

LESSON PLAN

Title: Chinese Zodiac (Chinese New Year)	Content Area/s: Reading / Language Arts
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Grade Level: 1 st	Time Frame: 1 hour	Date:
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SOLs:

VA English Standard 1.1: The student will continue to demonstrate growth in the use of oral language.

- a) Listen and respond to a variety of media, including books, audiotapes, videos, and other age-appropriate materials.
- b) Tell and retell stories and events in logical order.
- c) Participate in a variety of oral language activities, including choral speaking and reciting short poems, rhymes, songs, and stories with repeated patterns.

Related SOLs:

VA Social Studies Standard 1.12: The student will recognize that communities in Virginia

- c) include people who have diverse ethnic origins, customs, and traditions, who make contributions to their communities, and who are united as Americans by common principles.

Technology SOLs:

N/A

Lesson Objectives:

Given a read-aloud about the origin of the Chinese Zodiac (“Cat and Rat” by Ed Young), the student will:

- 1) describe the folktale of the river race
- 2) retell the animals of the Chinese zodiac

Given this same read-aloud about the betrayal of a friend (“Cat and Rat” by Ed Young), the student will describe how friends should respect and behave toward one another.

Resources (Texts & Technology):

“Cat and Rat” by Ed Young

Content:

The origin of the animals that comprise the Chinese zodiac is generally ascribed to an ancient race across a river or desert that was organized by the emperor. The first twelve animals that completed the race were honored by having one year of the zodiac named after them. The Chinese lunar calendar runs in a twelve year cycle. Each year’s animal designation is believed to carry certain personality traits.

In “Cat and Rat” by Ed Young, these two animals are lifelong best friends who devise a plan to overcome their small stature by riding on ox’s back across the river. Rat decides he wishes to win the race on his own and pushes Cat into the river. Rat does win the race and becomes the first animal of the zodiac. Cat is left behind and does not have a year named after him. “And that is why, until this very day, Cat and Rat are not friends.”

**Instructional Procedures: Include the estimated time for each activity.
(Number steps) beginning with Initial Activity and ending with Closing Activity.)**

- 1) Initial Activity: (5 minutes) In the reading circle, the teacher ask students to offer their ideas of what animals are included in the Chinese zodiac. All ideas are written on the whiteboard.
- 2) Read Aloud (10 minutes) Teacher reads “Cat and Rat” to the class.
- 3) Reflection (10 minutes) Teacher prompts students to retell key elements of the story in own words:
 - Who organized race?
 - How did Cat and Rat feel about race and what did they do?
 - Opinions on actions and feelings of Cat and Rat?
- 4) Review (5 minutes) Teacher and students review and edit whiteboard list
- 5) Students break into small groups for center work (20 minutes):
 - Tangram center (animal templates)
 - Text set reading
 - Writing/drawing center (“Good friends ...”)
- 6) Closing Activity (10 minutes): Reconvene in reading circle. Teacher presents cyclical image of Chinese zodiac and asks students to name animals in order beginning with rat. As each animal is named, the teacher solicits input on what characteristics might be associated with each animal. All ideas are written down. Discussion of these characteristics is where the lesson will begin the following day.

Assessment/s:

Formative: Monitor student attentiveness, task attention, and performance during activities.
Collect work from writing center.

Summative:

Which animal is NOT included in the Chinese zodiac?

- 1) rat
- 2) pig
- 3) cat
- 4) sheep

**Extension Activities/
Interdisciplinary Links:**

Text Set:

Chin Chiang and the Dragon's Dance by Ian Wallace
Chinese New Year by Lola M. Schaefer
Chinese New Year by Fay Robinson
The Chinese New Year by Joanna Troughton
The Dragon New Year (legend) by David Bouchard
Dragon Parade by Steven A. Chin
The Dragon Prince by Laurence Yep
The Great Race by David Bouchard

Chinese Zodiac Tangrams:

<http://abcteach.com/directory/basics/math/geometry/tangrams/>

Differentiation Strategies/Activities:

Different reading levels in text set.
Paired reading with peer model, teacher, or parent volunteer
Fidget balls and T-squares as needed during reading time