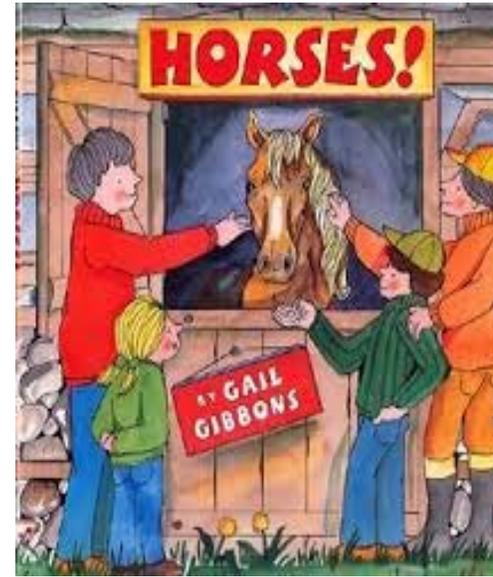


April 2015 Book of the Month
Horses

By: Gail Gibbons

No other animal has captured the human imagination or changed lives as has the horse. Their grace, strength, and beauty have made horses sought after as well as being useful. What would kings and queens, knights and conquistadors, cowboys and stagecoach drivers, or **FARMERS** have done without them?

In this informative book, Gail Gibbons, relates some of the long history horses and humans have shared. She looks at horse biology and behavior, and includes colorful, clear, and accessible diagrams that will interest all who want to know more about these popular animals.



Vocabulary and Fun Facts:

- Horses can sleep both lying down and standing up.
- Horses can run shortly after birth.
- Domestic horses have a lifespan of around 25 years.
- A 19th century horse named 'Old Billy' is said to have lived 62 years.
- Horses have approximately 205 bones in their skeleton structure.
- Horses have been domesticated for over 5000 years.
- Horses are herbivores (plant eaters).
- Horses have bigger eyes than any other mammal that lives on land.
- Because horse's eyes are on the side of their head they are capable of seeing nearly 360 degrees at one time.
- Horses can gallop at 44 kph (27 mph).
- The fastest recorded sprinting speed of a horse was 88 kph (55 mph).
- Estimates suggest that there are around 60 million horses in the world.
- Scientists believe that horses have evolved over the past 50 million years from much smaller creatures.
- A male horse is called a stallion.
- A female horse is called a mare.
- A young male horse is called a colt.
- A young female horse is called a filly.

- Ponies are small horses.

Activities

How Do Horses Measure Up?

A horse's height is measured in "hands" from its withers (the highest point of a horse's shoulder) to the ground. One hand equals 4 inches (10 cm). Give students different task cards with how many "hands tall" a horse is and have the students determine the height of the horse. This can also be done by giving the students the height of the horse and the students must determine how many hands tall the horse is.

Scale Model of a Horse:

After completing the activity above, have students use bulletin board paper or construction paper, and newspaper to construct a "real life size" horse based on the scale model of the answer from the task card. Be sure to include all the features of a horse and label.

Work Horses:

Over time, horses have helped humans in many ways. Make a list of all the ways horses have helped over the years. (Ex. Used to carry food/goods, warriors fought battles on horses, they plowed fields for crops, they carried carts, wagons, and carriages, etc). Have students select the use they think was most helpful and write about it.

How Well Do You Know Your Horse?

Refer to the pages in the back of the book. Read and discuss the "well-known purebred horses." Assign a specific breed of horse to a group of students and have them 1) Draw and label the horse, 2) research the characteristics of the horse and record facts 3) list the different tasks they perform and 4) present their project to the rest of the class.

Horses Throughout History:

Horses migrated to South America, Europe and Asia. About 500 years ago Spanish explorers brought horses back to America. Have students create a map depicting the route in which the horses migrated. Students may also create a time line showing the transition of migration.

Purebred, or Not?

A purebred horse has a mother and father from the same breed. A crossbred horse has at least one parent that is not purebred. Have students draw a picture of a horse and write what kind of horse the mother and father are. Share findings with the class and determine if they are a purebred horse or a crossbred horse.

Horses, A Farmer's Friend!

Have students list all the ways horses were used to help farmers. Then have them brainstorm what they would have used if there weren't any horses to help them. What would have been different or the same if they didn't have horses to help on farms?

Lesson Plans:

Detailed lesson plans about horses can be found at: <http://www.ncagintheclassroom.com/Curricula/ThirdGrade.aspx>

Illinois Ag Mag "Horses" is an excellent information text resource to supplement the book "Horses" by Gail Gibbons.

<http://www.agintheclassroom.org/teacherresources/AgMags/Horse%20Ag%20Mag.pdf>

Sources:

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/animals/horse.html>