

## BACKGROUND READING – CHINESE ZODIAC (CALENDAR)

**DIRECTIONS:** Read this background information on the Chinese zodiac. Paste it in your ISN under chapter 18. Do the processing questions on the right.

**INFORMATION:** The Chinese calendar is lunisolar. The lunar (moon) year is divided into 12 months of 29–30 days. Every few years an extra month is added (when there are 13 full moons in a year it adds to the calendar). There is also a solar (sun) year of 12 months (365 days each), that complements the lunar year. Most holidays are on the lunar cycles.

The Chinese lunar calendar is also the basis for the Chinese zodiac. The calendar extends into 12-year cycles, with an animal for each year. Thus, each Chinese New Year celebrates a different animal until the cycle repeats itself. Like the Western zodiac (Gemini, Capricorn, etc.), personalities and events are

believed to be influenced by the signs. For example, if you were born in the Year of the Dragon in 2000, you are supposed to be lucky, imaginative, and proud.

### Processing Questions:

1. What year were you born?
2. Do you have the traits the zodiac claims?
3. Name two ways the Chinese zodiac is similar to the Mayan calendar.
4. Color the zodiac.

