

# The Year of the Ox

Chinese New Year is one of the most significant dates in the Chinese calendar: it marks the beginning of the new **lunar year**. Because of this, Chinese New Year falls on a slightly different date each year.

## The Legend of the Chinese Horoscope

According to Chinese culture, each lunar year is represented by one of 12 animals. This tradition dates back thousands of years and is said to have begun with a story. However, given its age, many versions of the story exist and it is unclear which version was the original tale. One story holds the main character as Buddha while another states that it was the Jade Emperor. Nevertheless, both stories are very similar and name the same 12 animals. In one version of the Chinese myth, Buddha called out to all of the animals on Earth and asked them to come and see him yet only 12 animals answered Buddha's call. To repay them for their loyalty, Buddha gave each one of these animals their own year in the Chinese zodiac cycle.

One such animal was the ox. The Year of the Ox begins on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021. It is the 4719<sup>th</sup> year of the Chinese calendar and it will run until 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 when the Year of the Tiger begins. Once the Year of the Tiger begins, the next Year of the Ox will only begin again in 2033.

## Traits of the Ox

People born in each year of the Chinese zodiac cycle are believed to demonstrate particular traits and qualities. These characteristics are said to reflect the animal that the year is named after; for example, the ox is said to be a strong and reliable creature.

Each zodiac sign is also linked with one of five elements: wood, fire, earth, water and metal. Depending on the year that you were born and the element that you are linked to, people born in a Year of the Ox are said to have different traits.

Year of Birth	Type of Ox	Traits
1925 or 1985	Wood Ox	brave, outspoken and resourceful
1937 or 1997	Fire Ox	clever and adaptable
1949 or 2009	Earth Ox	smart, confident and determined
1913 or 1973	Water Ox	hard-working and realistic
1961 or 2021	Metal Ox	busy and active with good people skills

Overall, people born in the Year of the Ox are said to be faithful, dependable, persistent and diligent. They are believed to be quiet and level-headed and they are known for their determination and their attention to detail.

### Predictions and Horoscopes

The Chinese culture surrounding the zodiac includes many beliefs and **horoscopes**. Just as the above traits are believed to apply to anyone born in a Year of the Ox, the following predictions are also believed to be true for those people in 2021:

- People born in the Year of the Ox will have a positive year in 2021.
- 2021 will be a good year for gaining wealth.
- It will be important for them to take extra care of themselves.
- They should be prepared to rely on friends for support during busy times.
- They should be prepared to take extra trips this year.

### Glossary

**horoscope:** Predictions about what will happen in someone's future based on the positions of the stars when that person was born.

**lunar year:** A year in which the months are calculated based on the Moon's phases rather than the Sun's movement.



# Questions

1. Which of the following types of ox are listed in the Chinese zodiac cycle? Tick **two**.

- Metal Ox
- Stone Ox
- Wind Ox
- Wood Ox

2. On which date does the Year of the Tiger begin? Tick one.

- 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021
- 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022
- 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022
- 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021

3. Find and copy one word which shows that it is not known which version of the story is the original tale.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. List **two** of the supposed traits of an Earth Ox.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

5. In which section of the text would you find the date of the next Chinese New Year?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why does Chinese New Year fall on a slightly different date each year?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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7. How might people born in the Year of the Ox be rewarded for their hard work in 2021?

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8. **...Buddha called out to all of the animals on Earth and asked them to come and see him get only 12 animals answered Buddha's call.** Explain why you think that the ox was one of the 12 animals that responded to Buddha's call.

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9. Summarise what you have learnt about Chinese New Year using 30 words or fewer.

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# The Year of the Ox

Chinese New Year is one of the most significant dates in the Chinese calendar. Each Chinese New Year – a lunar year in which the months are calculated based on the Moon's phases – begins on a slightly different date compared to the last and each is represented by one of 12 animals.

## The Origin of the Chinese Horoscope

The history of the Chinese New Year is steeped in legend and dates back thousands of years. It is believed to have originated from a story but, given its age and regular retelling, many different versions of the story exist. One myth holds the main character as Buddha while another states that it was the Jade Emperor – a representation of the first god within Chinese culture. It is difficult to determine which version was the original tale but both stories bear strong similarities and involve the same 12 animals. In one version of the story, Buddha called out to all of the animals on Earth and requested that they come and see him yet only 12 animals answered Buddha's call. To repay them for their loyalty, Buddha gave each one of these animals their own year in the Chinese zodiac cycle.

One such animal was the dependable ox. It is said that the ox, in fact, arrived first but the rat - who was kindly helped by the ox - tricked the ox and rushed ahead of them. Consequently, the ox was the second animal to arrive and, thus, became the second animal of the Chinese zodiac.

The Year of the Ox commences on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and will be the 4719<sup>th</sup> year of the Chinese calendar, lasting until 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 when the Year of the Tiger begins. Once this happens, 11 years will pass until the next Year of the Ox, which will only begin again in 2033.



## Traits and Characteristics

People born in each year of the Chinese zodiac cycle are believed to demonstrate particular traits and qualities. These characteristics are said to reflect the animal that the year is named after. Each zodiac sign is also linked with one of five elements: wood, fire, earth, water and metal. Depending on the year that you were born and the element that you are linked to, people born in a Year of the Ox are said to have different traits.

Year of Birth	Type of Ox	Traits	Famous Examples
1925 or 1985	Wood Ox	brave, outspoken and resourceful	Malcolm X
1937 or 1997	Fire Ox	clever and adaptable	Malala Yousafzai
1949 or 2009	Earth Ox	smart, confident and determined	Annie Leibovitz
1913 or 1973	Water Ox	hard-working and realistic	Jesse Owens
1961 or 2021	Metal Ox	busy and active with good people skills	Barack Obama

Overall, people born in the Year of the Ox are said to be dependable and faithful. They are believed to have a quiet and level-headed disposition and they are known for their determination and attention to detail. They are said to be practical and to make effective leaders.

People born in the Year of the Ox are said to be most compatible with those born in the years named after the rat, the snake and the rooster. The rat and the ox are believed to have compatible personalities while the rooster and the snake are said to have warm and caring natures which offer valuable support to the ox.



### Predictions and Horoscopes

The Chinese culture surrounding the zodiac includes many beliefs and horoscopes – predictions about the future of a person based on the positions of the stars at the moment of their birth. Just as the above traits are believed to apply to anyone born in a Year of the Ox, the following are also believed to be true for those people in 2021:

- People born in the Year of the Ox will have a fruitful and prosperous year in 2021.
- It will be important for them to take extra care of themselves.
- They should be prepared to rely on friends for support during busy times.
- They should be prepared to take extra trips this year.

# Questions

1. Draw **four** lines and complete each sentence.

Each new lunar year...

dates back thousands of years.

A person born in the Year of the Ox...

gave each one their own year in the Chinese zodiac cycle.

To repay the animals for their loyalty, Buddha...

begins on a slightly different date than the last.

The history of the Chinese New Year...

is said to be faithful and dependable.

2. **...people born in the Year of the Ox are said to be dependable...** Which of the following words is an antonym of 'dependable'? Tick one.

- unkind
- unreliable
- unfriendly
- untidy

3. Fill in the missing words.

Depending on the year that you were born and the \_\_\_\_\_ that you are linked to, people born in a Year of the Ox are said to have different \_\_\_\_\_.

4. On what date will the next Year of the Tiger begin?

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5. Look at the section of the text called **The Origin of the Chinese Horoscope.**

Why do you think that this section has this been included in the text?

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6. **...The rat and the ox are believed to have compatible personalities...**

What does 'compatible personalities' mean?

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7. **...the rat - who was kindly helped by the ox - tricked the ox and rushed ahead of them.**

Explain how you think the ox would have felt when this happened.

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8. Summarise what you have learnt about the Chinese zodiac cycle using 25 words or fewer.

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