

## Sample Chinese Fable: Chinese Zodiac (Grades 4-6) Worksheet

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## Chinese Fable: Chinese Zodiac



<sup>1</sup> A long, long time ago, there was no calendar in China. Since people didn't have means to measure time, they didn't know when to grow crops and when to expect seasonal changes. It was such an inconvenience!

<sup>2</sup> Jade Emperor, the almighty Chinese God, took note of the situation and wanted to help. He announced that he would set up a system that runs in a 12-year cycle. He called it the Chinese Zodiac. He offered to hold a contest on his birthday. The first twelve animals of his kingdom to arrive at the finish line would receive the honor of having a year named after it. All animals were very excited!



<sup>3</sup> Rat was ambitious. It wanted to win the first prize. Yet, it had two problems. The first was about the timing. Because the race would start at the crack of dawn, Rat was afraid that it could not wake up on time. The second was about the route. As the finish line would be directly beyond a swift river, Rat needed to find a way to cross the current. Just when Rat was contemplating a solution, it bumped into its best friend, Cat. After a lengthy discussion, the two animals came up with a brilliant idea. They decided to solicit help from Ox. Rat and Cat figured that Ox -- always being an early riser and a good swimmer -- could wake them up before sunrise and carry them across the river. With their minds made up, Rat and Cat went to see Ox. Out of kindness, Ox agreed to help. Hence, the three animals formed an alliance. They promised to help each other, so they could share the first prize.

<sup>4</sup> On the day of the race, Ox woke up Rat and Cat and put them on its back. Just when Ox was half way across the river, Rat had a second thought about the plan. It wondered, "Why should I share the glory with Cat? Look at it! It just lies on Ox's back sleeping! What a lazy animal Cat is! Come to think of it, what if Cat decides not to honor the agreement? It runs fast. Surely, it can get to the finish line before I do, once Ox reaches the bank." Eager to win, Rat decided to get rid of Cat. It quietly crept next to Cat and gave it a push. SPLASH! Cat fell into the river. Not knowing how to swim, Cat called out for help. To its horror, Rat pretended not to hear its pleas and urged Ox to keep on moving.

<sup>5</sup> Finally, Ox reached the other side of the river and climbed ashore. As soon as they were on the dry land, Rat jumped from Ox's back and ran ahead toward the finish line. Ox could not believe its eyes! It called out, "Wait for me! I thought we have a pact! And, where is Cat?" Rat didn't stop. It kept on charging ahead. Just as it had dreamed, Rat won the contest! Jade Emperor congratulated Rat and named the first year "Rat." Before long, Ox also reached

the finish line and took the second spot. Ox was furious at Rat. It accused Rat of breaking the deal. Rat laughed smugly and said, "How naïve you are! Why should I -- the smartest of all creatures -- share the title with Cat and you? It's your own mistake to trust me!" Ox wanted to argue more, but it was not very good at expressing its opinions. Though upset by Rat's deceitful act, Ox decided to drop the matter.

**Paragraphs 6 to 12:**

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Name \_\_\_\_\_



Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Chinese Fable: Chinese Zodiac

### Sample

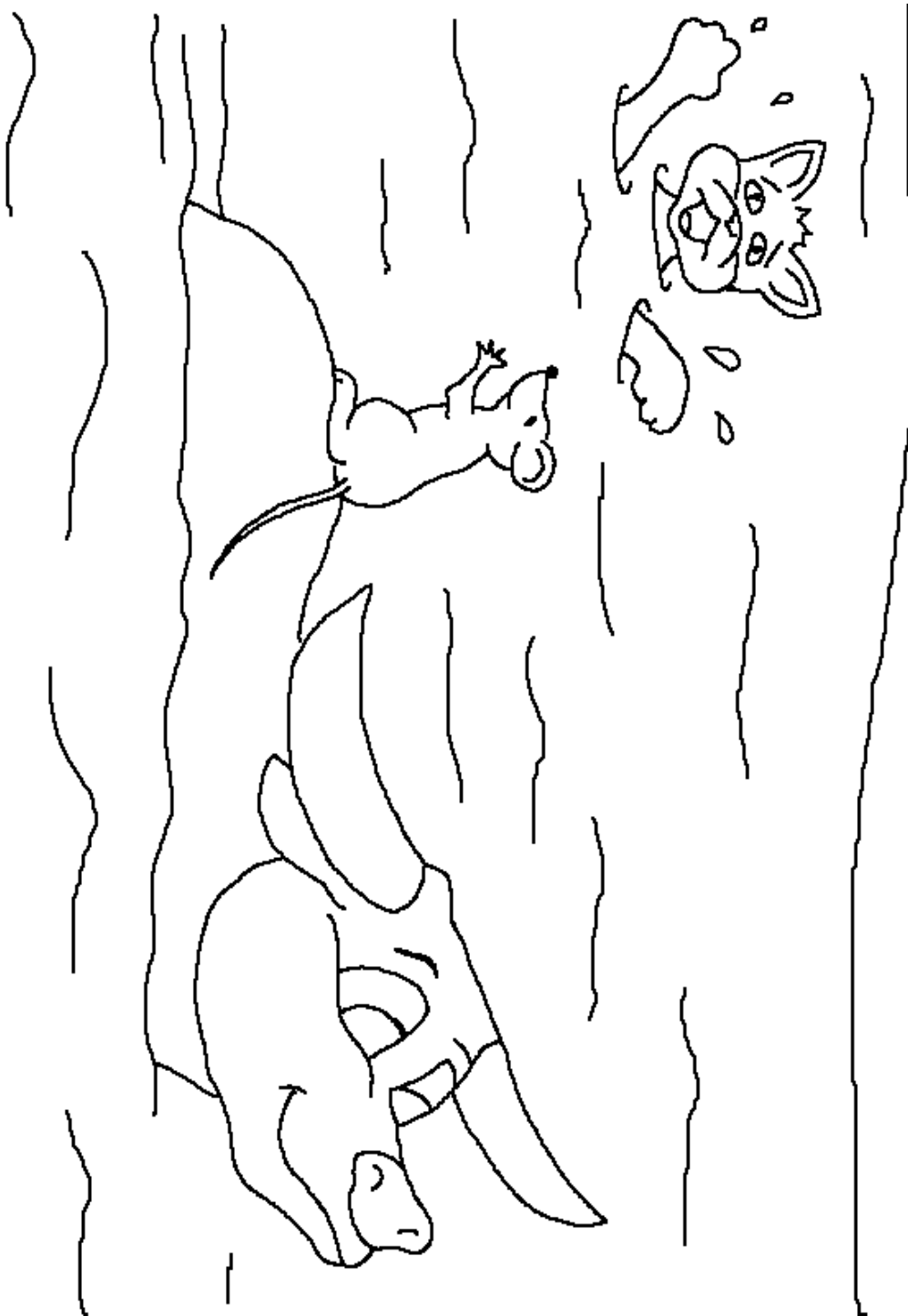
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<p>1. How many animals does the Chinese Zodiac have?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Twenty</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Seven</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C One</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Twelve</p>	<p>2. Jade Emperor set up a system, called the Chinese Zodiac, to help people measure time.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>
<p>3. According to the Chinese Zodiac, year 2004 is the year of Monkey. What animal represents year 2006?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Dog</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Rat</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Pig</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Rooster</p>	<p>4. Which three animals teamed up to cross the river with a log?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Rat, Cat, and Ox</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Pig, Dog, and Horse</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Dragon, Tiger, and Rabbit</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Rooster, Monkey, and Goat</p>
<p>5. Why did Dragon come late?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A It stopped on the way to make rain.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B It stopped on the way to burn a forest.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C It stopped on the way to kidnap a princess.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D It stopped on the way to put out a fire.</p>	<p>6. Jade Emperor was disgusted by Rat's cheating act, so he disqualified Rat and gave the first prize to Cat.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>
<p>7. Rabbit crossed the river by hopping from one stone to another that were scattered across the riverbed.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>	<p>8. Which of the following animals represents the 7th year of the Chinese Zodiac?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Horse</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Monkey</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Pig</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Rabbit</p>

Name \_\_\_\_\_



Date \_\_\_\_\_



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