

NAME: _____
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DRAGON LORE

The dragon was the sign of the emperors. Over time, the dragon became a nickname for China. Dragons are an important part of ancient Chinese daily life.

In ancient China, dragons were thought to be wise and caring, and a bit mischievous. They did not breathe fire. They had personalities. They had magical powers. They could disappear whenever they wanted. They could turn into beasts if they were angry.

The emperor and his court wore imperial dragon robes. Only the emperor, his wife and his mother could wear yellow silk. Only those who served at court could wear blue silk. But all imperial robes had designs of dragons on them. Fewer than five toes on the dragon's claws indicated a lower ranking official.

Dragons in ancient china were a composite (a mix) of parts from different animals. These mythical creatures had a camel head, a snake neck, fish scales, eagle claws, tiger paws, ox ears, deer horns, and whiskers. Their job in ancient China was to act as guardians.

Legend says...

- Wood dragons are brown. They guard the forest. They are imaginative and curious, and come up with brilliant new ideas. They will even compromise. They're not as selfish as the other dragons. They share well.
- Fire dragons are red. They guard the wind, fire, lightening and sky. These dragons are the most outgoing and short-tempered. But they have the ability to gain massive popular support.
- Earth dragons are green. They guard the earth, the crops, and the mountains. They know the value of cooperation.
- Metal dragons are gold. They guard metals and precious gems. These dragons succeed because they refuse to accept failure. They have little caring for the feeling of others. These dragons are quite selfish.
- Water dragons are blue. They guard rivers, rain, wells, and water. They get along well with people. They know how to accept defeat and how to rebuild.

Many countries use brightly colored dragons in their art, especially China, Korea and Japan. It's easy to tell the difference between Chinese, Korean and Japanese dragons. Just count the dragon's toes!

- Chinese dragons have five toes!
- Korean dragons have four toes!

- Japanese dragons have three toes!

Chinese legend says . .

The farther dragons travel from their home in China, the more toes they lose! Fortunately, when wandering dragons return home to China, all their missing toes grow back. But, as most dragons would prefer to keep all their toes, all the time, few dragons ever wander very far from home.

Discussion Questions:

Do dragons really exist? Did they ever exist?

If not, give two reasons why people might have invented these mythical creatures.

1.

2.

Draw a dragon: