



Horses

Curriculum Links:

- Science Living Things
- Geography Human Environments
- Mathematics Data

Lesson objective:

To introduce students to the world of equestrian activities, horse racing and equine careers.

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

The Irish people have used horses for sport, transport, work and as companion animals for centuries. There are different breeds of horses that have been created by humans in order to perform to the best of their abilities e.g. racehorses. Horses are herbivores, meaning that eat plants for energy. They have a single-chambered stomachs making them mono-gastric animals. This is different to ruminants that have a four-chambered stomach; such as cattle, sheep and goats.

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

Keywords and concepts for this lesson:

racing jockey equestrian thoroughbred farrier hunting eventing

Equestrian Sports

Equestrian is a term used to describe all horse related activities. There are numerous equestrian activities including hunting, eventing and racing.

Hunting is an ancient tradition in Ireland. The aim is to track and chase quarry with the use of hounds. Quarry is the term used to describe a hunt animal such as a fox.

Eventing is one of the Olympic disciplines. Horses and riders compete on national teams in three areas: dressage, cross-country and show-jumping. Dressage involves a rider and horse working together to perform movements in an effortless way. Cross-country involves a rider and horse working together to complete a natural obstacle course race. Show-jumping involves a rider and horse working together to complete an obstacle course as quickly as possible without making any mistakes.

Racing, as a sport, is a part of Irish culture and society. The earliest documented history of horse racing in Ireland is from the 1600s (about 400 years ago). Nowadays, horses compete at one of Ireland's 26 racecourses or at an international racecourse.

One of the biggest international competitions is the Grand National in England. It is a National Hunt race that requires the horse to jump over fences and ditches in the fastest time possible. Irish trained horses have won the Grand National title 25 times. The race first began in 1839 and has been cancelled for three events in history - World War I (years 1916-1918), World War II (years 1941-1945) and the Covid-19 Pandemic (year 2020).



Breeds of horse

Horses, like cattle and other farm or pet animals, are categorised into different breeds. There are breeds that are better suited to racing and breeds that are better suited for leisure. The thoroughbred is a breed that is known for its power and speed. They are very good racers. The Connemara pony is a breed that is gentle, yet fearless. They are better suited for leisure riding and hunting.



Connemara pony

Did you know?

The difference between a horse and a pony is their height. A horse is 14.2 hands or taller and a pony is shorter than 14.2 hands. Racehorses are between 15-17 hands. A hand measures 10cm - how wide are your hands?



Thoroughbred

Horse racing careers

A professional **jockey** is a person who rides a racehorse during competitions. They must be very fit and healthy. It takes a long time to train to be a professional jockey. They start out as apprentices and must ride 95 winning horses to become full professionals

A **farrier** is a person who looks after the horse's feet. They must take care of their hooves and fit them for shoes. It is very important to take great care of each hoof so that the horse can walk, trot, canter and gallop.

A **horse trainer** is in charge of the racehorses routine. This means they ensure that they are on a good feeding and training schedule. There are lots of people who help with this, especially if the horse is a champion.

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 it.
- Take a look at the horse's digestive system. Draw and label it. Discuss the difference between ruminant herbivores (see Cattle) and mono-gastric herbivores.
- Create a poster on the evolution of the horse.
- Investigate other careers associated with horse racing e.g. equine veterinarians and equine auctioneers.
- Watch An Urban Jockey from Horse Racing Ireland.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this lesson, students should have a better understanding of equestrian activities and be familiar with horse breeds and horse racing careers. The worksheets focus on basic data analysis.

Additional resources:

- www.agriaware.ie
- www.goracing.ie
- www.equip.ie



Horses

1

The Grand National is a horse racing competition that takes place every year. Ireland has won the title 25 times since it began in 1839. Examine the table below and answer the questions that follow.

Year	Horse	Country
2010	Don't Push It	Ireland
2011	Ballinabriggs	Ireland
2012	Neptune Collogues	France
2013	Aurora's Encore	Ireland
2014	Pineau De Re	France
2015	Many Clouds	Ireland
2016	Rule The World	United Kingdom
2017	One For Arthur	Ireland
2018	Tiger Roll	Ireland
2019	Tiger Roll	Ireland

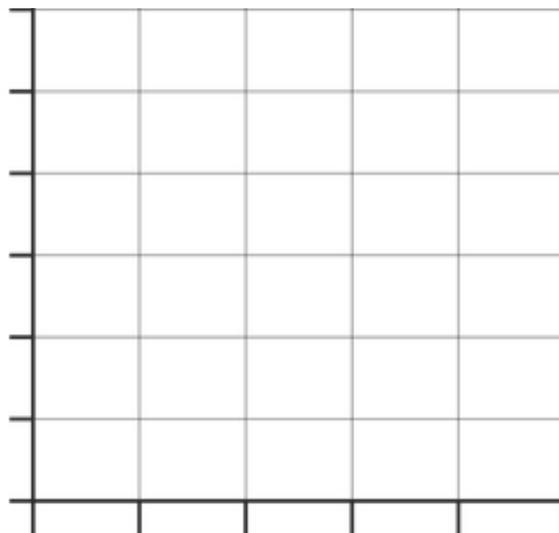
Questions:

1. What is the name of the horse that won the Grand National twice in a row?
2. In what year did the horse 'Many Clouds' win the Grand National?
3. How many times has Ireland won the Grand National?
4. What is the name of the horse that won the Grand National in 2010?
5. Using the countries listed, fill in the bar chart below to show the total number of wins per country.

Answers:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5.





Equine

2

Horses run a number of races each year. The total times a horse has run is called the total runs. Sometimes they may come 1st (win) and other times they may come 2nd, 3rd or 4th (place). Examine the table below and answer the questions that follow:

Horse	Total Runs	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Is That Love	10	5	0	0	1
Fill That Power	8	1	1	0	1
Pale Iris	6	2	0	1	1
Morph Speed	6	3	0	2	0
Dream Tale	6	2	3	0	0

Questions:

1. In how many races has 'Pale Iris' run?
2. In how many races has 'Fill That Power' placed 3rd?
3. In how many races did 'Morph Speed' not place or win?
4. What percentage of total runs did 'Is That Love' come 1st in?
5. In how many races did 'Dream Tale' place or win?

Answers:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Sums box

Bonus question:
Who became the first female jockey to win the Grand National in 2021?