



# The Horse in Chinese Art

## Student Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## 📅 Lunar New Year & the Chinese Zodiac

The Lunar New Year is celebrated in many Asian cultures and follows the moon calendar. Each year is connected to one of **12 animals** in the **Chinese zodiac**.

In **2026**, Lunar New Year begins on **February 17**, and it is the **Year of the Horse**. The horse represents **energy, confidence, and moving forward**, which is why horses appear so often in Chinese art.

**Why do you think animals are used to represent years instead of numbers?**

## 🐎 Why Are Horses Important in Chinese Art?

Long ago, horses helped people travel, work, send messages, and protect their land. Because horses were so important, artists began using them as **symbols**.

In Chinese art, horses often represent:

- Strength
- Speed
- Success
- Never giving up

**Circle TWO qualities that best describe horses:**

Strength Speed Success Calm Power Laziness

## Horses and Success

There is a Chinese saying that means “*success arrives with the horse.*” Because of this, many artworks show horses running or moving forward.

Artists often show success by using:

- Horses in motion
- Heads held high
- Slanted or diagonal lines

**How does movement help show success in art?**

## Capturing Energy (Qi)

Chinese artists focus more on **energy** than on tiny details. This energy is called **qi**, or life force.

Artists use:

- Fast, confident lines
- Loose brushstrokes
- Empty space

Even a simple horse can feel powerful if it shows energy.

### Quick Sketch

Draw a horse using **as few lines as possible**, but make it look energetic.

## Artist Spotlight: Han Gan

**Han Gan** was a famous horse painter during the Tang dynasty. He studied real horses and painted them so they looked strong and alert.

Many of his horses are standing still – but they still feel powerful, like they could move at any moment.

**How can a horse look powerful without running?**

## Color and Meaning

Match each horse color to its meaning:

Red horse → \_\_\_\_\_

White horse → \_\_\_\_\_

Black horse → \_\_\_\_\_

*(energy / calm strength / important journey)*

## Horses in Art Today

Artists today still use horses, but sometimes in new ways – abstract, colorful, or symbolic of freedom.

**Why do you think symbols change over time?**

## Your Turn: Be the Artist

**My animal:** \_\_\_\_\_

**It represents:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Will it be calm or energetic? Why?**

## Exit Reflection

**One new thing I learned about Chinese art:**