

# Classroom Resources — Free on This Site

Every resource below is free on ChineseZodiac.com — print copies for students or display them on your classroom screen. No login needed.

## REFERENCE

### Zodiac Year Chart (1924–2031)

Have students look up the animal for their own birth year.

[chinesezodiac.com/years](http://chinesezodiac.com/years)

## REFERENCE

### Zodiac Calculator

Instant birth-date zodiac lookup.

[chinesezodiac.com/calculator](http://chinesezodiac.com/calculator)

## PRINTABLE

### Animal Flashcard Set

Picture cards to pair with the matching exercise.

[chinesezodiac.com/printables/flashcards](http://chinesezodiac.com/printables/flashcards)

| English | 中文 | Pinyin    | Notes                                               |
|---------|----|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Zodiac  | 生肖 | shēngxiào | The Chinese zodiac; the set of twelve animal signs. |
| Rat     | 鼠  | shǔ       | First animal in the zodiac cycle.                   |
| Ox      | 牛  | niú       | Symbol of diligence and steady strength.            |
| Tiger   | 虎  | hǔ        | Associated with bravery and confidence.             |
| Rabbit  | 兔  | tù        | Linked to gentleness and good fortune.              |
| Dragon  | 龙  | lóng      | The only mythical animal; a sign of power and luck. |
|         |    |           |                                                     |

| English                      | 中文 | Pinyin | Notes                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------|----|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Snake                        | 蛇  | shé    | Connected with wisdom and calm.                                                                                                      |
| Horse                        | 马  | mǎ     | Represents energy and freedom.                                                                                                       |
| Goat                         | 羊  | yáng   | The character 羊 can mean goat or sheep.                                                                                              |
| Monkey                       | 猴  | hóu    | Known for cleverness and curiosity.                                                                                                  |
| Rooster                      | 鸡  | jī     | The character 鸡 covers chicken and rooster.                                                                                          |
| Dog                          | 狗  | gǒu    | A sign of loyalty and honesty.                                                                                                       |
| Pig                          | 猪  | zhū    | Twelfth and last animal in the cycle.                                                                                                |
| Year                         | 年  | nián   | Used in phrases like "Year of the Tiger."                                                                                            |
| Animal                       | 动物 | dòngwù | The general word for an animal.                                                                                                      |
| I was born in the year of... | 我属 | wǒ shǔ | Literally "I belong to," used to give your zodiac sign. Note: here 属 (shǔ) means "to belong to," a different word from 鼠 (shǔ, rat). |

## Bilingual Reading Passage

The Chinese zodiac, or shēngxiào (生肖), is a cycle of twelve animals. The order always begins with the Rat (鼠) and ends with the Pig (猪).

Each year (年, nián) belongs to one animal. A baby born in a dragon year is a little Dragon (龙), and a baby born in a rabbit year is a little Rabbit (兔). After twelve years, the cycle starts again with the Rat.

In Chinese, you can say which sign you are with the phrase *wǒ shǔ* (我属), which means "I belong to." For example, someone born in a horse year would say they belong to the Horse (马).

People often connect each animal with a trait. The Ox (牛) is known for hard work, the Tiger (虎) for bravery, and the Dog (狗) for loyalty. These are just for fun and storytelling, but they make the zodiac easy to remember and enjoy.

## Practice Exercises

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### Exercise 1: Match the Animal

*Match each Chinese character to the correct English animal.*

1. 龙 a. Rabbit
2. 马 b. Pig
3. 兔 c. Dragon
4. 猪 d. Horse

### Exercise 2: Fill in the Blank

*Write the missing pinyin (with tone marks) for each animal.*

1. Rat = 鼠 = \_\_\_\_\_
2. Tiger = 虎 = \_\_\_\_\_
3. Snake = 蛇 = \_\_\_\_\_
4. Dog = 狗 = \_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise 3: Speaking Practice

*Practice saying these out loud with a partner. Try to use the correct tones.*

Say the twelve animals in order, from 鼠 (shǔ) to 猪 (zhū).

Tell your partner your own sign using "wǒ shǔ..." plus your animal.

Point to a classmate and ask which animal they think they are.

## Answer Key

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Exercise 1: 1-c (龙 = Dragon), 2-d (马 = Horse), 3-a (兔 = Rabbit), 4-b (猪 = Pig).

Exercise 2: 1. shǔ, 2. hǔ, 3. shé, 4. gǒu.

Exercise 3: Answers will vary; check for correct animal names and a clear attempt at tones.

# Cultural Notes

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- Your zodiac animal is set by the year you are born, not the month, so everyone born in the same lunar year shares the same sign.
- The lunar new year usually falls in late January or February, so a person born in early January may belong to the previous year's animal. Always check the exact lunar date for a birthday near the new year.
- The same twelve animals appear across many East and Southeast Asian cultures, though a few cultures swap one animal (for example, some traditions use the Cat in place of the Rabbit).
- Asking someone their zodiac sign is a polite, friendly way to guess their age without asking the year directly, since each sign repeats every twelve years.

**How to use this in class:** Start with the vocabulary table and have students match each English animal to its character and practice saying the pinyin aloud with correct tones. Read the passage together, then work through the exercises and check answers with the key. As a follow-up, ask each student to find the animal for their own birth year and say it in Chinese.

Vocabulary verified against standard Chinese references. We welcome corrections from native speakers and educators — please get in touch if you spot anything to improve.