

Historian tip # 6: Historians make predictions and revise them based on new information.

Today's investigation: **The Chinese Zodiac**

Outcomes of the investigation: Our historians will be able to

1. compare and contrast today's daily Zodiac Horoscopes with the Zodiac of the ancient (and modern) Chinese.
2. make predictions and draw conclusions about ancient Chinese Zodiac beliefs based on data gathered in their own lives now.
3. survey people who read Horoscopes to discover their reasons for doing so.
4. revise predictions based on data collected during the survey.

Vocabulary: Horoscope
Zodiac

Materials: The Great Race, by David Bouchard
A copy of Horoscopes from today's newspapers
(Note: If you want to do a lesson on the Chinese Zodiac without the Read-aloud, go to www.bcl.net/masat/animals.html#snake for material)

Mini lesson: Here is a copy of today's Horoscopes. Who was born between March 20 and April 19? Here is your fortune for the day (read Aries). Everybody find your own Zodiac animal based on your birthday and read your fortune for the day. Take a minute to share with a partner any information you gathered last night about HOW horoscopes work (pause for sharing). For these Horoscopes, a person is assigned an animal according to the pattern of the stars around the month he or she is born. Rather than looking at star patterns, the ancient Chinese believed in the importance of the year a person was born, and each year was assigned one of twelve animals. After twelve years, the cycle of animals repeats again. Instead of a new fortune coming out every day, the animal a person is assigned determines the fortune for a whole lifetime. The story we are about to read explains how the order of animals was decided.

Read aloud: The Great Race, by David Bouchard (a story about how the order of animals in the Chinese Zodiac came to be).

Activities: Each child reads a copy of his or her Chinese Zodiac. In partners, students will discuss how the Chinese Zodiac compares and contrasts with the daily Horoscope. Observations can be recorded into the notebook using a venn diagram or t-chart. The Historians will

then be responsible for predicting the reasons some people today read their horoscopes. They will use this information to extrapolate back to the past, and hypothesize why the ancient Chinese (and many today) believed or believe in the Chinese Zodiac. All thought and wonderings on the topic should be recorded.

Connecting past to present: In their historian's notebooks, students should gather data about people who read their daily (or occasional) horoscope. Students should interview such people asking for reasons why the person reads his or her horoscope. This information should be used to revise their hypotheses if necessary.