

Kites: Dancers in the Wind



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You're on a beach, and the wind is blowing off the ocean. Your kite floats and swirls, dancing in the wind.

Kites were invented in China more than 2,000 years ago. They were first used by the Chinese military, but about 1,000 years ago, people started flying kites for fun. Since then, kites have been used for celebrations, in competitions, and

for science. In addition, kite festivals show off the many shapes and colors of kites. These festivals are held in Japan, Pakistan, and many other countries.

The first kites were made of silk. After paper was invented, around the year 100 AD, people used it to make kites. Today, most kites are made of paper or cloth, with sticks to hold them in shape and string to hold onto them. However, there are also kites for skiing or for moving a buggy on a beach.

In ancient times, kites carried lines across rivers. These lines helped build bridges. In the 1880s, kites

were first used to take photographs. In the early 1900s, the United States Weather Bureau used kites to help with weather prediction. The kites measured winds and temperatures.

The word kite is from an Old English word that means "a kind of hawk." Kites were probably given this name because of the way they look when they fly.

To fly a kite, find a large open area, such as a park or a beach. Make sure there are no trees or power lines the kite can get caught on. Then hold the kite's string up and run. The kite will lift when it catches the wind. Guide your kite by pulling the string. Make sure you look around when you're running so you don't run into anything.

As you watch the kite, notice how it moves. If the wind is just right, your kite will dance, too, swirling as the wind takes it high up into the sky.



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