

The Chinese New Year Story – Oral Teacher Questions

Why did the Jade Emperor decide to have a swimming race in the first place? **He wanted there to be a way of measuring the years.**

Why were the cat and the rat worried at the start of the race? **They were very poor swimmers and were worried about how they would get across safely.**

Why has the writer used the words 'mischievous' and 'shrewd' to describe rat? **He had a plan all along to cheat the ox and cat. He tricked them so that he could come first.**

The writer describes the rat as 'smug'. Why is this a good word to describe rat after the race? **He was feeling very pleased with himself because he had won the race. To get there however, he has to cheat the others which made them angry.**

Why was the tiger 'exhausted' when he reached the other side of the river? **He had been swimming against the river's strong currents and it had been an enormous struggle for him. He was very tired when the race was finished.**

Rabbit was helped to cross the river by another animal. Which animal was it and how did they help? **The dragon helped her by blowing a floating log which carried her to the shore.**

Why did the horse have to settle for seventh place? **The snake slithered between her legs to scare her. She jumped back in fear and the snake sneaked past him to get sixth place.**

Why did the dog take longer to finish than the Jade Emperor expected? **The dog wanted to have a bath because the water was so clean and fresh.**

The dragon should have been the real winner. Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. **Pupil response may vary. Pupils should draw on the facts that the dragon had the abilities to win the race, but chose to use them to help others. They may explain that the dragon should win because of his caring and generous nature.**

Do you think the rat was a worthy winner? Why? **Pupil response may vary. Pupils should draw on the facts that the rat won using his intelligence, but also refer to the way he cheated others to get there.**

Throughout the text there are many phrases which show the passing of time. Can you identify some examples of this from the text? **Examples could include 'just then', 'before long', 'for many long minutes', 'minutes later' or 'many years ago'.**

Why does the writer finish the story with a question? **The question draws the reader in and gets them to think about the contents of the story and what it means to them.**

Which of the animals would you like to be like and why? **Pupil responses may vary.**

This story could be described as a 'myth'. Do you agree? Explain your answer. **Pupil response may vary. However, pupils should refer to the way the story tries to explain the way things are and includes fictional elements such as talking animals.**