

The Legend of the Zodiac Animals



Standards Met

- 1.1: Communication – Interaction
- 1.2: Communication – Interpretation
- 1.3: Communication – Production
- 3.1: Connections – Reinforce other content areas
- 4.1: Comparisons – Chinese language patterns
- 5.1: Community - Use Chinese beyond school

Objectives:

The students will...

- demonstrate knowledge of the Chinese zodiac calendar
- demonstrate comprehension of the ancient myth of how the zodiac animals were selected by acting out the story as it is told in Chinese
- apply knowledge of animals to other activities
- create their own animal story by using the animals of the zodiac

Anticipatory Set

Students will find the animal from the Chinese Zodiac Calendar that represents the year they were born. They will look up the traits that correspond to those animals and determine if they have those particular traits.

The following web site is for children and it contains the Chinese Zodiac calendar animals and the traits they exhibit.

<http://www.china.mrdonn.org/zodiac.html>

Activity Sequence

Input

1. Complete the Frayer Vocabulary Model using the words from the story.
2. Give each student a sheet of white paper with nine squares. Tell the students an animal from the story, and the students draw that animal using the color indicated. They then pass the paper to their right. Tell the students to draw another animal from the story in a second square and then again pass the paper to the right. Continue this procedure until all squares are filled. Each student will then have nine squares with the animals from the story. These may then be cut up and used as flash cards.
3. Visuals
Read the story showing visuals to aid in comprehension

Guided Practice

1. Living Order –(visuals may be printed from Power point)
Students do a living order of the visuals while the teacher reads the story. The students can place the visuals on the sticky board.
2. Matching Cards
In small groups, students match the picture with the correct corresponding word in Chinese.
3. Group Story Sequence
Put all visuals on the floor. As a group, students put the cards in the correct order.
4. Story Sequence Cards
In small groups, students sequence the cards in the order they appear in the story and match the caption with each picture.
5. Play Bingo using the vocabulary from the story. Younger students can do a large Bingo card as a class.
6. Put the name of an animal from the story on the back of each student. By asking only yes/no questions, the student will try to find out which word is on his/her back. When a student thinks that he/she has the correct answer, he/she asks someone to verify that answer.
7. Have the students talk about their favorite pets and graph the results.
8. Have the students work together to retell the story using prompts from the board.
9. Guess the Animal
Get cheap stuffed animals at garage sales or use picture of animals and put them in a bag. Describe the animal and have the students guess which animal in the bag you are describing. Extend the language as appropriate to the age and knowledge of the teacher and students.
10. Animal Jeopardy
Ask the students questions in English, and have them guess which animal you are describing. (Example questions are at the end.)
11. Assign the 12 animals to one or two students, depending on class size. Using the information gathered for the chart, have them make a large poster, with a drawing of the animal, recent years associated with it, and adjectives that describe it.
12. Other Animal Activities
 - Animal Capsules: Using the capsules in hot water that turn into animals have the students guess what animal it will be.
 - Create a New Animal: Using parts from different animals, create a new animal.
 - Animal Action: Give each student a picture of an animal. Students pass the picture and put an action with it.
 - Question Circle: The teacher will ask simple questions such as **nǐ yǒu gǒu ma?** The students will step forward if yes and backward if no.
 - Animal Guessing Game: Show only part of the animal, and the students need to guess the animal in Chinese.
 - Students can perform the actions of various animals or mimic the sounds of various animals, and their classmates will guess the animal.

- Animal Switcharoo: In advance, the teacher makes 2 sets of identical animal cards of different sizes (*xiǎo*, *zhōng*, *dà*). The teacher instructs the students to sit in a circle by saying “*wéi chéng yī gè quān zuò xià.*” (The students should sit on chairs.) The teacher hands out an animal card from one set to a student. The cards match from the other set should be given to another student so that all of the cards in play have a match. If there are an odd number of students, the teacher will also need a card. The student should look at the card and then put it under his/her chair. The teacher models the game by standing in the center of the circle and saying the size and name of an animal (*bǐ rú lǎo shǔ*). The students who have “the big rat” should stand up. When the teacher says “*huàn*,” the students standing switch places as the teacher also tries to get to the students’ chairs before they do. The person who does not have a chair goes into the middle, and the game continues
- TPR Animals: Create animal stories using a felt board with many animal cut outs. When doing TPR the teacher may say...“*xiàng qǐ é yī yàng zǒu lù.*” (Walk like a penguin)... *xiàng shī zi yī yàng* (like a lion)...like *xiàng dà xiàng yī yàng* (like an elephant).

Extension

1. Give groups of three students an envelope with a string and random animals. Tell a new order for the story as students work together to place the animals in the correct order.
2. Create a collage of animals that the students like.
3. Allow students to create their own new version of the story by reordering the animals. While three students tell their story, another group of three students must order their animals correctly by only hearing the story.

Evaluation

1. Check comprehension with simple yes/no questions or either/or questions.
2. Give a yes/no quiz in Chinese asking some of the following questions: The animals wanted to be last in the zodiac calendar. Buddha decided by a contest. The rabbit jumped on the back of the ox. The rat was first and the ox was last. The cat doesn’t have a year because the rat didn’t wake him.

Closure

1. Retell the story one last time. Students will fill in the blanks when the teacher pauses.

Animal Jeopardy

1. _____ This animal has wool.
2. _____ This animal swims in rivers and lakes.
3. _____ This animal barks.
4. _____ This animal flies.
5. _____ This animal quacks.

6. _____ This animal lives in a cave.
7. _____ People ride this animal.
8. _____ This animal does not like mice.
9. _____ This animal hops.
10. _____ This animal says meow.

Extension Activities

Math

- Pattern activity where students complete simple or more complex patterns.
- Use animals in the story to create math problems
- Survey and graph students' favorite animals in the story

Science

- Complete a KWL chart
- Research and complete a list of facts about each animal
- Create an animal zoo with posters and interesting facts about each animal
- Discuss how the Chinese zodiac calendar relates to astronomy

Social Studies

- Discuss the zodiac calendar and how it relates to Chinese culture
- Jigsaw information about the history of the Chinese zodiac calendar and its importance to the culture

Language Arts:

- Write cinquain or concrete poetry
- Create class big book using different animals of the zodiac
- Dramatize the story
- Write an animal story using the following story starters:
 - Today, a rat rode my bus to school and...
 - A rabbit sat next to me in the cafeteria and...
 - I saw a snake in the principal's office and...
 - Yesterday, my toy monkey came to life and...
- Create a chart of the animals of the zodiac and then list the positive and negative characteristics associated with each animal
- Read aloud the following books about the Chinese zodiac to the class:
 - *The Great Race: Story of the Chinese Zodiac* by **Dawn Casey**
 - *Animals in the Stars: Chinese Astrology for Children* by **Gregory Crawford**
 - *The Dragon's Tale: And Other Animal Fables of the Chinese Zodiac* by **Demi**
 - *The Rooster's Antlers: A Story of the Chinese Zodiac* by **Eric A. Kimmel**
 - *The Animals of the Chinese Zodiac* by **Susan Whitfield**

- *Cat and Rat: The Legend of the Chinese Zodiac* by Ed Young

Art

- Illustrate the class animal book
- Illustrate the posters in the animal zoo
- Write the name of the animal that corresponds to the student's year of birth in Chinese characters
- View Chinese art representations of the animals of the zodiac
<http://www.c-c-c.org/chineseculture/zodiac/zodiac.html> - good source for art

Courtyard mosaics from the Chinese Cultural Centre, Chinatown, Vancouver. [Zodiac](#), 2. [Boar](#), 3. [Rat](#), 4. [Ox](#), 5. [Tiger](#), 6. [Dog](#), 7. [Rabbit](#), 8. [Rooster](#), 9. [Dragon](#), 10. [Monkey](#), 11. [Goat](#), 12. [Horse](#), 13. [Snake](#)

Twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac - Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/10/eac/ho_02.18.730.htm

- Assign an animal to each student. Have the student cut out the picture of that animal and paste it on the top of a strip of oak tag. Below the picture he should write three or four adjectives describing that zodiac animal. The bookmark can be laminated to make it more durable.

Higher Level Thinking Skills

- Compare and contrast the characteristics of the animals of the zodiac
- Categorize the animals – no legs, two legs, four legs / domestic and wild
- Sequence the events into a story board

Resources on the Chinese Zodiac

<http://www.china.mrdonn.org/zodiac.html> - lots of information specifically for kids – excellent source

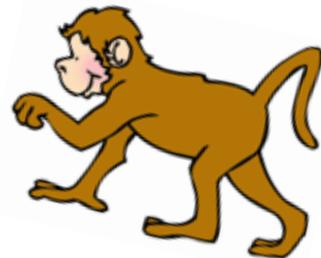
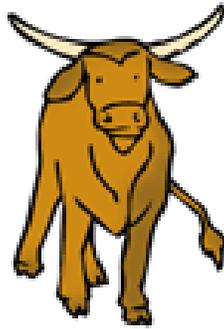
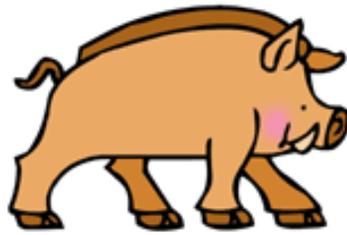
<http://www.chinesezodiac.com/calendar.php> - information about the Chinese zodiac calendar

<http://www.c-c-c.org/chineseculture/zodiac/zodiac.html> - background, information, Chinese art representing the specific animals, cultural insight of the zodiac calendar

<http://www.chinese.new-year.co.uk/calendar.htm> - history of the Chinese zodiac calendar

<http://www.onmarkproductions.com/html/12-zodiac.shtml> - very detailed information

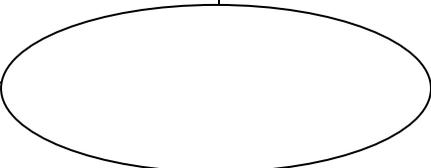
http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=344 – entire lesson plan using the animals of the Chinese zodiac



tù	lóng	mǎ
hóu zi	niú	jī
gǒu	shé	zhū
shǔ	hǔ	yáng

Frayer Model

Definition (in own words)	Characteristics
Examples (from own life)	Drawing



shí èr gè dòng wù dōu xiǎng
chéng wéi shí èr shǔ xiàng lǐ de dì
yī gè 。 tā men chǎo le qǐ lái 。

fó jué dìng ràng tā men bǐ sài 。 yǐ
dòng wù men dào dà hé duì àn de
xiān hòu shùn xù jué dìng tā men
de shù xiàng niàn fèn de shùn xù 。

suǒ yǒu de dòng wù dōu tiào dào
hé lǐ , dàn shì lǎo shǔ tiào dào niú
de shēn shàng 。

dāng niú dào àn biān , lǎo shǔ
cóng niú shēn shàng tiào xià , yíng
le bǐ sài 。

niú dì èr , lǎn zhū zuì hòu 。

lǎo shǔ běn lái yào bǎ māo jiào
xǐn , dàn shì tā méi yǒu 。

suǒ yǐ māo bù zǎi shí èr shǔ
xiàng lǐ 。

māo yīn cǐ hèn lǎo
shǔ。

Chinese New Year



This holiday is the most important holiday.
Dates change from year to year because based on cycles of the moon.
Dates can be at the end of January or in February.
The celebration lasts 15 days.
The celebration includes family reunions and visiting friends and relatives.
Lots of firecrackers are set off to drive away evil spirits

Chinese New Year Traditions

Fresh start – clean house from top to bottom before New Year's Eve
Kitchen God – watches over family and week before New Year's Day reports to heaven the behavior of the family
Big Feast – knives put away before New Year to avoid cutting good luck
Family share huge meal and say only positive things.
Gifts – children receive little red envelopes with money inside
Lights – last day of the celebration is Lantern Day
People light lanterns and hang them to welcome in spring.
Happy Birthday – seventh day of New Year is everyone's birthday
Lucky Signs – hang up red banners with wishes for good fortune and happiness
Firecrackers – set off firecrackers to drive away evil spirits
New Year Graphics – each new year, people will decorate their homes with many New Year Graphics, the best of which are from the small town called Yangliuqing.
New Year's Festival – cloth dragon winding down the street
Ends with the beautiful Lantern Festival. The children carry lanterns all around the village.

Resources

http://crafts.kaboose.com/holidays/chinese_new_year.html - excellent source for easy students' crafts for the Chinese New Year

<http://www.history.com/topics/chinese-new-year> - video of the Chinese New Year

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/chinesenewyear/> - excellent site for information for children, crafts, and many activities

http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/chinese_new_year.htm - lots and lots of student activities and ideas

http://www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/china/chinese_new_year.html - in-depth explanation of the Chinese New Year

http://www.chiff.com/home_life/holiday/chinese-new-year.htm - lots of good information

http://www.familyculture.com/holidays/chinese_new_year.htm - details family culture as it relates to the Chinese New Year

<http://pbskids.org/sagwa/games/countdown/index.html> - kid countdown for the Chinese New Year based on the book The Chinese Siamese Cat written by Amy Tan

<http://www.dltk-holidays.com/china/index.htm> - great student site – games, crafts, information etc.

http://www.theholidayspot.com/chinese_new_year/ - lots and lots of great information and pictures

<http://www.kiddyhouse.com/CNY/> - great activities for kids and teachers