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## **There are 13 signs of the Zodiac, expert says**

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1101/110116-zodiac.html>

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16th January, 2011

# THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1101/110116-zodiac.html>

An astronomy professor has turned the astrology world on its head by suggesting the 3,000-year-old zodiac system is wrong. Professor Parke Kunkle said the Earth's wobbly orbit means things have changed in the past three millennia and now has a different relationship to the stars. He said the ancient Babylonians determined the dates of the Zodiac and decided not to include a thirteenth sign called Ophiuchus. He believes the changes in the Earth's orbit now mean this sign must be included in the Zodiac. This would change all of the dates we are used to with our star signs and many of us would have a new one. Professor Kunkle is surprised his recent announcement has shocked people: "Astronomers have known about this since about 130BC," he said.

The story has caused millions around the world to worry their life might change because of this news. People who were happy at being a Virgo are upset because they are now Leos. Kunkle says people should not be worried because star signs were never meant to predict our future or provide an income to horoscope writers, saying: "You could predict when to harvest, when to plant, by the stars. So there is some predictive nature there. Then they took it too far, using it to determine when to go to war and people's personalities." Popular astrologer Susan Miller has reassured people they needn't worry and called the news "ridiculous." In an interview with ABC News, she joked: "We've known about this for ages....Trying to explain something technical in 140 characters [on Twitter] is hard."

# WARM-UPS

**1. THE ZODIAC:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about the Zodiac. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*astronomy / astrology / wobbly / orbit / determined / star signs / announcements / worry / predict our future / horoscope / personalities / ridiculous / technical / Twitter*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. NEW STAR SIGNS:** Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

New sign	Personality	Prediction for this year
Panda		
Microchip		
Snow flake		
Book		
Ant		
Electricity		

**4. HOROSCOPE:** Students A **strongly** believe in horoscopes; Students B **strongly** don't. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. PREDICTING:** Which is the best system of predicting our personality and character? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- star signs
- handwriting
- blood type
- tea leaves
- palm reading
- crystal ball
- personality tests
- fortune cookies

**6. ORBIT:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'orbit'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1101/110116-zodiac.html>

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. The zodiac system is three millennia old.                               | T / F |
| b. Earth's relationship to the stars has changed in the past 3,000 years.  | T / F |
| c. A thirteenth sign would not change the dates of our current star signs. | T / F |
| d. Astronomers have only recently found out about the thirteenth sign.     | T / F |
| e. Some people with the Virgo star sign might really be Leo.               | T / F |
| f. Star signs were originally to predict harvest times, not horoscopes.    | T / F |
| g. A popular astrologer said the news was fantastic.                       | T / F |
| h. She said her star signs show she has 140 characters.                    | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. on its head | a. found out   |
| 2. wobbly      | b. comforted   |
| 3. determined  | c. worried     |
| 4. new         | d. wonky       |
| 5. shocked     | e. forecast    |
| 6. upset       | f. upside down |
| 7. predict     | g. stupid      |
| 8. reassured   | h. fresh       |
| 9. ridiculous  | i. quipped     |
| 10. joked      | j. astounded   |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. turned the astrology world  | a. the Earth's orbit     |
| 2. the Earth's wobbly          | b. go to war             |
| 3. the ancient Babylonians     | c. of this news          |
| 4. changes in                  | d. horoscope writers     |
| 5. his recent announcement     | e. on its head           |
| 6. life might change because   | f. has shocked people    |
| 7. star signs were never meant | g. determined the dates  |
| 8. provide an income to        | h. for ages              |
| 9. determine when to           | i. orbit                 |
| 10. We've known about this     | j. to predict our future |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1101/110116-zodiac.html>

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

An astronomy professor has (1) \_\_\_\_\_ the astrology world on its head by suggesting the 3,000-year-old zodiac system is wrong. Professor Parke Kunkle said the Earth's (2) \_\_\_\_\_ orbit means things have changed in the past three millennia and now has a different (3) \_\_\_\_\_ to the stars. He said the ancient Babylonians determined the dates of the Zodiac and decided not to (4) \_\_\_\_\_ a thirteenth sign called Ophiuchus. He believes the changes in the Earth's orbit now mean this (5) \_\_\_\_\_ must be included in the Zodiac. This would change all of the (6) \_\_\_\_\_ we are used to with our star signs and many of us would have a new one. Professor Kunkle is surprised his (7) \_\_\_\_\_ announcement has shocked people: "Astronomers have known about this (8) \_\_\_\_\_ about 130BC," he said.

*recent*  
*relationship*  
*turned*  
*since*  
*sign*  
*wobbly*  
*include*  
*dates*

The story has (9) \_\_\_\_\_ millions around the world to worry their life might change because of this news. People who were happy at being a Virgo are (10) \_\_\_\_\_ because they are now Leos. Kunkle says people should not be worried because star signs were never meant to (11) \_\_\_\_\_ our future or provide an income to horoscope writers, saying: "You could predict when to (12) \_\_\_\_\_, when to plant, by the stars. So there is some predictive nature there. Then they took it too far, using it to (13) \_\_\_\_\_ when to go to war and people's personalities." Popular astrologer Susan Miller has reassured people they needn't worry and (14) \_\_\_\_\_ the news "ridiculous." In an interview with ABC News, she joked: "We've known about this for (15) \_\_\_\_\_ ....Trying to explain something technical in 140 characters [on Twitter] is (16) \_\_\_\_\_."

*called*  
*harvest*  
*upset*  
*hard*  
*determine*  
*ages*  
*caused*  
*predict*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1101/110116-zodiac.html>

An astronomy professor has turned the astrology \_\_\_\_\_ suggesting the 3,000-year-old zodiac system is wrong. Professor Parke Kunkle said the Earth's \_\_\_\_\_ have changed in the past three millennia and now has a different relationship to the stars. He said the ancient Babylonians \_\_\_\_\_ of the Zodiac and decided not to include a thirteenth sign called Ophiuchus. He believes the changes in the Earth's orbit \_\_\_\_\_ must be included in the Zodiac. This would change all of the dates we are used \_\_\_\_\_ many of us would have a new one. Professor Kunkle is surprised his recent announcement has shocked people: "Astronomers \_\_\_\_\_ since about 130BC," he said.

The story has caused millions around the world \_\_\_\_\_ might change because of this news. People who were happy at being a Virgo \_\_\_\_\_ are now Leos. Kunkle says people should not be worried because star signs were never \_\_\_\_\_ our future or provide an income to horoscope writers, saying: "You could predict when to harvest, when to plant, by the stars. So there is some predictive nature there. Then \_\_\_\_\_, using it to determine when to go to war and people's personalities." Popular astrologer Susan Miller has \_\_\_\_\_ needn't worry and called the news "ridiculous." In an interview with ABC News, she joked: "We've known \_\_\_\_\_....Trying to explain something technical in 140 characters [on Twitter] is hard."

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1101/110116-zodiac.html>

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'star' and 'sign'.

<b>star</b>	<b>sign</b>
-------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• head</li><li>• wrong</li><li>• include</li><li>• used to</li><li>• surprised</li><li>• 130BC</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• happy</li><li>• meant</li><li>• writers</li><li>• war</li><li>• ridiculous</li><li>• hard</li></ul>
--	---

# STUDENT THE ZODIAC SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1101/110116-zodiac.html>

Write five GOOD questions about the Zodiac in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



# THE ZODIAC DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'zodiac'?
- c) What do you think of the thirteenth sign?
- d) What is the Zodiac for?
- e) What do you know about the Earth's relationship with the stars?
- f) What would change if we had 13 star signs in the Zodiac?
- g) Why has this news only come out now?
- h) Do you believe in star signs?
- i) How might changes in the Earth's orbit affect our lives?
- j) What's the difference between astrology and astronomy ?

*There are 13 signs of the Zodiac, expert says - 16th January, 2011*  
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# THE ZODIAC DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Are you worried the Zodiac system might change?
- c) What does your star sign say about you?
- d) Do you ever believe what horoscopes say?
- e) Why do you think people started using star signs to predict our future?
- f) Do you think people can predict the future accurately?
- g) Do you believe in things like palm reading and determining personality by blood type?
- h) Do you think Susan Miller is right?
- i) Would you rather be an astronomer or an astrologist, and why?
- j) What questions would you like to ask professor Parke Kunkle?

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# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1101/110116-zodiac.html>

An astronomy professor has turned the astrology world on its (1) \_\_\_\_\_ by suggesting the 3,000-year-old zodiac system is wrong. Professor Parke Kunkle said the Earth's wobbly orbit (2) \_\_\_\_\_ things have changed in the past three millennia and now has a different relationship (3) \_\_\_\_\_ the stars. He said the ancient Babylonians determined the dates of the Zodiac and decided (4) \_\_\_\_\_ to include a thirteenth sign called Ophiuchus. He believes the changes in the Earth's orbit now mean this sign must (5) \_\_\_\_\_ included in the Zodiac. This would change all of the dates we are used to with our star signs and many of us would have a new one. Professor Kunkle is surprised his recent announcement has shocked people: "Astronomers have known about this (6) \_\_\_\_\_ about 130BC," he said.

The story has caused millions around the world to worry their life might change because of this news. People who were happy (7) \_\_\_\_\_ being a Virgo are upset because they are now Leos. Kunkle says people should not be worried because star signs were never meant to predict our future or (8) \_\_\_\_\_ an income to horoscope writers, saying: "You could predict when to harvest, when to plant, (9) \_\_\_\_\_ the stars. So there is some predictive nature there. Then they took it too far, (10) \_\_\_\_\_ it to determine when to go to war and people's personalities." Popular astrologer Susan Miller has reassured people they (11) \_\_\_\_\_ worry and called the news "ridiculous." In an interview with ABC News, she joked: "We've known about this for (12) \_\_\_\_\_ ....Trying to explain something technical in 140 characters [on Twitter] is hard."

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |           |              |             |             |
|-----|-----------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.  | (a) foot  | (b) stomach  | (c) knee    | (d) head    |
| 2.  | (a) meant | (b) means    | (c) meaning | (d) meanie  |
| 3.  | (a) to    | (b) by       | (c) at      | (d) as      |
| 4.  | (a) now   | (b) no       | (c) not     | (d) non     |
| 5.  | (a) do    | (b) have     | (c) be      | (d) see     |
| 6.  | (a) by    | (b) since    | (c) for     | (d) past    |
| 7.  | (a) at    | (b) from     | (c) to      | (d) as      |
| 8.  | (a) write | (b) do       | (c) work    | (d) provide |
| 9.  | (a) on    | (b) by       | (c) as      | (d) at      |
| 10. | (a) uses  | (b) used     | (c) usage   | (d) using   |
| 11. | (a) need  | (b) needless | (c) needn't | (d) needed  |
| 12. | (a) ages  | (b) pages    | (c) rages   | (d) sages   |

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# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about the Zodiac. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. THE ZODIAC:** Make a poster about the Zodiac and your star sign. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. HOROSCOPE:** Write a magazine article about horoscopes. Include imaginary interviews with a horoscope writer and someone who thinks horoscopes are a load of rubbish.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to professor Parke Kunkle. Ask him three questions about the Zodiac. Give him three predictions for your life this year. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

a. T      b. T      c. F      d. F      e. T      f. T      g. F      h. F

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. on its head | a. upside down |
| 2. wobbly      | b. wonky       |
| 3. determined  | c. found out   |
| 4. new         | d. fresh       |
| 5. shocked     | e. astounded   |
| 6. upset       | f. worried     |
| 7. predict     | g. forecast    |
| 8. reassured   | h. comforted   |
| 9. ridiculous  | i. stupid      |
| 10. joked      | j. quipped     |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. turned the astrology world  | a. on its head           |
| 2. the Earth's wobbly          | b. orbit                 |
| 3. the ancient Babylonians     | c. determined the dates  |
| 4. changes in                  | d. the Earth's orbit     |
| 5. his recent announcement     | e. has shocked people    |
| 6. life might change because   | f. of this news          |
| 7. star signs were never meant | g. to predict our future |
| 8. provide an income to        | h. horoscope writers     |
| 9. determine when to           | i. go to war             |
| 10. We've known about this     | j. for ages              |

## GAP FILL:

### There are 13 signs of the Zodiac, expert says

An astronomy professor has (1) **turned** the astrology world on its head by suggesting the 3,000-year-old zodiac system is wrong. Professor Parke Kunkle said the Earth's (2) **wobbly** orbit means things have changed in the past three millennia and now has a different (3) **relationship** to the stars. He said the ancient Babylonians determined the dates of the Zodiac and decided not to (4) **include** a thirteenth sign called Ophiuchus. He believes the changes in the Earth's orbit now mean this (5) **sign** must be included in the Zodiac. This would change all of the (6) **dates** we are used to with our star signs and many of us would have a new one. Professor Kunkle is surprised his (7) **recent** announcement has shocked people: "Astronomers have known about this (8) **since** about 130BC," he said.

The story has (9) **caused** millions around the world to worry their life might change because of this news. People who were happy at being a Virgo are (10) **upset** because they are now Leos. Kunkle says people should not be worried because star signs were never meant to (11) **predict** our future or provide an income to horoscope writers, saying: "You could predict when to (12) **harvest**, when to plant, by the stars. So there is some predictive nature there. Then they took it too far, using it to (13) **determine** when to go to war and people's personalities." Popular astrologer Susan Miller has reassured people they needn't worry and (14) **called** the news "ridiculous." In an interview with ABC News, she joked: "We've known about this for (15) **ages**....Trying to explain something technical in 140 characters [on Twitter] is (16) **hard**."

## LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d    2 - b    3 - a    4 - c    5 - c    6 - b    7 - a    8 - d    9 - b    10 - d    11 - c    12 - a

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