# Subject: How did zodiac signs appear? Origin Story

To the first explorers of the sky, these constellations seemed similar to the outlines of animals, so the belt of constellations is known as the zodiac - from the Greek word zodiac, meaning circle of animals.

The division of the sky into 12 windows dates back to the Sumerian civilization, the 60-digit number system and the astronomy of ancient Babylon. As a result of the adoption of the Babylonian system by the ancient Greeks, 12 zodiac signs were born according to the number of constellations.

Each zodiac sign has its own legend about its origin from ancient Greek myths.

**Aries** is the first sign of the zodiac. In myths, Aries always appears as a courageous, agile and energetic animal, capable of overcoming obstacles.

An ancient Greek legend is associated with this sign. The Titanide Nephele, saving her children from an evil stepmother, put them on a golden ram, which was supposed to carry them to Colchis. But on the way, the girl could not stay on the back of the ram and fell into the sea, where she drowned, and the boy, upon arriving in a safe place, sacrificed this beast, which Zeus himself accepted and transferred the beast to the sky, creating the constellation Aries.

The second sign of the zodiac is **Taurus**, a kind animal that has always symbolized strength and sexuality. According to legend, the ancient Greek god Zeus was in love with the Phoenician girl Europa. To possess her, he turned into a white Taurus and kidnapped her. He took her to the island of Crete, where he took possession of her, and the head of the huge Taurus was reflected in the sky and turned into the constellation Taurus.

**Gemini** is the third sign of the zodiac, symbolized by people, not animals. According to legend, Zeus had two sons, whom Princess Leda bore to him. Their names were Castor and Pollux. These were powerful and brave brothers who accomplished many feats, but when one of the brothers died, the second asked Zeus to take away his immortality in order to reunite with his brother. Zeus did just that, placing both brothers in heaven.

The fourth sign of the zodiac is depicted as **Cancer**, an inhabitant of water bodies, who is also capable of moving on land. It is known that Cancer as a symbol appeared in the Zodiac about 500 years before the beginning of our era. The name is associated with the second labor of Hercules: when Hercules fought in the waters with the Lernaean Hydra, Cancer bit into his leg, due to which Hercules weakened, but he immediately killed Cancer and still managed to finish the battle in his favor. However, the goddess Hera, who did not like Hercules, considered this Cancer a very brave animal and took him to heaven. This is how this constellation appeared.

The fifth sign of the zodiac is represented by **Leo**, the king of beasts. The first feat of Hercules was to destroy the fierce and fearless Leo who lived in the Nemean Valley. No human weapon could pierce his skin. Hercules tried to kill Leo with arrows, but this technique also did not give a positive result. The hero decided to defeat Leo with his bare hands. Possessing incredible strength, he managed to squeeze his neck with his fingers and strangle him. The constellation Leo perpetuates the courage of Hercules, shown during single combat with the mighty Nemean Leo.

**Virgo** is the sixth sign of the zodiac, whose symbol is also a person, not an animal. It is known that Virgo symbolizes the goddess of fertility Demeter. The sign is a symbol of innocence and purity.

The myth of Pandora's Box is associated with the appearance of the constellation Virgo. Pandora brought a box to earth that she was forbidden to open, but one day, succumbing to curiosity, she lifted the lid. After she, contrary to the orders of Zeus, opened this box, all misfortunes and human vices scattered from there, only hope remained at the bottom of the box. After this, dark times came, and the gods left the earth one by one. The last to fly away was Astraea, the goddess of innocence and purity. Since then, she began to live among the stars, turning into the constellation Virgo.

**Libra** is the seventh sign, the only one whose symbol is not a person or an animal. Libra represents balance, justice and harmony. Among the ancient Egyptians, the scales of justice were solely owned by the god Anubis. Anubis stands at a large scale, with the help of which he weighs the heart of the deceased. On one bowl is a human heart, and on the other is the feather of the goddess Maat, which symbolizes truth. According to Egyptian beliefs, if a person's heart is in balance with the truth, he will be able to gain a second life.

The eighth sign of the zodiac is represented by **Scorpio**, which paralyzes its victim with poison. The name is associated with a quarrel between Artemis and the hunter Orion. When the latter sent Scorpio to him so that he would poison him with his poison. After the death of Orion, Zeus created two constellations at once: Scorpio and Orion.

**Sagittarius** is the ninth sign of the zodiac. Sagittarius is a centaur, a mythological creature that is half man and half horse. According to legend, this is the wise Charon, who mastered many arts. He knew how to heal, hunt, play musical instruments and predict the future. One day, Hercules wounded Charon with a poisoned arrow, but since the wise centaur was immortal, Hercules promised to find a way to ease his suffering. When, during his labors, Hercules found the unfortunate Prometheus, whom Zeus had chained to a rock where an eagle was devouring his liver, the centaur Charon agreed to take his place. Therefore, Zeus rewarded his nobility by placing the centaur among the stars. So it became the constellation Sagittarius.

The tenth sign of the zodiac, **Capricorn** is an animal with strong hooves that climbs up mountain slopes, clinging to every ledge. The image is associated with the great god of Mesopotamia, Ea, who brought knowledge and culture to these peoples. During the time of the ancient Greeks, Capricorn became associated with the god Pan, a cheerful and lustful creature, ruler of forests and fields, herds and shepherds.

One day, fleeing the pursuit of the terrible monster Typhon, the god Pan jumped into the river. However, plunging into the water, he did not have time to complete the transformation, and as a result, the part that remained under water turned into a fish tail, and the upper part remained like a goat.

The symbol of the eleventh sign of the zodiac, **Aquarius**, is a man with a jug from which water is pouring. In the ancient Greek epic, Aquarius is associated with the myth of the only person who was not harmed during the great flood. When, after heavy rains, the only surviving righteous man, Devkalinon and his wife Pyra found refuge on Mount Parnassus, Zeus commanded the water to recede. Then he ordered both of them to pick up as many stones as possible and throw them over their heads without turning around. Deucalion and his wife did just that, and the stones that Pyra threw turned into women, and those that Deucalion threw turned into men. So Deucalion became the progenitor of humanity.

**Fish**. The twelfth sign of the zodiac is depicted as two fish, tied to one another, but swimming in opposite directions. Two fish in water symbolize opposing emotions. According to legend, the goddess of love Aphrodite and her son Irot once walked along the river bank. Suddenly, a huge fire-breathing monster Typhon appeared in front of them, emitting the roar of a bull, the roar of a lion and the hissing of snakes. Frightened, Aphrodite turned to her father Zeus, who turned them into two fish, which jumped into the river and thus managed to escape.

As we see, the formation of the zodiac signs occurred gradually, and they combined all the signs that the ancient Greeks adopted from the Sumerians with their worldview and managed to create a system that has survived to this day.