

The History of Horses

WebQuest Description: Learn about the history of horses and their impact on humanity.

Grade Level: 3-5

Curriculum: Science

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Introduction

There was a time when mankind did not have tamed horses to help with labor and travel. Humans had to do all the hard work themselves, they had to walk everywhere they wanted to go and they had to carry whatever they needed to take with them. There were no tamed horses to help them and horses were actually hunted for meat! So how did humans begin to see the benefit of taming these wild equine animals to help them with daily living? This webquest is all about the history of the horse and its domestication into a working animal.

Tasks

Horses have been such a constant companion and helper for man it is hard to believe they are not listed in the very beginning of the Bible during the Creation! But they aren't!!! Instead, the very first passage we read about that includes the word "horse" is found in Genesis 47:17. Horses throughout the Bible are spoken of as burden animals, animals that were created to help man with his daily life and to ease his burdens. Horses bespoke wealth, status and were often a defining line between winning battles and losing them. Where did they come from? To read about the history of horses, click on the following links:
<http://mysite.verizon.net/mmaidens/prehistory.html> (very early history of the horse)
<http://mysite.verizon.net/mmaidens/classical.html> (how horses changed civilization)
<http://mysite.verizon.net/mmaidens/medieval.html> (how draft horses affected civilization)
<http://mysite.verizon.net/mmaidens/asia.html> (how the use of horses differed in the West and in Asia)
How horses changed civilization: Horses changed the lifestyle of the world, including where we live in North America. They were not indigenous to North America but were brought here and eventually thrived. Who brought the first horses and why? Click on the link and find out!
<http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/environment/horses3.htm> Fascinating facts you may not know about horses: Some very interesting facts about horses for those who have never been up close and personal with one! Can you imagine???
<http://www.thekidswindow.co.uk/News/Horses.htm> We have often been told that King Solomon was a very wise man, specially gifted by God to rule his people with incredible wisdom. He was also known to be very wealthy as well. But did you know that he had 40,000 horses and 12,000 horsemen at his disposal! Can you IMAGINE how much those horses ate each day and how much manure they created! That is an amazing number of animals and would have created an invincible army for King Solomon! 1 Kings 4:26 "And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen." Some VERY famous horses in history! Some horses were doomed to live a life of non-importance. They pulled plows, carried unimportant people from one place to another, were used to transport supplies, and some were even used for entertainment. Only a select few have made it into the history files as worthy to be remembered. Here are a few: Bucephalus - THE most famous horse of all time. Alexander the Great's favorite horse. <http://www.answers.com/main/ntq-dsid-1648-dekey-bucephalus> A list of dozens of famous horses and their owners with links to learn more about those that interest you: <http://www.answers.com/topic/list-of-historical-horses> VIDEO!!! The video clips linked below show you how horses can do the work of many men and in a shorter amount of time. Take the logging video for example, it would take a dozen men or more to lift and move the large trees that are cut down during the logging process. With a pair of horses, the trees are easily maneuvered and moved with the flick of a wrist on the reins. Listen as the video explains how the horses cause less damage to the environment than a tractor does and how quiet it is while harvesting trees as compared to loud, noisy, smokey tractors. Also consider the video clip that shows a tractor tilling soil verses a team of horses. Although the tractor can plow faster, allowing more fields to be sown and harvested per farmer, there is a negative side to this too. Farmers work much longer hours because their tractor never gets tired, or needs to eat and rest. Tractors can work in the dark, horses can't. This means that farmers put in longer days working with tractors than they would with a pair of horses - yes, the farmer makes more money, can farm larger areas and produce more food. However, the farmer himself can

often become fatigued and become injured. Farming as an industry has one of the highest rates of injury - partly because they work so hard and become tired and thus, careless. With a team of horses, the farmer would need to rest during the day while his horses rested. He would be up at daybreak and sleeping at nightfall - just like his horses. His days would be less stressful and tiring - with the drawback that he could not farm as much land and would make less income. This doesn't even take into consideration the effect of machinery on land versus animals - animal manure can be spread onto the fields to compost over the winter, feeding the soil that the next harvest will grow in. Tractors produce exhaust and pollution, and use a considerable amount of gasoline or diesel fuel to operate. Horses are easier on the environment and do not leave damage behind them. Tractors, because of their size and weight can permanently destroy the ecological life near the fields they work. There are pros and cons to both sides -which would you prefer if you were going to be a farmer? Why? <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/kids/animals-pets-kids/mammals-kids/horses-kids.html>http://www.livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe20s/machines_01.htm

(compares horses to

tractors)<http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/environment/going-green-environment/conservation-in-action/horses-logging.html>

(logging trees with horses instead of machines)

Process

The word "horse" is a modern name. In classical Latin, the ancients called it "equus." Horses are also known in the animal category as "equine" because of the Latin root word. In common Latin, which we would consider slang, the term for horse was "caballus." This is where we get more common words such as cavalry, caballero (cowboy) or the French word, cheval. Now in the Greek, they used the word "hippo" for horse. What common animal name goes along with "hippo"? The hippopotamus! Hippopotamus is a two part word meaning: horse and river. Potomas means river. So the Greeks named this strange animal that lives in rivers but lightly resembles a horse, a "river-horse". There are a number of words in this webquest that may be confusing to you. Here are some vocabulary words you can look up and study: Horse Burden Bespoke Indigenous Manure Invincible

Evaluation

Most people know what a horse looks like. There are obviously variations to horses. Some are tall, some are short. Some have large bone structures, others have petite bones. They come in all colors too and both solid, spotted and speckled. But how much do you actually KNOW about a horse? Did you know a horse has something called a "frog" in their hoof? Any idea what that is or what it does? Did you know the horse's shin bone is called a Cannon Bone? The human body has 206 bones in it, and a horse has...only 205!!! They might be bigger than we are, but we have more bones than they do! What about the other parts of a horse? Are you familiar with common areas on a horse? Here is the best informational study I have found to teach and explain all about the horse and its many parts. This was created by an extension service for 4-H clubs.

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/4h7933/\\$file/g_partsofhorse.pdf](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/4h7933/$file/g_partsofhorse.pdf) if the link above is too much information for you, try this one: http://www.animalcorner.co.uk/farm/horses/horse_anatomy.html

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Conclusion

Where would we be today as humans without the help of horses? Prior to the horse, humans had to carry everything themselves so commerce (buying and selling) was limited to what was within walking distance. They had to dig in the field themselves using picks, shovels and other implements so they could loosen the ground for planting seeds. Without horses, humans traveled very slowly and could not travel far. Wars and battles were hand-to-hand combat and without the use of horses for speed and height, many battles would have been lost and history would have been drastically changed. Every civilization owes its advancement to the horse - yet we rarely consider this. Especially today when machinery has taken over the jobs that horses have done for thousands of years.

Generations are being raised without an understanding of what a horse is, what they did for humans and how they have helped to shape history. As your ONLY assignment for this webquest, you are to write a 2-3 page story about what YOUR life would be like if horses had never been created. Turn this in to your parent for grading and try to be logically creative here. The more you consider different aspects of history without horses, the more you will thoroughly understand their importance in our life and in the history of mankind.

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