

**UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS  
HUMANE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

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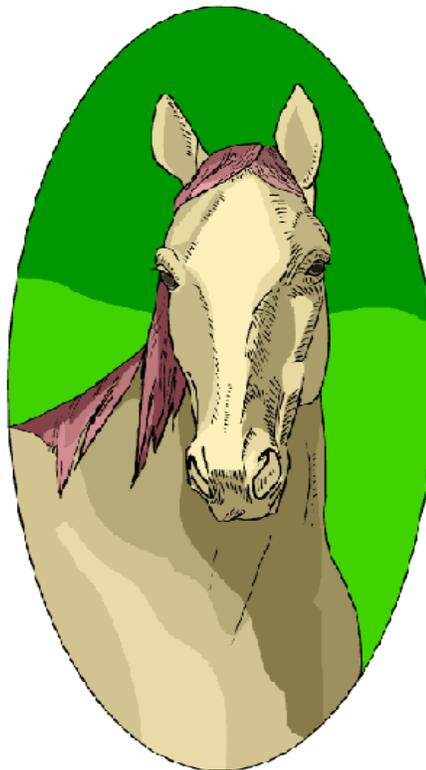
**LEARNING ABOUT HORSES**

**GRADES TWO TO FIVE**

**by United Federation of Teachers Humane Education Committee**

**Sheila Schwartz, Chairperson, United Federation of Teachers Humane Education Committee, organized the lessons in this unit. Some of the information has been excerpted from a longer unit on horses that was originally developed in the 1990s. Units for grades pre-kindergarten to one, two to five and six to twelve have been developed thanks to a grant provided by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA).**

**UNIT OVERVIEW: In this unit students will learn about the physical characteristics of horses, how people have and continue to use horses, ethical issues involved in the use of horses today, people who have worked to make life better for horses, and how they can become involved in helping horses.**



**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE I: Students will be able to identify the physical characteristics of horses.**

**Motivation:** Display a selection of non-fiction library books about horses in the classroom. A variety of pictures of horses from magazines might be used additionally. Develop a KWL chart with students.

**K.W.L.**

**KWL stands for**

**K = What do you know about the topic? (Before reading)**

**W = What would you like to learn about the topic? (Before reading)**

**L = What did you learn about the topic? (After reading)**

In KWL, the teacher determines the focal topic in a story or book. The three questions noted above are generally recorded on a chart such as the one shown below.

**K.W.L.**

**TOPIC: HORSES**

<b>K</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>
<b>What do you know about horses?</b>	<b>What would you like to learn about horses?</b>	<b>What did you learn about horses in this book/lesson?</b>

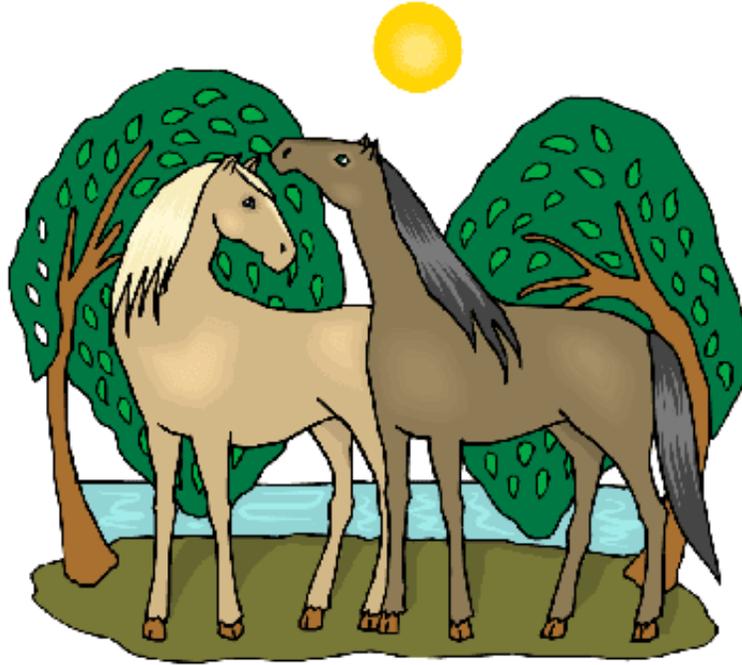
**KWL is a strategy that begins before reading and continues after reading. It is a good idea to keep the chart available for further additions. As the children learn more about the topic from other sources, they can add to the final column. Also, as they acquire more information, they may decide to add additional questions for further study. KWL is a strategy best used with non-fiction text.**

**Ask students what they know about horses. Record their responses on the chart. Ask the students what they would like to learn about horses and record these responses on the chart as well.**

**Read one of your selected books about horses. Ask students what they learned about horses and record their responses on the chart. Do this for one or more books. Try to select books which will provide most of the following information. Horses are:**

- **mammals, which are animals who have hair or fur, bear live young, and produce milk to feed them**
- **herbivores, or plant-eaters. Horses are particularly well suited to eating and digesting grass**
- **ungulates, or hooved animals, like cows, pigs and deer**
  
- **A mare is an adult female horse.**
- **A stallion is an adult male horse.**
- **A foal is a baby horse.**
- **Horses have large heads and long necks which allows them to eat off the ground while standing up. Their large eyes are far from their mouths so they can watch for danger when they are eating grass. They have twelve large chewing teeth on each side - - six upper and six lower and twelve teeth in front for clipping grass.**

**If you select a library book which contains information about the different kinds of horses, include that information in the chart as well. Otherwise, duplicate and distribute the following information for students to discuss and add to the chart.**



The first, second and fifth pictures of horses are from Millermark Creations Free Horse Multi-Colored Horse Clipart. Additional free clip art of horses can be found at <http://www.classichorse.com/clipart/colored.html>

**Kinds of horses:**

- **Draft breeds, which originated in cold climates, include the largest horses. They may have been bred to pull carriages and farm equipment, or to carry heavy armored knights into battle. Today they may be seen pulling carriages at country fairs, parades and on the streets of many cities.**



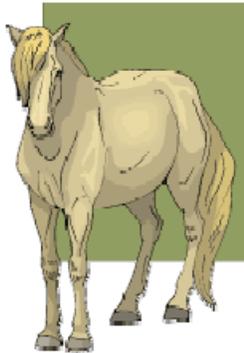
**draft horse**

- **Lighter breeds such as Arabians and Thoroughbreds descended from horses in hotter climates. They were used in warfare and racing. Today light horses are used for racing, jumping, dressage and polo.**



**thoroughbred horse**

- Ponies are horses generally under 14 hands 2 inches which is equivalent to being less than 4 feet 10 inches. They look like small draft horses because of their thick bodies and sturdy legs. They are ridden by children and perform in circuses. One kind of pony, called the Falabella, is too small to ride. The Falabella averages 15 to 34 inches in height which makes them smaller than many breeds of dogs.



**pony**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE II:** Students will be able to identify the ways in which humans have used and continue to use horses.

**Motivation:** Display books and magazines about horses in the classroom. Allow students to read these during their independent reading time. Students can also get information from the American Museum of Natural History's website devoted to the horse at <http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/horse/>. Some students may be able to research specific topics on the Internet and report back to the class.

The following information contains some of the main points students should be able to discover. The following information can also be duplicated and distributed to students to read and discuss.

### **PEOPLE AND HORSES**

While digging up rocks, scientists have discovered skeletons of horses that lived millions of years ago. Cave paintings showed that people ate horses and used their hides to make tents and clothing.

People began to tame horses more than 4,000 years ago. People began to use horses to carry things including tents and food. Eventually people began to ride horses while herding other animals.

People have used horses in times of war. About 2,000 years ago, knights in suits of armor, fought each other while riding on horses. A few hundred years ago soldiers rode on horseback in the cavalry and fought each other using guns and swords.

Horses have been used to help plow the land, to pull stagecoaches and to pull mail coaches.

Today horses are used:

- 1) by the mounted police. Horses work for the New York City Mounted Police Unit. This unit is primarily assigned to patrol on the streets and in the parks.  
[www.regardinghorses.com/2008/05/07/police-horses-at-work-in-nyc/](http://www.regardinghorses.com/2008/05/07/police-horses-at-work-in-nyc/)  
[www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/pr/pr\\_2008\\_006.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/pr/pr_2008_006.shtml)



- 2) in horseracing. Purebred horses are used in running contests called horse races. Jockeys ride pedigreed horses on both flat tracks and over obstacles. The thoroughbred horse generally has a long arched neck, sloping shoulders, a deep chest, a strong short back and muscular hindquarters.

Going to the track is an enjoyable pastime for many people. However, humane organizations report that horses are sometimes raced too hard and too young. Horses may suffer serious injuries including a broken leg. Sometimes their owners have them euthanized because of their injury.

- 3) for people to ride. Horses are used for recreational riding. Sometimes the individual who owns them boards them at a stable. Other horses are owned by the stable and may be rented by the hour. Each horse must be taught to respond properly to the rider's demand to move at a particular pace, direction and speed. Horses must be able to walk, trot and canter on command. They must also be gentle and well-mannered enough for people to ride. A bit in the horse's mouth, reins, the rider's legs and body weight and voice are all used to communicate to the horse.

- 4) in entertainment including the circus and rodeos. Horses who perform in circuses must learn new acts regularly. They must learn to respond quickly and gracefully to commands such as standing on their hind legs or moving at different speeds. They must become accustomed to the music, loudspeakers and other animals as well as to the noise of the crowd. They take long trips – sometimes without an opportunity to exercise -- between the many places in which they perform.

Horses, such as the “bucking bronco,” are used in the rodeo. The audience cheers at what is supposed to be an exhibition of human skill in taming fierce, wild animals. Humane Societies report, however, that sometimes relatively tame horses are provoked into displaying “wild” behavior by the use of a strap placed tightly cinched around the horse’s abdomen. The horse bucks because she is in pain.  
[www.aspca.org/about-us/policy-positions/rodeo.html](http://www.aspca.org/about-us/policy-positions/rodeo.html)

- 5) as carriage horses. Carriage horses are used to pull carriages with people in it -- in all kinds of weather. In New York City, for example, carriage horses are allowed on the street when the temperature does not exceed 89°F or fall below 19°F.

In New York City, these horses must become accustomed to heavily trafficked and noisy streets. At present, they must become used to working alongside cars, buses and large trucks. Some people enjoy carriage rides. Others think that carriage horse rides should be restricted to city parks because of the dangers to humans and horses in offering rides on city streets. Others believe that carriage horse rides should be banned in New York City and other large urban areas.  
[www.aspca.org/pressroom/press-releases/121808.html](http://www.aspca.org/pressroom/press-releases/121808.html)  
[www.aspca.org/pressroom/press-releases/013009.html](http://www.aspca.org/pressroom/press-releases/013009.html)

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE III:** Students will be able to discuss the ethical issues involved in human use of horses today.

**Motivation:** Discuss with students the fact that working horses are dependent on people for good care which includes nutritious food, clean water, grooming and kindness. The ways in which owners treat and train their horses vary considerably ranging from superior care, to adequate care, to inadequate care. The use of reward versus punishment to train horses also varies considerably.

Working horses that can no longer perform tasks to the satisfaction of their owners sometimes are killed at a slaughterhouse. Their bodies are used as food for human or animal consumption, to produce hides, as fertilizer, to be used in products such as Jell-o.

**Activities:** Have students discuss their views about the use of horses for recreational riding, in races, rodeos and as carriage horses. Ask students to explain their viewpoints. There will be no right or wrong answers but students should be encouraged to show empathy and responsibility.

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE IV:** Students will learn about individuals who helped horses.

**Motivation:** Ask students if they have ever heard of Henry Bergh or Wild Horse Annie and how they helped horses. If possible, bring books and Internet articles about these individuals to class for students to read and discuss.

**Activities:**

- Download the ASPCA AnimaLessons that contains information about Henry Bergh at [www.aspcapro.org/mydocuments/Animalelessons\\_Humane\\_Heroes.pdf](http://www.aspcapro.org/mydocuments/Animalelessons_Humane_Heroes.pdf) . The text is suitable for many second and fifth graders but teachers might modify for use with their students. Discuss the first two paragraphs of text with students. How did Henry Bergh help a horse in Russia? Who did he meet in London? What did he decide to do when he got back to New York? When was the ASPCA formed?
- Log onto <http://www.returntofreedom.org/kids/annie.html> for information about Wild Horse Annie. Read and discuss the first 4 paragraphs with your students. What did Velma Johnston notice when she was driving? Where were the horses being taken? What would happen to them? How did school children try to help horses? What is the Wild Horse Annie Act and how does it help horses?

The “Just 4 Kids” link on this site provides additional interesting information for a more extended study of horses.

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE V:** Students will write letters and draw pictures to send to Congress to help horses. Most teachers can involve their students in letter writing campaigns without administrative approval. However, if it is customary to ask for principal approval to conduct a letter writing campaign, please follow school protocol.

**Motivation:** Ask students if they would like to become involved in a campaign to help horses. In 1959, Wild Horse Annie’s successful campaign to help horses involved students throughout the United States. The Wild Horse Annie Act became Public Law 86-234 on September 8, 1959 and said that motorized vehicles could no longer be used to hunt wild horses and burros on all public lands in the United States.

**Students’ letters and drawings can help make an important difference for horses in 2012!**

**Activities:** Have students discuss whether or not they think horses that people in the United States no longer want should be killed for human consumption, that is, so that people in other countries including France, Germany and Canada can eat them. Do we eat horses in the United States? Why or why not?

Please consider having your students join the campaign to pass the **Horse Slaughter Prevention Act S. 1176 and H.R. 2966**. These bills, introduced in the House of Representatives and Senate, would stop the slaughter of American horses for food consumption by banning their shipment to foreign slaughterhouses. At the present time, American horses are being shipped to Canada and Mexico for slaughter.

Information can be found by logging onto

[http://animalrights.about.com/od/animalrights101/ss/Top-10-Animal-Rights-Stories-Of-2011\\_8.htm](http://animalrights.about.com/od/animalrights101/ss/Top-10-Animal-Rights-Stories-Of-2011_8.htm) and [www.equinewelfarealliance.org/How You Can Help.html](http://www.equinewelfarealliance.org/How_You_Can_Help.html).

We encourage teachers to write as well.

### **ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TO PROTECT HORSES IN THE UNITED STATES**

- The **American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**' (ASPCA) website is [www.aspca.org](http://www.aspca.org). It was founded by Henry Bergh on April 10, 1866 as the first humane society in the Western Hemisphere. Very shortly after the formation of The ASPCA, Bergh convinced the New York State legislature to pass an anticruelty law and to give The ASPCA the authority to enforce it. One of the first cases that was brought before the courts was that of a cart driver who used a wheel spoke to beat his fallen horse. This case served as the inspiration for the ASPCA's seal, depicting an avenging angel rising up to protect a fallen horse. Henry Bergh also helped to develop a horse ambulance, and had one on the streets before ambulances were used to transport humans in distress.

Today, the ASPCA continues to work to achieve Henry Bergh's mission "to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States" through national legislative and education programs along with local humane law enforcement, sheltering, and medical services. The ASPCA publishes magazine articles, brochures and flyers to raise awareness about carriage horses, wild horses, the Tennessee walking horse and race horses.

- **Equine Advocates**' website is [www.equineadvocates.com/](http://www.equineadvocates.com/). The mission of Equine Advocates is to rescue, protect, and prevent the abuse of horses through education, investigation, rescue operations, and the dissemination of information to the public. The organization deals primarily with five main issues of importance: Equine Rescue, Horse Slaughter, Wild Horse Issues, The PMU (Pregnant Mares' Urine) Industry, The Prevention of Equine Abuse. They have a horse sanctuary in Chatham, New York.
- **Equine Welfare Alliance**, website is [www.equinewelfarealliance.org](http://www.equinewelfarealliance.org). Equine Welfare Alliance is an umbrella organization representing over 200 member organizations and hundreds of individual members worldwide in 18 countries. EWA and its members are involved in a grass roots effort dedicated to ending the slaughter of American Horses and the preservation and protection of our Wild Horses & Burros on public lands. A video about their children's letter writing campaign to end U.S. Slaughter of Horses for Human Consumption can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpINoZ2CqJo>

## **CHILDREN'S BOOKS ABOUT HORSES**

- **Clutton-Brook, Juliet, *Horse* (DK Eyewitness Books), DK Children, June 2008**
- **Langrish, Bob, *Horse Breeds Poster Book*, Storey Publishing, September 2003**
- **Peterson, Cris, *Wild Horses Black Hills Sanctuary*, (ASPCA Henry Bergh Children's Book Awards Recipient), Boyds Mills Press, March 2003**
- **Ransford, Sandy, *Horse and Pony Care* (Kingfisher Riding Club), Kingfisher Books, Ltd, July 2004**
- **Wagner, Karen, *Do Horses Sleep Standing Up?*, Equine Advocates, July 2008**
- **Warner, Rita, *Wonderful World of Horses*, Price Stern Sloan Publishers, May 1998**

## **DVD:**

- **Equine Advocates Featured on the Martha Stewart Show**  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APg72ZIHOMY>