

## 12 Chinese Zodiac Signs

Chinese zodiac animals have lucky meanings. Chinese people associate each animal with certain characteristics. It's believed that people born in a given year have the personality of that year's animal.

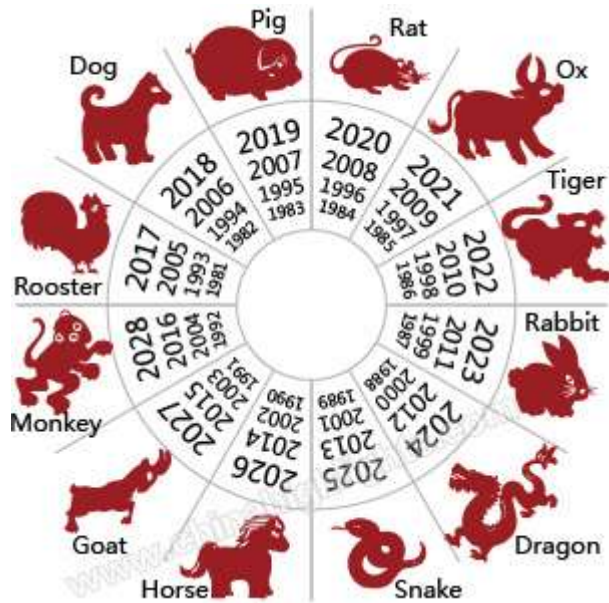


### What's Your Zodiac Animal?

Each zodiac animal's year comes around every 12 years, and each year is associated with a zodiac animal. The most recent zodiac sign years are shown below. Each Chinese zodiac animal has personality traits assigned to it by the ancient Chinese. Chinese people believe these traits will be embodied in people, according to their zodiac sign.

| Zodiac Animal | Recent Years   | Personality Traits                         |
|---------------|--|--|
| Rat           | 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020 | Quick-witted, resourceful, versatile, kind |
| Ox            | 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, 2021 | Diligent, dependable, strong, determined   |
| Tiger         | 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010, 2022 | Brave, confident, competitive              |
| Rabbit        | 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011, 2023 | Quiet, elegant, kind, responsible          |
| Dragon        | 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012, 2024 | Confident, intelligent, enthusiastic       |
| Snake         | 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, 2025 | Enigmatic, intelligent, wise               |
| Horse         | 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, 2026 | Animated, active, energetic                |
| Goat          | 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015, 2027 | Calm, gentle, sympathetic                  |
| Monkey        | 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, 2028 | Sharp, smart, curiosity                    |
| Rooster       | 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017, 2029 | Observant, hardworking, courageous         |
| Dog           | 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, 2030 | Lovely, honest, prudent                    |
| Pig           | 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019, 2031 | Compassionate, generous, diligent          |

## The Chinese Zodiac Story - The Zodiac Rankings Race



There are 12 Chinese zodiac signs, in the following order: **Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig**. Each sign is named after an animal, and each animal has its own unique characteristics.

Do you know why the 12 Chinese zodiac animals are in the sequence above? The following story reveals legendary reasons, and some of the characteristics of the 12 animals.

The story is widespread (and widely varying) among Chinese. Though it is made up, it might be interesting for you to tell your children and friends.

### The Heavenly Gate Race Story - Reasons for Zodiac Rankings

Long, long ago, there was no Chinese zodiac. The Jade Emperor wanted to select 12 animals to be his guards. He sent an immortal being into man's world to spread the message that the earlier one went through the Heavenly Gate, the better the rank one would have.

The next day, animals set off towards the Heavenly Gate. Rat got up very early. On his way to the gate, he encountered a river. He had to stop there, owing to the swift current. After waiting a long time, Rat noticed Ox about to cross the river and swiftly jumped into Ox's ear.

The diligent Ox did not mind at all and simply continued. After crossing the river, he raced towards the palace of the Jade Emperor. Suddenly, Rat jumped out of Ox's ear and dashed to the feet of the Emperor. Rat won first place and Ox was second.

Tiger and Rabbit came third and fourth because both are fast and competitive, but Tiger was faster. (Rabbit got across the river by hopping on stepping stones and a floating log.)

Good-looking Dragon was fifth and was immediately noticed by the Jade Emperor, who said Dragon's son could be sixth. But Dragon's son didn't come with him that day. Just then, Snake came forward and said Dragon was his adoptive father; so Snake ranked sixth.

Horse and Goat arrived. They were very kind and modest and each let the other go first. The Jade Emperor saw how polite they were and ranked them seventh and eighth.

Monkey had fallen well behind. But he jumped between trees and stones, and caught up to be ninth. Last were Rooster, Dog, and Pig.

These 12 animals became guards of the Heavenly Gate.