

Chinese Zodiac Animals

Grade Level: Grade One

Unit Theme: Chinese Zodiac Animals

Ohio Standards Connection: Foreign Language

Standard: Communication: Communicate in languages other than English.

Benchmark A: Ask and answer questions and share preferences on familiar topics.

Indicator 1: Ask and answer simple questions about personal information and other familiar topics (e.g., family members, weather, today's date, pets, school supplies).

Benchmark F: Identify people and objects based on descriptions.

Indicator 7: Identify people and objects based on detailed oral or signed descriptions (e.g., Point to a tall man./Montre-moi un grande homme. Find the red apple./Finde den rotten Apfel.).

Standard: Cultures: Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

Benchmark A: Observe, identify and describe simple patterns of behavior of the target culture.

Indicator 1: Name important traditions, holidays or events.

Standard: Connections: Connect with other disciplines and acquire information.

Benchmark A: Describe concepts and use skills from across disciplines.

Indicator 2: Identify common animals in students' own and the target culture.

Standard: Communities: Participate in multilingual communities and cultures at home and around the world.

Benchmark B: Perform for a school or community event.

Indicator 2: Perform songs and rhymes for classroom, school or community events.

Unit Mode(s) of Focus: Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational

Unit Description

In this multiple-day unit, students will gain the ability to use age-appropriate expressions to identify and exchange information about the Chinese zodiac animals. Initially, students

interpret and react to pictures, stories and illustrations, and audio clips. Then, students will interact with their teacher and classmates by asking and telling about their Chinese zodiac animal signs, and identify pictures about the zodiac animals. Students will perform simple animal songs in the classroom. At the conclusion of this unit, students will make a video of conversations between students about the animals studied and will share this with another class

Performance Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Identify Chinese zodiac animals;
- Ask and tell about their favorite zodiac animal; and
- Place the twelve zodiac animals in sequence.

Time Frame/Estimated Duration: *Seven classes / Three and one half hours*

General Tips from the Writers

- Modify the time needed for this unit based on class size and time it takes to move through the activity sequence.
- If you choose, use stuffed animals as props.
- Download the paper cut Chinese zodiac animals to build students' appreciation of Chinese folk arts.

Feedback from Pilot Teachers

- I think if the order of the animals on zodiac signs is one of the expected outcomes and criteria for evaluation, why not present them in correct order so the students get more opportunity to recognize the animals' names and practice saying them in order at the same time? It's more effective than asking the students to number the animals, cut them up and rearrange them in sequence according to the numbers. I have tried to divide the animals into three groups with four in each group and practice with my students like reciting a rhythm. They all learn well and fast. With several sets of cute zodiac animals, I played many different games with them, such as "Which animal is missing?" "Guess who I am?" "Mix-up and Rearrange" "Match the words (Pinyin/characters) and pictures" I also did some craft project using Chinese paper cut animals to make zodiac placemat or wreath. It's a lot of fun. Students are interested to find out their signs, so teaching them how to say "What is your Chinese zodiac sign?" and "My sign is ____." (I was born in the year of the ____) is appropriate (e.g., Ni shu shenme? Wo shu ____.). How the twelve animals were chosen? It is a question I think most children are eager to find out. Why isn't cat in the zodiac? To answer these questions, you cannot leave the famous Chinese Zodiac story out from the unit. There are many resources available either in the forms of books or online materials. I came across an eBook version for "Chinese Zodiac Story" with animated pictures in it. It's the best one I have seen so far. .
- The kids are excited to know Chinese Zodiac Animals. "Number all twelve pets/animals in sequence" is a little bit hard for the first grade kids. They like the song "Two Little Tigers" very much. We sing, act and play it.

- With only one hour a week, it is difficult to compress all the activities into one hour. If I had three hours, I would not teach all of the content. It is too much. But, when I pre-assess the students, all classes can come up with the 12 animals. But we only concentrate on three last year, this year, and next year. We also link the year number with the animal (2009=ox in Chinese). I teach them their own sign. In Chinese, we do not say, "What animal are you?" We say, "What animal do you belong to?"
- They did a very good job practicing "I like ..., what about you?" They like very much to sing the "Two Little Tigers" song.

Pre-Assessment

The purpose of the pre-assessment is to learn about the students' previous knowledge of zodiac animals. Instead of using the attached worksheet, the teacher may use toys or stuffed animals.

- Pass out Attachment A, Pre-Assessment Response Sheet.
- Ask students to point at the animals that make the sounds as they are made by native Chinese speakers such as:
 - 汪, 汪, 汪 Wāng! Wāng! Wāng (for dog)
 - 喵, 喵, 喵 Miāo! Miāo! Miāo! (for cat)
 - 咩, 咩, 咩 Miē! Miē! Miē (for sheep)
- Discuss with students in English that Chinese people choose twelve animals to be the zodiac animal signs that represent each year of a twelve year cycle in the Chinese calendar.
- Ask students which animals they would like to choose to be zodiac animals.
- Have students circle or place an "X" on 3 animals in each row as their choice of zodiac animals.

Pre-Assessment Scoring Guidelines

Collect the students' pre-assessment worksheets and use the following scale to evaluate their background knowledge of zodiac animals:

10-12	Strong understanding of topic
7-9	Adequate understanding of topic
4- 6	Poor understanding of topic/ Needs remediation
1- 3	Insufficient understanding of topic/ Needs remediation

Unit Assessments and Scoring Guidelines

Interpretive Assessment

Using the same worksheet that students used to complete the pre-assessment (Attachment A, Pre-Assessment Response Sheet), students demonstrate their recognition of target vocabulary phrases by circling the picture that corresponds to the teacher's random pronunciation of these animals.

Interpretive Assessment Scoring Guidelines

Use the same scale as in the pre-assessment to score the interpretive assessment:

10-12	Strong understanding of topic
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- 7-9 Adequate understanding of topic
- 4- 6 Poor understanding of topic/ Needs remediation
- 1- 3 = Insufficient understanding of topic/ Needs remediation

Interpersonal Assessment

At the conclusion of this unit, students will perform their conversation and song about zodiac animals on a video that could be sent to a partner class at a sister school in an area where Chinese is spoken. Each child will have the opportunity to present with a classmate without any assistance from the teacher or peers. The students will be required to use culturally appropriate gestures as they converse.

Interpersonal Assessment Scoring Guidelines

The teacher will review each child's contribution to the video and evaluate his or her performance based on the criteria found on Attachment E, Post Assessment Scoring Rubric. Based on the rubric, each student's performance can be rated according to the following:

- 25 - 22 Highly Proficient
- 21 - 18 Proficient
- 17 - 15 Minimally proficient
- 14 - 0 Needs remediation

Vocabulary and Structures

- 鼠 shǔ rat , 牛, 虎 hǔ tiger, 兔
龙 lóng dragon, 蛇, 马 mǎ horse, 羊 yáng sheep/goat,
猴, 鸡 jī rooster, 狗, 猪 zhū pig

狗 gǒu dog
兔 tù rabbit,
猫 māo cat
羊 yáng sheep/goat,

牛 niú ox
蛇 shé snake
猴 hóu monkey

这是老鼠。	Zhè shì lǎoshǔ.	This is a mouse.
这是不是龙?	Zhè shì bù shì lóng?	Is this a dragon?
我喜欢马。	Wǒ xǐhuān mǎ.	I like the horse.
我喜欢鸡, 你呢?	Wǒ xǐhuān jī, nǐ ne?	I like the chicken, and
you?		
我有小猪, 你呢?	Wǒ yǒu xiǎo zhū, nǐ ne?	I have a little pig, and you?
我也喜欢老虎。	Wǒ yě xǐhuān lǎohǔ	I also like the tiger.

Materials, Resources and Useful Web Sites

- “Magic box” filled with stuffed animals being studied in this unit.

- Kindergarten level picture/story books with related illustrations
- Recording of animal sounds
- Picture cards that depict vocabulary words
- Classroom set of hand puppets
- Children’s song that highlights vocabulary expressions targeted in this unit such as the song : *Liǎng zhī lǎohǔ* (Two Little Tigers)

Sequence of Activities

Day One

- Use hand puppets to greet each student in Chinese. Quickly review animals and pets they learned in kindergarten.
- Begin the pre-assessment activity by passing out Attachment A, Pre-Assessment Response Sheet.
- As a warm up activity, ask students to point at the animals that make sounds as they are made by native Chinese speakers:
 - Wang! Wang! Wang! (for dog)
 - Miao! Miao! Miao! (for cat)
 - Mieh! Mieh! Mieh! (for sheep)

- Name one animal in each row and have students circle that animal.
- Ask students in English what animals they would like to choose for Chinese zodiac animals signs.
- Have the students place an “X” on animals they choose.

Collect and score these to determine the extent of students’ background knowledge on learned vocabulary on animals 兔 tù (rabbit), 狗 gǒu (dog), 猫 māo (cat), 羊 yáng (sheep/goat) and the new topic of Chinese zodiac animals in order to determine their need for remediation on these topics.

- At the conclusion of this lesson, sing the song students learned in kindergarten, *xiǎo tùzǐ guāiguai* (Little Good Rabbit).

Day Two

- Using a “magic box” filled with stuffed animals, walk around the classroom and ask students to pick one animal out of the box. Name the animal, then have students repeat the name of each animal. Teach students how to pronounce *nǐú* (cow), *mǎ* (horse), *jī* (chicken), *lǎohǔ* (tiger), and *lǎoshǔ* (mouse).
- Review 兔 tù (rabbit), 狗 gǒu (dog), 羊 yáng (sheep/goat). Ask students to hold up each animal when they hear the name of the animal. Since all of the students will not have a stuffed dog, cat, or sheep, ask the students to trade their stuffed animals with a neighbor so that everyone will have a chance to demonstrate their recognition.
- Arrange students in small groups and have them sing and act out *xiǎo tùzǐ guāiguai* (Little Good Rabbit).

Day Three

- Conduct a quick oral review of the vocabulary. Have students come up to the front of the classroom and quickly pick out a stuffed animal from the magic box and line up in two rows.
- Have each student take turns identifying his or her animal saying “Zhèshìjī” (This is a chicken) to the partner facing him or her. Students then pass their animal to the person to their right and practice the same pattern until they feel comfortable with the concepts. The student on the far right end of the row will walk to the other end of his or her row in order to pass of his or her stuffed animal. This way each child will identify a different animal each time. You will need to practice these directions with the students prior to beginning the activity.
- Next review and practice the question pattern by adding “shìbùshì? Zhèshìbùshìgǒu? (Is this a dog?). Students who are face-to-face ask the question to each other.
- Finally, have the students sit in a circle. Have them listen to the children’s song *Liang zhi laohu* (Two Little Tigers). When they are finished listening, ask them to guess which animal is mentioned in the song.

Day Four

- Using a “magic box” to introduce new zodiac animals. Walk around the classroom and ask students to pick one animal out of the box. Name the animal, then have students repeat the name of each animal. Teach students how to pronounce *long* (dragon), *she* (snake), *houzi* (monkey), and *zhu* (pig).
- Ask the class to listen to the song *Liang zhi laohu* (Two Little Tigers) while they move to sit in a circle.
- Sit in the middle of the circle and use a tiger puppet to greet students.
- Orally demonstrate and practice pattern “*Wo xihuan houzi* (I like the monkey).” and use facial expressions (smiles) and gestures (hugs) that emphasize liking. Have different students come to the center of the circle to pick up the various stuffed animals that you mention and repeat each sentence for practice.
- Add “*ni ne?*(And you?)” at the end of the question pattern “*Wo xihuan tuzi* (I like the rabbit).” Have students practice by turning to the person on their right side and asking “*Wo xihuan tuzi, ni ne?* (I like the rabbit, and you?)”.
- At the end of the class, have the students sing *Liǎng zhī lǎohǔ* (Two Little Tigers) a number of times. You can lead the song or you can play an audio recording of the song.

Day Five

- Give each student a copy of Attachment C, Post-Assessment Response Sheet for Students. Read animals’ name one by one in the sequence of the zodiac signs and ask students to write down the number next to the animal picture.
- Use TPR story telling to illustrate the story of the song *Liǎng zhī lǎohǔ* (Two Little Tigers) by reviewing parts of the body vocabulary students learned in the past. See Attachment B for the lyrics of this song. Ask the classroom teacher or another adult to help do this performance. Have the classroom teacher act as the little rabbit and the

teacher act as whatever another animal. The classroom teacher as the little rabbit doesn't want you to come in.

Day Six

- Using Attachment C from Day Five, ask students to cut out the animal pictures (with the number they wrote the day before) and line up the zodiac animals in sequence. Use these animal pictures as flash cards to review the names of the animals. Show flash cards to the students one by one and ask them to say the name of the animal in Chinese.
- Separate the students into pairs. Using the vocabulary and structures studied, have students make a dialogue by asking and answering questions and sharing preferences.
- Combine three pairs to form one group to act out the song *Liǎng zhī lǎohǔ* (Two Little Tigers).

Day Seven

- Handout a new copy of Attachment C and ask students to cut out the animal pictures. Give each student six animal pictures and another piece of paper. Ask them to organize the pictures into three lines with two pictures on each line. Then hand out some small button to play Bingo. Have students put a button on the picture of the animal which you say. See who is first to have the buttons form a line.
- Arrange the students in pairs and ask them to make a dialogue using the vocabulary and sentence structures studied. After they are prepared, video tape their performances. Evaluate each student's performance based on the videotaped presentation using Attachment E, Post-Assessment Scoring Rubric.

Differentiated Instructional Support

- Allow students who are initially hesitant to use word utterances or short expressions that correctly respond to the questions. Partner these students in subsequent activities with students who can provide a strong model for complete sentences.
- For heritage speakers of Chinese and more able students, assign extra credits tasks for them to find out the Chinese zodiac animals of their parents and siblings.

Extensions and Home Connections

- Encourage students to teach the vocabulary of animals to their parents or siblings at home. Students can use the Attachment C, Post-Assessment Response Sheet to teach the Chinese names of these animals to another family member and ask their parents for a signature. Students who complete this home connection task can be rewarded with animal stickers.
- Students can sing and dramatize the song *Liǎng zhī lǎohǔ* (Two Little Tigers) to students in other world language classes. Those students who have sung and dramatized the song to others can be rewarded with small prizes.

Technology Connections

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Zodiac
- <http://www.elet.org.tw/ocacworks/200404/18/index.htm>
- http://hk.geocities.com/othertopic_leo/year.htm

List of Attachments

Attachment A, Pre-Assessment Response Sheet

Attachment B, Children's Song – *Liang zhi laohu* (Two Little Tigers)

Attachment C, Post-Assessment Response Sheet for Students

Attachment D, Post-Assessment Response Sheet for Teachers

Attachment E, Post-Assessment Scoring Rubric

Attachment A
Pre-Assessment Response Sheet

Circle the animal you hear.
Mark X on 3 zodiac animals in each row



Attachment B

Children's Song – *Liǎng zhī lǎohǔ* (Two Little Tigers)



两只老虎

两只老虎, 两只老虎

Liǎng zhī lǎohǔ, Liǎng zhī lǎohǔ

跑得快, 跑得快

pǎo de kuài, pǎo de kuài

一只没有眼睛

yī zhī méiyǒu yǎnjìng

一只没有尾巴

yī zhī méiyǒu wěiba

真奇怪! 真奇怪!

zhēn qíguài! zhēn qíguài!

Two little tigers, two little tigers

Run so fast

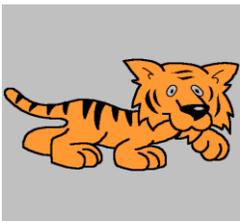
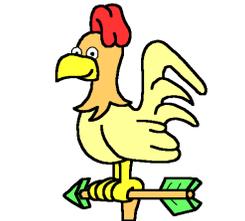
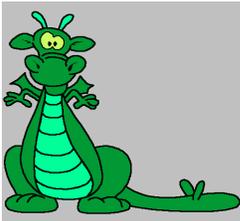
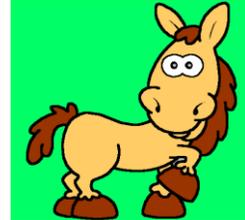
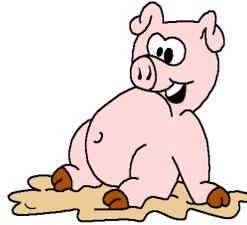
One with no eyes,

Another with no tail

Very strange! Very strange!

Attachment C
Post-Assessment Response Sheet for Students

Listen to your teacher and number the following zodiac animals in sequence



Attachment D

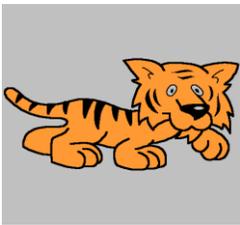
Post-Assessment Response Sheet for Teacher
Chinese Zodiac Animals in sequence associated with years



老鼠 Rat (1912 - 1924 - 1936 - 1948 - 1960 - 1972 - 1984)



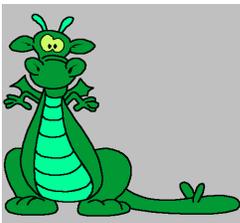
牛 Ox (1913 - 1925 - 1937 - 1949 - 1961 - 1973 - 1985)



老虎 Tiger (1914 - 1926 - 1938 - 1950 - 1962 - 1974 - 1986)



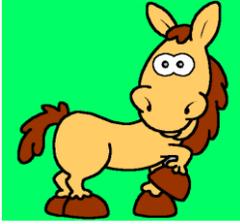
兔子 Rabbit (1915 - 1927 - 1939 - 1951 - 1963 - 1975 - 1987)



龙 Dragon (1916 - 1928 - 1940 - 1952 - 1964 - 1976 - 1988)



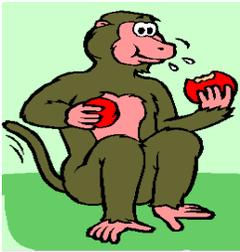
蛇 Snake (1917 - 1929 - 1941 - 1953 - 1965 - 1977 - 1989)



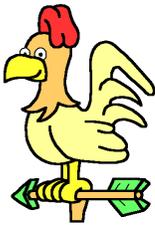
马 Horse (1918 - 1930 - 1942 - 1954 - 1966 - 1978 - 1990)



羊 Goat (1919 - 1931 - 1943 - 1955 - 1967 - 1979 - 1991)



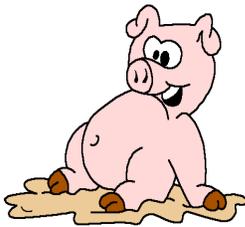
猴子 Monkey(1920 - 1932 - 1944 - 1956 - 1968 - 1980 - 1992)



鸡 Rooster (1921 - 1933 - 1945 - 1957 - 1969 - 1981 - 1993)



狗 Dog (1910 - 1922 - 1934 - 1946 - 1958 - 1970 - 1982)



猪 Boar (1911 - 1923 - 1935 - 1947 - 1959 - 1971 - 1983)

Attachment E
Post-Assessment Scoring Rubric

Performance Outcomes	5	3	1
Number the picture of zodiac animals in sequence (Interpretive Assessment)	Student numbered all twelve pets/animals in sequence correctly.	Student numbered six pets/animals in sequence correctly.	Student attempted to number at least two pet/animal correctly.
Told information about their zodiac animals. (Interpersonal Assessment)	Student told zodiac animals on the first try.	Student told zodiac animals on a second or third attempt or they used an incomplete sentence.	Student attempted to tell zodiac animals in a complete sentence but did not succeed.
Exchange information about their preference of the zodiac animals. (Interpersonal Assessment)	Student, on the first try, used culturally appropriate expressions when asking and giving information about his/her favorite zodiac animals.	Student, on a second or third try, used culturally appropriate expressions when asking and giving information about his/her favorite zodiac animals.	Student, attempted to use culturally appropriate expressions when asking and giving information about his/her favorite zodiac animals.
Perform the children song. (Presentational Assessment)	Student completed all parts of the children's song on the first try.	Student completed all parts of the children's song at the second or third try.	Student attempted to perform the children's song but did not succeed.
Clarity of speech (pronunciation, intonation, Fluency/Flow)	Student's remarks are easily understood by a native speaker.	Student's remarks are easily understood with some difficulty by a native speaker.	Student's remarks are not comprehensible to a native speaker.