

Horses



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Horses are symbols of speed, strength, and stamina. As we examine the anatomy of horses, we can easily see how they can live up to this claim. Horses have muscular bodies and powerful legs. They have one hoofed toe on each foot. Their heads are elongated. With enough distance between their muzzles and their eyes, horses can graze and look out for danger at the same time. At a moment's notice, horses spring into action and set out to run as fast as 43 miles per hour. Although their diet, grasses, provides little nutritional value, horses seem to have a secret energy valve that supplies them with strength. All these qualities of horses did not escape the notice of our ancestors, as horses have been domesticated for thousands of years as effective farm helpers and reliable means of transport. While the invention of machines largely relieved horses from their historical roles, they are now often kept for leisure and sports.

² Horses have long manes and tails. Their hairy coats come in a variety of colors and patterns. Most horses wear either single-colored coats or spotted outfits. But, there are exceptions. Roaming across the African grassland are three horse species with stripes. Do you know what they are? That's right! Zebras! There are three zebra species -- the Gravy's zebra, the mountain zebra, and the common (or Burchell's) zebra. All of them have eye-catching black and white stripes.

³ Horses live in herds, with a male horse (or a stallion) guarding a harem of female horses (or mares) and their young (or foals; male foals are colts and female foals are fillies.) A stallion frequently challenges other stallions in an attempt to take over their harems. His aggressive behavior often leads to pregnant mares from the acquired harem to miscarry, so he can mate and breed his own offspring immediately. When kept in farms, some stallions are castrated to make them more mild tempered and easy to control. Castrated stallions can no longer reproduce. They are called geldings.

⁴ We often size up an animal in meters, inches, or feet. This rule, however, doesn't apply to horses. Instead of taking out a measurement tape to record how tall a horse stands, we opt to use our hands to measure the distance between the ground and the horse's withers. The withers are the high part of the horse's spine between its neck and back. The average width of a man's hand is 4 inches. Horses must be at least 14.2 hands high. Otherwise, they are ponies. A common mistake that we often make is to confuse between ponies and baby horses. Ponies are not baby horses. They are simply horses' short relatives!

⁵ Converting the horse's "hand height" into inches is a mind-juggling exercise. Logically and mathematically speaking, 14.2 hands equals 56.8 inches. Nevertheless, the actual conversion doesn't work this way. As we set out to calculate how tall the horse is, we must take the number before the decimal point as the number of whole hands, and the number after the decimal point as inches. Hence, 14.2 hands are really 14 whole hands and 2 inches, or 58 inches! This is confusing, isn't it?

Name _____



Date _____

Horses

<p>1. Which of the following about horses is true?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Although horses and zebras look alike, they are not related.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Baby horses are ponies.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C They can run as fast as 43 kilometers per hour.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Horses feed on grasses.</p>	<p>2. Which of the following is not a quality that horses are known for?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Strength</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Speed</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Sense of smell</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Endurance</p>
<p>3. Horses have three toes on each of their feet.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>	<p>4. What is a gelding?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A A baby female horse</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B A stallion</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C A castrated male horse</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D A baby male horse</p>
<p>5. We use a measurement unit called "hand" to determine how tall a horse is. The distance between the ground and the tip of the horse's right ear is recorded as the horse's height.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>	<p>6. Which of the following horse species has a striped fur coat?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A The Burchell's zebra</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B The Onager</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C The Arabian horse</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D The Przewalski's wild horse</p>
<p>7. What is the minimum height of a horse?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A 13.2 hands</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B 12.2 hands</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C 14.3 hands</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D 14.2 hands</p>	<p>8. If the height of a horse is said to be 15.3 hands, how tall, in inches, is the horse?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A 60.0 inches</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B 61.2 inches</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C 62.1 inches</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D 63.0 inches</p>

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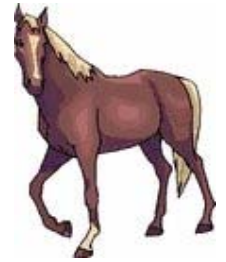
9. Which of the following statements about horses is **not** correct?
- A Mares are female horses.
 - B Horses have been domesticated for thousands of years.
 - C Female foals are colts and male foals are fillies.
 - D Horses' withers are the high part of their spines between their necks and backs.

Horses



attempt	reproduce	offspring	male
supplies	escape	height	valve
reliable	spine	however	pregnant
longer	often	historical	

Directions: Fill in each blank with the word that best completes the reading comprehension.



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Horses live in herds, with a male horse (or a stallion) guarding a harem of female horses (or mares) and their young (or foals; (7) _____ foals are colts and female foals are fillies.) A stallion frequently challenges other stallions in an (8) _____ to take over their harems. His aggressive behavior often leads to (9) _____ mares from the acquired harem to miscarry, so he can mate and breed his own (10) _____ immediately. When kept in farms, some stallions are castrated to make them more mild tempered and easy to control. Castrated stallions can no

(11) _____ (12) _____ . They are called geldings.

We often size up an animal in meters, inches, or feet. This rule,
(13) _____ , doesn't apply to horses. Instead of taking out a measurement
tape to record how tall a horse stands, we opt to use our hands to measure the distance between
the ground and the horse's withers. The withers are the high part of the horse's

(14) _____ between its neck and back. The average width of a man's hand
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mistake that we often make is to confuse between ponies and baby horses. Ponies are not baby
horses. They are simply horses' short relatives!

Converting the horse's "hand (15) _____ " into inches is a mind-juggling
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(Key 1 - Answer ID # 0379793)

Write a sentence using each word in the space provided.

1. **eye-catching** _____

2. **reproduce** _____

3. **anatomy** _____

4. **easily** _____

5. **largely** _____

6. **often** _____

7. **hence** _____

8. **escape** _____

9. **graze** _____

Horses - Answer Key

- 1 D Horses feed on grasses.
- 2 C Sense of smell
- 3 A False
- 4 C A castrated male horse
- 5 A False
- 6 A The Burchell's zebra
- 7 D 14.2 hands
- 8 D 63.0 inches
- 9 C Female foals are colts and male foals are fillies.



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Answers to Reading Comprehension Questions

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