

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 12th February 2021. It is the 4719th year of the Chinese calendar and it will run until 1st 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.

- 12th February 2021
- 1st February 2022
- 21st February 2022
- 21st 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?

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

8. ...**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.** Explain why you think that the ox was one of the 12 animals that responded to Buddha's call.

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