forward to showing everyone what we prepared for Tết this year.  Con chúc mọi người một năm  vui vẻ.

Angelina Nguyễn