

This story is from page 20 of *First News*. Read the story and then try the puzzle. To help you we have underlined the answers in the story, but you will need to match the correct word with each clue!



SPECIAL REPORT

HOPPING INTO THE NEW YEAR!



IT'S hard to believe that we're already near the end of the first month of 2023. But, while your New Year's parties might be over, the Chinese community around the world is just starting to celebrate.

That's because Chinese New Year – also known as Chunjie (meaning Spring Festival) – starts on 22 January, the first day of the new moon.

This year marks the Year of the Rabbit in the Chinese zodiac. There are 12 zodiac animals, which each represent one year in the Chinese calendar, making up a cycle of 12 years. These animals are Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig.

The Dragon came fifth, after helping others first, while the Snake sneaked into sixth, before the Horse who came seventh. Goat, Monkey and Rooster arrived next, one after the other, on a log that they had paddled across together.

In 11th place was the Dog, who was too busy playing and nearly missed the race. Last was the Pig, who asked if it had missed lunch as it came out of the river!

The zodiac story

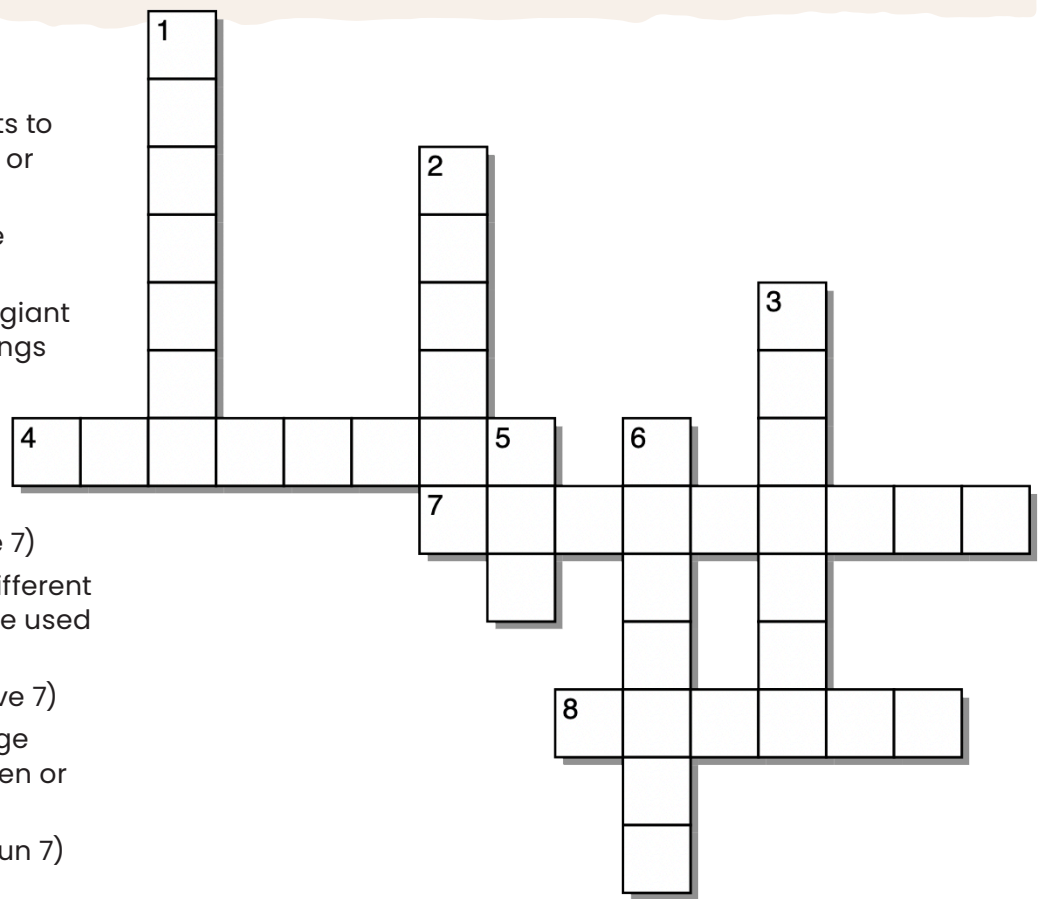
The order of the animal years is said to have been decided many years ago, following a race. The race came about because people didn't know how to keep time, so they asked the Jade Emperor for help, who agreed. He said that there would be 12 years, and to help them keep track, 12 animals would represent these years.

To decide which animals would be part of the zodiac, a race was held on the Emperor's birthday. The first 12 animals to cross a river would become part of the zodiac.

On the day, lots of animals lined up at the side of the river. The cunning rat, who was small and didn't know how to swim, asked the Ox for a ride, promising that it would tell the Ox if other animals were catching up.

The Ox easily made its way across the river, but just before it reached the other side, the rat leapt off its back and crossed the finish line first!

The Ox came second, shortly followed by the Tiger, who was furious it wasn't first. The Rabbit – the animal for 2023 – came fourth, after leaping across the backs of the other animals – and was completely dry!



ACROSS

4) An event or series of events to celebrate an important date or occasion (noun 8)

7) A group of people who are similar in some way (noun 9)

8) A mythical creature like a giant lizard, often depicted with wings and breathing fire (noun 6)

DOWN

1) Extremely angry (adjective 7)

2) A name for a number of different systems and pictures that are used for measuring time (noun 6)

3) Clever and crafty (adjective 7)

5) A part of the trunk or a large branch of a tree that has fallen or been cut off (noun 3)

6) The ruler of an empire (noun 7)

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