



# Dr. Seuss's Birthday

## 2020 Classroom Activity Guide

# Celebrate Dr. Seuss's Birthday!

## Happy Birthday, Everyone!

Birthdays celebrate important firsts: the anniversary of a baby's first day on earth and the start of their next year of life! People celebrate birthdays all over the world. On Dr. Seuss's birthday, we invite you to explore how people celebrate birthdays and other important firsts—to try new things, meet new people, and have new adventures.

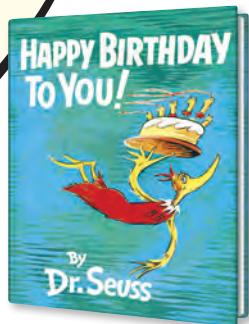


Happy Birthday, Feliz Cumpleaños, Bon Anniversaire, Sang Yat Fai Lok, Saeng-il Chugha, Eid Mawlid Saeid, Alles Gute zum Geburtstag!



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# Dr. Seuss's Birthday



## Happy Birthday, Everyone!



**Birthdays and celebrations are a universal experience—all cultures celebrate.**

**We celebrate important milestones—birth, death, marriage, and accomplishments like graduations. We celebrate our ancestors, changing seasons, new years, and national holidays.**

**Exploring these traditions is a great way to learn about other cultures and find examples of ways that people all over the world are alike.**

### Birthdays around the world

Everyone has birthdays, but people celebrate them in different ways in different parts of the world. In Dr. Seuss's *Happy Birthday to You!*, readers learn about how birthdays are celebrated in Katroo. Read the story with your students and talk about the traditions in Katroo.

Ask how your students celebrate birthdays.

- Do they eat something special?
- Do they sing a special song?
- Do they exchange cards or gifts?
- Do they have a party?
- Does their family celebrate some birthdays differently (for example, a quinceañera)?
- What else do they do to celebrate birthdays?

As you go around the class, take note of how everyone celebrates. How are the traditions alike and different?

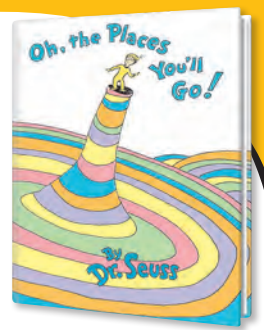
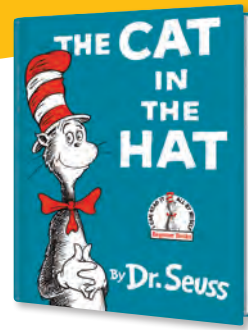
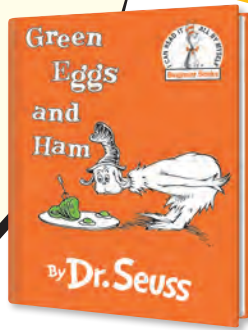
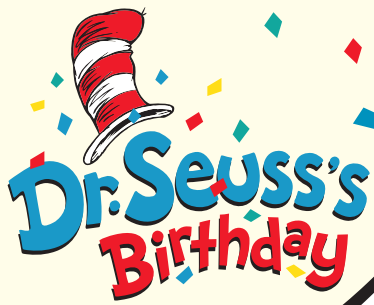
Encourage your students to write, draw, or make a digital presentation about their family's birthday traditions.

- Have them interview parents or other loved ones about how certain traditions got started in their family.
- Then have them research traditions from another place or another time in history, and compare and contrast how people celebrate birthdays.
- Students can share their research in a presentation during their birth month or on their birthday!



**Subjects:  
Language Arts,  
Social Studies**





## Celebrating YOU!

A birthday marks a milestone—another year of life experienced. But birthdays can also mark a new beginning—a chance to make a change, work toward a new goal, think about the future, or look at familiar things in a new way.

Get your students thinking about how they could make a fresh start on their birthday by reading some Dr. Seuss favorites. Here are some ways to try something new:

### Instead of eating cake, try a new food

Read *Green Eggs and Ham*, and talk about being willing to try a new food. Encourage students to write or act out their own version of the story using a new food. Have a tasting party in your class!

### Instead of getting presents, try giving

Read *What Pet Should I Get?* While the story doesn't say that the pet is a birthday gift, it explores how hard it is to choose the right pet and what goes into caring for one. Focusing on the responsibilities and costs of having a pet, discuss why pets don't always make great gifts, especially if they are a surprise. Ask your students to imagine that instead of getting a pet as a gift, they chose to find a cause or charity, like an animal shelter, food bank, or library, that could benefit from receiving donations. (It doesn't have to be pet related.) Then have them research what kinds of donations are needed and plan how they could encourage friends, family, or the public to help in honor of their birthday.

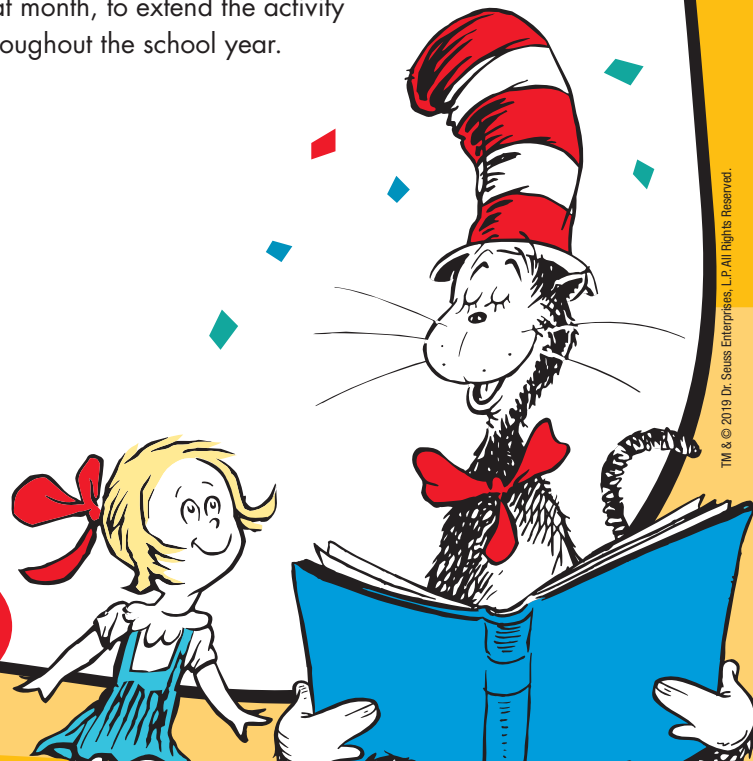
### Instead of old games, try a new game, sport, craft, or experience

Read *The Cat in the Hat* and talk about how the Cat turns a rainy day into an adventure. Encourage your students to brainstorm new adventures—things that take them out of their comfort zones. Salsa dancing? Skateboarding? Bungee jumping? Baking? Knitting? Singing in front of an audience?

- What are the benefits of trying something new?
- What keeps people from trying new things?

Based on your students' brainstormed lists, try some of the new experiences as a class (maybe not bungee jumping!), and talk about how it felt to try something new. You could even try one new thing each month, in honor of the kids having a birthday that month, to extend the activity throughout the school year.

Subjects:  
Language Arts,  
Social Studies





# Dr. Seuss's Birthday



## Celebrate birthdays of famous people

Encourage kids to research someone who interests them, gather some interesting facts about the person, and create a costume to be that person. Have a famous person birthday costume party during which each student can portray their person and share some facts about them. For inspiration, here are some famous March birthdays:

**Justin Bieber**—March 1

**Dr. Seuss**—March 2

**Albert Einstein**—March 14

**Ruth Bader Ginsburg**—March 15

**Mia Hamm**—March 17

**Moms Mabley**—March 19

**Mr. Rogers**—March 20

**Harry Houdini**—March 24

**Aretha Franklin**—March 25

**Johann Sebastian Bach**—March 31

## Set a personal goal for the next year— and don't be afraid to fail

Read *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* and discuss the challenges involved in taking risks. Ask your students to think about a time they failed at something.

- What did it feel like?
- Did they try again?
- Did they ask for help or try a different approach?

Explain how the story is an example of a growth mindset.

Encourage your students to research famous failures or setbacks and how they turned into something

useful (like the sticky note) or how they shaped the people who experienced them. (Dr. Seuss's first book, *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, was rejected twenty-seven times before he got it published!)

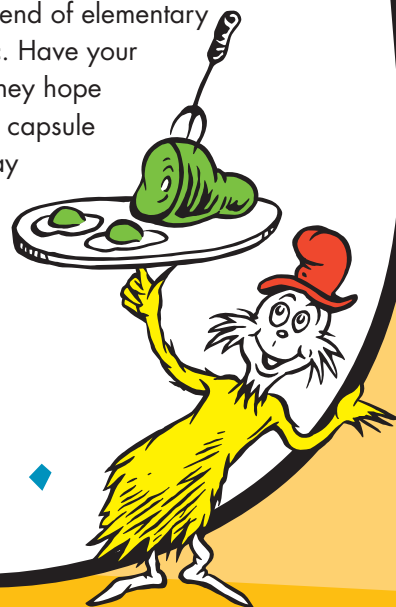
Ask your students to create a poster, play, or digital presentation about what they've learned and what kind of goal they'd like to pursue in the coming year. What is their goal? What kind of challenges do they predict they'll face? What kind of strategies or resources can they use to handle setbacks? How can they help each other reach their goals?

## Think about the future

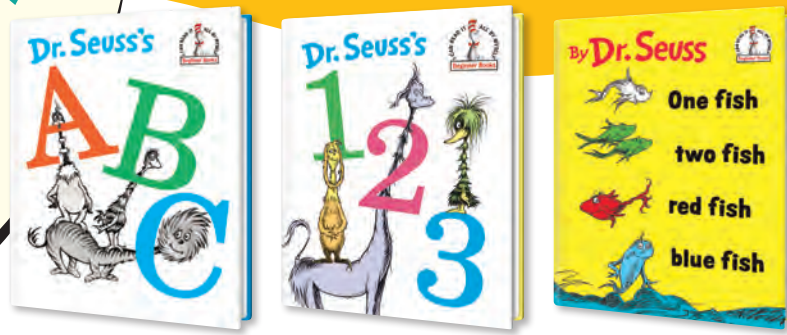
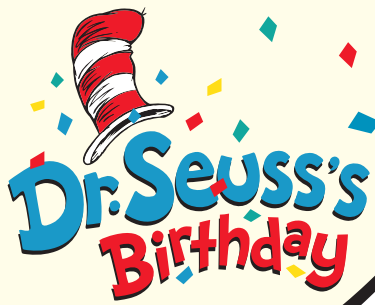
With Dr. Seuss, anything is possible. Ask your students to imagine the future and how they can make it better.

- What would you like the world to be like in the future?
- What would you like your life to be like in the future?
- What can you do now and later to make the future great?

Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers—it's all about embracing the unknown and being open to new experiences. Set a time period—the end of the school year, the end of elementary school, ten years from now, etc. Have your students dictate or write what they hope for the future and create a time capsule with their ideas. You can display them on a bulletin board first, and then pack them up in a box or jar and seal with tape. Add a label that names your class and says, "Do Not Open Until [Predetermined Date]!"



Subjects:  
Language Arts,  
Social Studies,  
Art, Math



## Celebrate Favorite Characters, Pets, or People with a Costume Party!

Dr. Seuss is all about IMAGINATION. Choose a theme for a party, and have students create costumes. Ask them to write why the person, character, or animal is their favorite. If they choose a real person or animal, ask them to research the person or the animal to find some interesting facts to share. If the students choose something made-up, have them create their own character profile.

### Create a costume

- Favorite Dr. Seuss characters
- Favorite pets or famous pets
- Famous or favorite authors
- Famous pioneers or explorers—Arthur Ashe, Julia Child, Jacques Cousteau, Marie Curie, Leif Erikson, Henry Ford, Sir Edmund Hillary, Mae Jemison, Thurgood Marshall, Barack Obama, Sally Ride, Sacagawea, Sonia Sotomayor

### Look at familiar things in a new way

Every year and every new experience gives us a new perspective. It can be fun to look at things you see every day, like letters or numbers, in a new way. Encourage your students to rewrite *Dr. Seuss's ABC*, *Dr. Seuss's 123*, or *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish* to reflect themselves or the class.

#### *Dr. Seuss's 123*

Revise the story to reflect something about themselves. (You can limit the number of things they share to a more manageable number than twenty.)

- Write something about each year of their life so far. They'll likely have to interview parents or other family members for information about the first few years.
- Write something about themselves now. For example, I have 1 dog, 2 siblings, 3 favorite foods. . . .

- If you have students who speak languages other than English, help them translate the book into different languages or add sections in different languages. When sharing their creation, they can teach classmates numbers and words in a language other than English.

#### *Dr. Seuss's ABC*

- As a class project, change *Dr. Seuss's ABC* into *Dr. Seuss's Birthday ABC*, and use words that relate to birthdays, celebrations, and Dr. Seuss.
- Each child can use the letters in his or her name to make an acrostic book about themselves.
- Create an *Our Class ABC* book, featuring each member of the class and other fun information about your class.
- Collaborate to write ABC books in languages other than English that your students speak.

#### *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*

Every day, from here to there, funny things are everywhere!

- Encourage your students to imagine funny animals and write about or draw them.
- What are some imaginary animals or pets? What do they look like? What do they do? Where would you see them?

Subjects:  
Science, Math,  
Social Studies



# A New Year Is a Kind of Birthday.

All around the world, people celebrate the beginning of each new year. This does not always follow the Gregorian calendar.

Explore these traditions with your class, encouraging them to look for things that cultures have in common.

## Starting with a clean slate

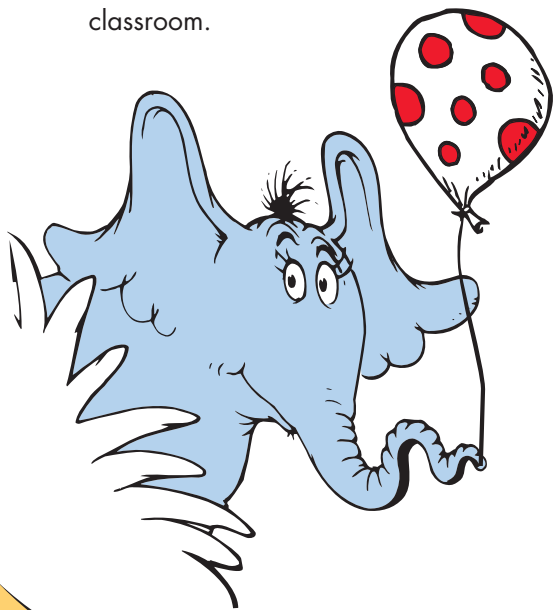
In many cultures, cleaning on or around the New Year is very important. Families will clean their whole house, buy a new broom, or throw buckets of water or furniture out the window.

- Have a New Year's or New Semester's Classroom Cleaning Party. Scrub tables and tidy bookshelves while talking about how students' families celebrate or researching traditions from around the world.

## Decorate

Many cultures decorate for the New Year. In China, the color red is very important and can be seen in many places around the New Year. Some families paint their front doors red. In Japan, people decorate with natural items like pine branches, plum blossoms, and bamboo. In Denmark, people break old dishes on friends' doorsteps to show their friendship.

- Explore how other cultures decorate for the New Year, and then brainstorm decorations for your classroom.



## Party food

What's a celebration without food? People eat traditional foods at New Year's to bring good luck, health, and prosperity.

In the Southern United States, people eat black-eyed peas. In Pennsylvania, some people eat pork and sauerkraut. In Spain, they eat twelve grapes at midnight. In Brazil, it's lentils for wealth. Some cultures have feasts with many courses.

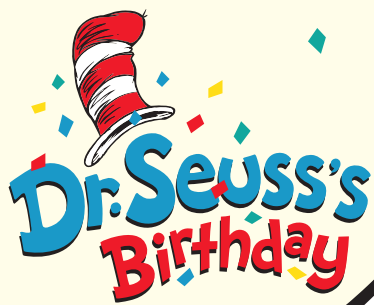
- Ask your students to find out and share what special foods their families eat at New Year's. If possible, make some of the dishes as a class!

## Dress for success

Lots of cultures wear special clothes to celebrate the New Year. Some focus on new clothes; some focus on certain colors or patterns.

In Russia, Italy, and Vietnam, new clothes celebrate the New Year. In the Philippines, round shapes, symbolizing money, are popular at New Year's, so people wear polka dots. Many countries have traditions of wearing special underwear to ring in the New Year: in Turkey, the lucky color is red. In Brazil, different colors bring different kinds of luck.

- Ask your students, if they could design and wear special clothes for New Year's, what would they make? Why?
- If they could choose what kind of luck different colors brought, which color would mean what?
- What would Dr. Seuss characters wear to celebrate the New Year?



# Dr. Seuss's Birthday



## Set a goal

All around the world, a new year is a time to make a fresh start. People in Mesopotamia and ancient Rome would make a promise each New Year to be loyal to the king or emperor. In modern times, people sometimes make New Year's resolutions. That means they set a goal or try to create a new habit, like eating healthful food, flossing their teeth daily, or learning a new language.

- Ask your students to make some of their own resolutions for the school year or the New Year. Kids can make individual resolutions, or your class can make resolutions together.

National holidays are another kind of birthday. Countries often celebrate important days in their history. In the United States, we celebrate the Fourth of July in honor of the day the colonies declared their independence from Great Britain: July 4, 1776. We have parades, fireworks, and barbecues.

In Norway, children play an important role in parades celebrating the signing of their Constitution on May 17.

South Korea celebrates independence on two dates: March 1 and August 15. In August, they celebrate independence from Japan, and in March they celebrate the movement that resulted in independence from Japan.

In Australia they acknowledge the anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet of British ships. In present-day Australia, celebrations include community and family events, citizenship ceremonies, and fireworks. In fact, lots of countries use fireworks to celebrate on national holidays.

Bolivia throws a two-day celebration starting on August 6 with parades, fireworks, carnivals, and music to celebrate its Día de la Patria.

- Invite your students to research how different countries celebrate independence or other national holidays. What do the celebrations have in common? What is different?
- Working in groups, encourage your students to develop a celebration for your school, town, or community organization recognizing its beginning. What historical facts do they want to teach people? How will they include history in the celebration? Will they have special music or food?
- Throw a party in your class right before a school break. Invite students to brainstorm decorations, games, and foods to celebrate their upcoming freedom. How can they celebrate the accomplishments they've made during the school year? What do they want to remember and honor? What are they looking forward to?



Subjects:  
Language Arts,  
Social Studies



## The Solstice Is a Kind of Birthday.



A solstice happens twice a year. It's the day when the sun's path is the farthest away—north or south—from the equator. In the northern hemisphere, the longest day with the most sunlight is in June. The shortest day with the least sunlight is in December. For thousands of years, people have celebrated the longest and shortest days, recognizing the important role the sun plays in our lives.

The winter solstice is the longest night of the year. It marks when nights stop getting longer and start getting shorter. Cultures throughout history and all around the world celebrate the promise of spring and the beginning of the end of winter. Many winter holidays, like Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa include ancient solstice traditions like burning candles. Some cultures celebrate with bonfires, special foods, or by staying up all night to welcome the sun. Since ancient times, the winter solstice has helped farmers know when to start planting their spring crops.

The summer solstice is the longest day of the year. The closer you are to the poles, the more sunlight a place gets as it nears the summer solstice. People in Iceland and Scandinavia celebrate with events that take advantage of lots of sunlight, holding festivals and parties under the "midnight sun." Many cultures throughout history have built structures that align with the sun on the summer solstice—Stonehenge in Britain, the Great Pyramids in Egypt, and Chichen Itza in Mexico, for example. The summer solstice is a time when people celebrate growth and life.

Even though your students will likely be out of school during the winter and summer solstices, exploring the science and traditions related to these events is a great way to learn about astronomy, timekeeping, and different cultures.

- Make sundials with your students to show them how the sun moves and how people use the sun to keep track of time.

- Use a globe and a light, like a bright lamp without a shade, to help your students understand the solstice, demonstrating how Earth's movement (rotating every twenty-four hours to create night and day, and its revolution around the sun, creating the seasons) along with the angle at which it spins, affect the amount of sunlight each part of the planet gets. Place the light on a small table. Have a child hold the globe near the light and spin it to demonstrate night and day. Then have the globe holder walk around the light, simulating a year. Point out how the globe spins on its axis at an angle. That's what makes days longer or shorter the closer you get to the poles.
- Encourage your students to imagine what it was like to live in ancient times before electricity, when people's daily routines depended on the amount of sunlight available. How would summer be different from winter? What would it be like to live without lights? How would you feel when you realized that the dark nights of winter were getting shorter and spring was on the way, or the long, hot days of summer were winding down? These are the experiences that shaped solstice celebrations.
- Plants and animals respond to sunlight as well. Encourage your students to observe how plants react to sunlight or a lack of it. Migration is based on sunlight, too. Geese, monarch butterflies, and wildebeests are examples of animals that move based on the season. Ask your students to explore how the movement of the sun can signal a new beginning for plants and animals.
- Invite your students to research solstice traditions from around the world and create a poster, digital presentation, or skit to share what they have learned.





Reading  
is FUN  
with Thing 1!



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RANDOM HOUSE  
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

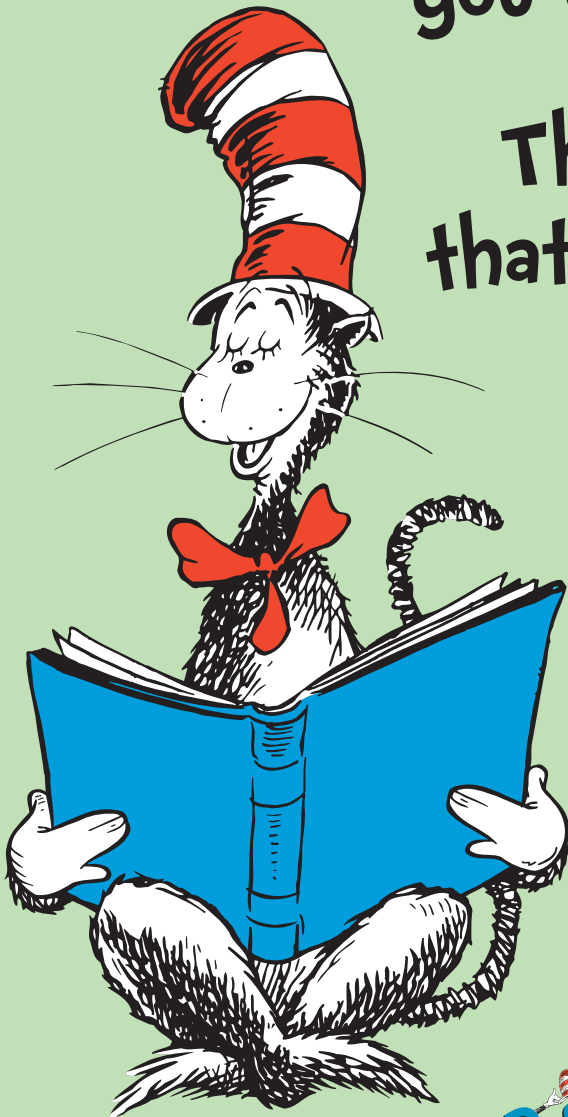
# I Will Read Anywhere with Sam-I-am!



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**The more  
that you read,**

**the more things  
you will know.**



**The more  
that you learn,**

**the more  
places  
you'll go!**

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**Dr. Seuss**

**RANDOM HOUSE  
CHILDREN'S BOOKS**

Happy Birthday!

Feliz  
Cumpleaños!

Bon  
Anniversaire!



Sang Yat  
Fai Lok!

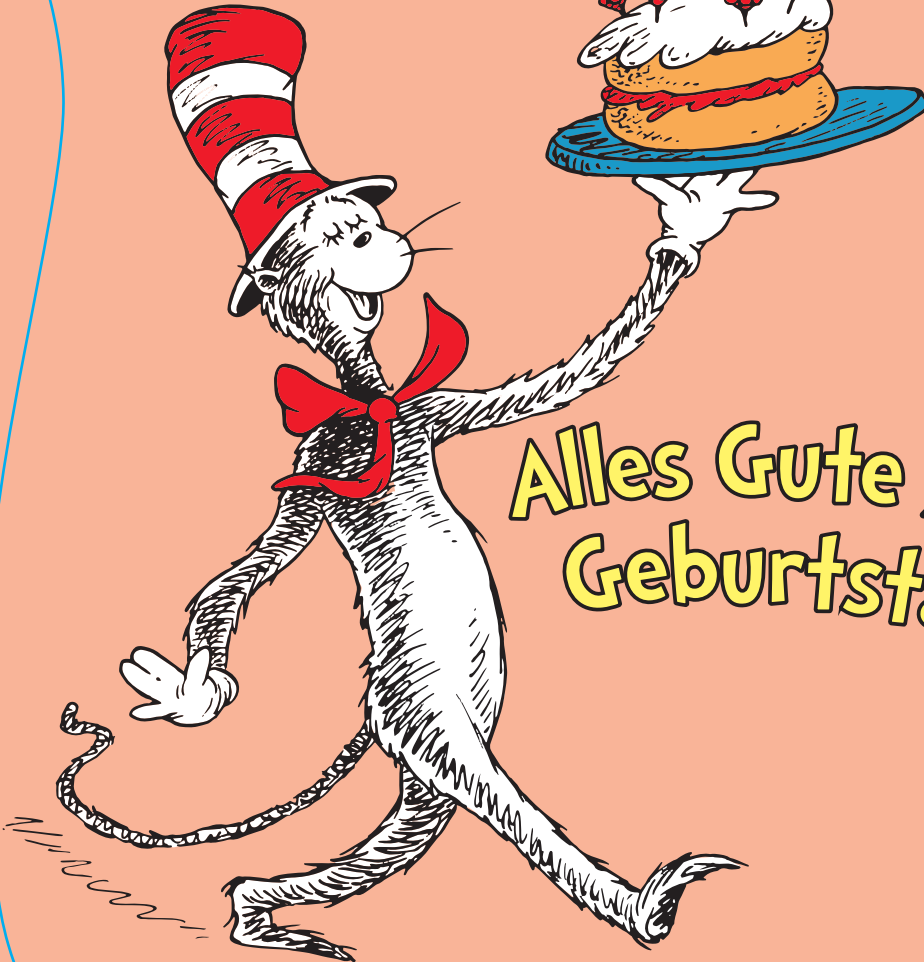
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**Happy Birthday!**

**Saeng-Il Chugha!**

**Eid Mawlid Saeid!**



**Alles Gute zum  
Geburtstag!**

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# I celebrated by reading!

Happy Birthday, Feliz Cumpleaños, Bon Anniversaire, Sang Yat Fai Lok, Saeng-Tl Chugha, Eid Mawlid Saeid, Alles Gute zum Geburtstag!

