



## Horses

Curriculum Links:

- Science Living Things
- Geography Human Environments
- SPHE Myself and the Wider World
- History Local Studies (see activities)

**Lesson objective:**

To introduce students to the world of horse racing including horse care and professional horse racing.

**Teacher guidelines**

It is suggested that the teacher should ensure that their students are familiar with the vocabulary and concepts introduced in previous modules before starting this lesson.

**Keywords and concepts introduced in previous modules:**

breed herbivore oats cereals grazing

Horses are herbivores. This means that they get their energy from plants. They are grazing animals that will happily eat grass. Their food is supplemented with cereals such as oats and if they are a champion racehorse, they are fed special racehorse food that has lots of nutrition to keep them healthy,

After revision of the above teachers should discuss the below in more detail.

**Keywords and concepts for this lesson:**

jockey tack weanling yearling foal mare stallion

Did you know? Horses have the biggest eyes of any land mammal.

**Horse Racing**

Horse racing is a very popular sport in Ireland.

A champion stallion (male) and a mare (female) had a foal called Tiger Roll in 2010. Tiger Roll is now a very successful horse and has won lots of races.

**Let's take a look at the lifecycle of a racehorse!**

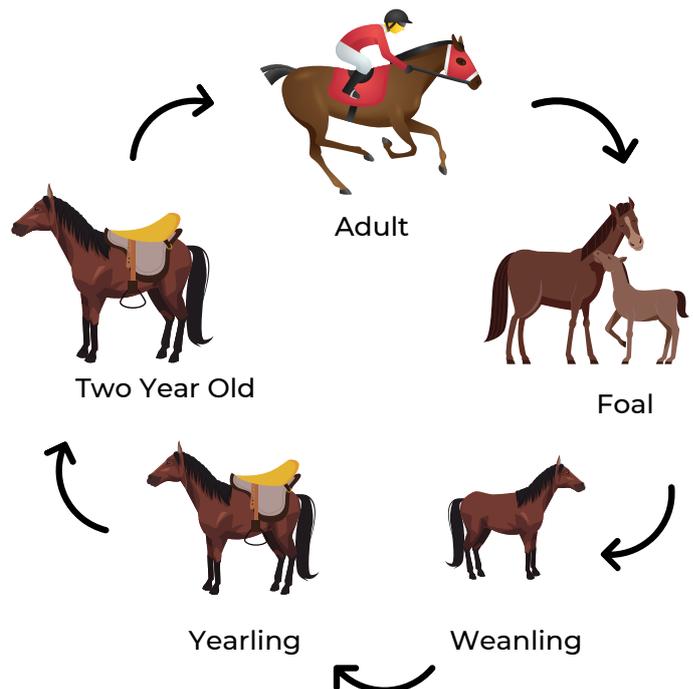
**Foals** - drink milk from their mother until they are 5-6 months old.

**Weanlings** - no longer drink milk from their mother but still require attention and guidance.

**Yearlings** - are between 1-2 years old. They begin training on a track with a rider on their back. They learn to gallop - to run as fast as they can.

**Two Year Olds** - are strong and fast enough to race competitively. They improve a lot over this period and can get better from race to race.

**Adults** - stallion (3 years+) and mare (4 years+)



## Tacking up

The equipment you need when preparing a horse is known as **tack**. When you are getting a horse ready to ride you must 'tack up'.



Saddle and pad



Bridle and reins



Jodhpurs



Riding boots



Back protector



Riding helmet

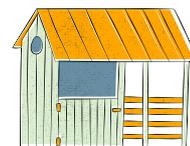
## Taking care of a horse - think food, shelter, health, behaviour and friends!

Taking care of a horse is a big responsibility.

Horses must be given food and water everyday. They eat grass, hay and cereals such as oats.



A stable will protect a horse from the rain, cold and sun. Inside a stable, bedding such as straw can be used to give the horse comfort if they choose to lie down. This is also helpful for mucking out (cleaning out their waste).



As a responsible horse owner, it is very important to keep your horse healthy. This means giving them a rest if they are sick and making sure that their body is kept healthy. Grooming a horse keeps their skin and coat healthy. It is also a good opportunity to bond with a horse and to develop a trusting relationship. A grooming kit is made up of a collection of brushes and other tools that clean the horse. This is done before and after a ride.



Normal behaviour for a horse is grazing grass, exercising inside and outside and socialising with other equine animals, preferably other horses. This keeps them happy. Sometimes, horses are kept with other animals such as donkeys or cattle for company. If your horse is kept alone, make sure you give it lots of attention.

### Suggested Activities:

- Print and use the worksheets in the classroom or at home.
- Find out where your closest racecourse is (there are 26 in Ireland) and collect some facts about its history.
- Do some research to find out where in the world wild horse herds still exist today.
- Get the students to write an essay on the importance of safety when riding a horse.
- Do a project on the cost of looking after a horse in a livery.

### Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this lesson, students should have a better understanding of the lifecycle of a racehorse, tacking up and caring for a horse.

### Additional resources:

- [www.agriaware.ie](http://www.agriaware.ie)
- [www.goracing.ie](http://www.goracing.ie)
- [www.equip.ie](http://www.equip.ie)



## Horses

1

Using the vocabulary below, fill in the blanks:

stable happy coat oats

Horses eat grass, hay and \_\_\_\_\_

Grooming a horse is important to keep their skin and \_\_\_\_\_ healthy.

Having access to shelter is important for horses. A \_\_\_\_\_ should be provided.

A horse should be allowed to express its natural behaviour. This keeps them \_\_\_\_\_

2

Label the diagram:



Bonus question:  
What is a group of wild horses called?