

PROJECT UNIT: The story of the Great Race (The Chinese Zodiac Story)

OBJECTIVES	
<i>Language:</i>	Pupils should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the gist of a short illustrated story
<i>Intercultural aspect:</i>	Pupils should become familiar with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Chinese zodiac • the Chinese traditional story of ‘The great race’ • the Chinese traditional ‘Dragon dance’ • Chinese ideograms
<i>Learning strategies:</i>	Pupils should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use visuals to make meaning • make logical predictions based on context • personalise learning
NEW LANGUAGE	
<i>Production</i>	Ox, rat, emperor, dragon, year
<i>Comprehension</i>	message, race, ordinal numbers (1 st – 12 th)
RECYCLED LANGUAGE	goat, pig, horse, monkey, snake, tiger, rabbit, rooster, dog, cat
MATERIALS	Small pieces of card or paper, sticky notes (optional)
TIME	1 x 40 minutes

PROCEDURE	
INTRODUCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher asks pupils what famous celebration happens at the end of January/beginning of February and helps pupils remember the Chinese New Year festivities discussed and explored in Friends – year 3. S/he asks pupils if they remember when they made lanterns and how to say Happy Chinese New Year (Gung Hoy Fat Choy) in Year 3. <p><u>Note:</u> Chinese New Year can be anytime from late January to middle of February.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher asks pupils if are aware that Chinese people have names for their years and/or if they have ever heard of expressions such as ‘year of the horse’, ‘year of the dog’, etc.

	<p>S/he explains that there is a Chinese Zodiac, a cycle of 12 different zodiac signs. Each Chinese zodiac sign lasts for a year and that year has the name of the specific zodiac sign (in contrast to western zodiacs that have 12 signs in one year).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher gives pupils the names of the Chinese zodiac signs: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog, pig (see PowerPoint presentation at www.schools.ac.cy). <p>S/he explains that the animals always come in that order and tells the pupils that the present year is the year of the goat (2015) and the previous year was the year of the horse (2014) asking them to say what year will follow.</p>
<p>GETTING TO KNOW A TRADITIONAL CHINESE STORY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher tells pupils they are going to read a traditional Chinese story that explains two things: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why the animals of the Chinese Zodiac come in that specific order (e.g. why the rat is first, the ox second, etc.) - Why cats hate rats (according to Chinese traditional stories) • The teacher asks pupils, if they have any ideas as to the answers to these questions. Ideas can also be shared in L1, if necessary. • The teacher gives pupils a few words and asks them to predict whether the words will appear in the story. S/he writes the words on the board asking pupils if they know what they mean, explaining them and asking pupils to repeat them: emperor, race, swimming. The teacher adds more words: ice-cream, chocolate cake, river, ox, lion, girl. The teacher circles the words the pupils predict will be in the story. • Pupils can also try to predict what the role of the emperor might be in the story, e.g. what does the emperor do in the story/who is the emperor/ what is he called/ what is he like, etc. • Pupils read the story individually and silently to check if the predictions they made were right. • Pupils discuss the story with their partner. They talk about their predictions and check what they have understood, asking each other about things they didn't understand.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher asks pupils questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who is the Jade emperor? - What does the emperor want? - Can you describe the ox? - How can we describe the rat? • The teacher reads the story (or plays the recording) and the pupils follow in their books. • Pupils read the story silently one more time and then explain to their partner what happened in the story. Pupils can use Greek to explain to their partners, if they want to. • Volunteer pupils can explain to the class what happened in the story. After their explanation, the class can further discuss the story.
<p>THE DRAGON DANCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher asks pupils to look at the 12 animals of the Chinese Zodiac and say which they think is the odd one out. Pupils are expected to notice the dragon (the only mythical creature in the Zodiac). The teacher asks why they think there is a mythical creature along with the other animals. <p>During the discussion the teacher explains that the dragon is very important to Chinese people. Dragons are a symbol of China and they are considered to bring good luck.</p> <p>S/he tells pupils that dragons and the dragon dance, in particular, is an important (and very famous) part of Chinese festive celebrations and especially part of the celebrations for the New Year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils can view examples of the dragon dance (e.g. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S09rX_0oXjo) and listen to the music used for the dance.
<p>EXPERIENCING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils draw Chinese dragons to decorate their classroom or draw all the animals of the Chinese Zodiac. The teacher can show pupils various pictures to help them understand what typical Chinese dragons look like and how they differ from how dragons are viewed in western cultures. • The teacher gives out the photocopyable handout and pupils use it to practice writing the names of the animals of the Chinese zodiac in Chinese. They can copy the ideograms on small pieces of paper or card and use them either to label their pictures (if they drew the animals of the Chinese zodiac) or simply display the ideograms around their classroom.

	<p>Tip: <i>You can have the Chinese dragon dance music playing in the background while the pupils are working and encourage pupils to appreciate it and respond to it rhythmically</i></p>
EXTENSION	<p>Pupils can watch the following animated story about ‘the great race’ although the version in the story is slightly different from the one in the text. Pupils can discuss the differences: http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/short-stories/the-great-race</p> <p>If there is time and available resources, the lesson can be turned into a storytelling session with the use of a book such as: http://store.barefootbooks.com/the-great-race.html</p>
EVALUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation is ongoing and takes place through observation. • The teacher observes pupils when they are working in pairs and evaluates their comprehension of the story. • Pupils are given a small paper or a sticky note and write down three things they learnt. The teacher can write the beginning of the note on the board: Today I learnt: 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ <p>Pupils can hand the sticky note to the teacher on their way out or stick it on the side of the door as they exit the room.</p>
PORTFOLIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils can complete page 34 – ‘Things I noticed about other countries’ and write or draw about the Chinese Zodiac, the Chinese dragons and Chinese ideograms. • Pupils can add to the balloons for level A1 – Intercultural competence (‘Έχω ακούσει ιστορίες από άλλες χώρες’, ‘Έχω μάθει για παραδοσιακούς εορτασμούς άλλων χωρών’.) or add to the Intercultural competence A2 target ‘Μπορώ να εξηγήσω διάφορους εορτασμούς και φεστιβάλ από άλλες χώρες’.
CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS	<p><u>Music:</u> Pupils can explore the music of the dragon and the lion dance. <u>Art:</u> Pupils can design and decorate a Chinese dragon <u>P.E:</u> Pupils can practice the dragon dance and/or respond to the music through free dance.</p>

Photocopiable materials: Chinese ideograms for the animals of the Chinese zodiac

鼠

RAT

牛

OX

虎

TIGER

兔

RABBIT

龍

DRAGON

蛇

SNAKE

馬

HORSE

羊

GOAT

猴

MONKEY

雞

ROOSTER

狗

DOG

豬

PIG