

Zodiac River Race Answer Key

Sample Responses:

1. To determine the order of the twelve animals in the zodiac.
2. The Rat rode on the Ox's back and jumped off at the end to win.
3. The Dragon stopped to help others before finishing the race.
4. The Ox shows kindness and patience; the Dragon shows compassion and selflessness.
5. The order they finished in became the zodiac's sequence.
6. The story teaches that intelligence, kindness, and perseverance are as important as strength.
7. Answers will vary (e.g., "I relate to the Tiger because I try to stay brave during challenges.").

Teacher's Guide:

- **Skill Focus:** Reading comprehension, myth interpretation, symbolism, and moral analysis.
- **Differentiation Tips:**
 - For emerging readers, break the myth into smaller sections and read aloud with expression.
 - For advanced learners, have students research how zodiac animals influence personality beliefs in Chinese culture.
- **Engagement Idea:**
 - Let students act out "The Great Race" as a mini class play or puppet show.
 - Create a classroom zodiac wheel showing all twelve animals in order with short personality notes.
- **Extension Activity:**
 - Have students compare this myth to another origin story (e.g., Greek, Norse, or Native American).
 - Encourage creative writing: "If you could add a new animal to the zodiac, what would it be and why?"