

Horses with a History

Objective

TLW identify traits of the American Quarter Horse, compare breeds of different heights and learn to read the pedigree of a horse.

TEKS

Economics 4.13, Social Studies 4.22

Building Background

Define and discuss the following vocabulary words.

withers - the highest part of the back of a horse

dam - the female parent of a horse

mare - a female horse

sire - the male parent of a horse

foal - a young horse under 1 year of age

remuda - a group of horses

filly - a young female horse not of breeding age

sorrel - a reddish or copper-red colored horse

pedigree - a family tree of pure breeding

Procedure

- Read about the American Quarter Horse on the activity sheet.
- Using butcher paper, make a class chart, measuring each student's height in hands.
- Compare the average height of American Quarter Horses to other breeds. Which breed is the tallest? Which breed is the shortest?
- Diagram the pedigree of Drifts Chip, a Four Sixes horse.
- Visit the Four Sixes Ranch Web site at www.6666ranch.com and list other names of famous Four Sixes horses.
- Name your own horse and add the sire's and dam's names.
Under official rules, an American Quarter Horse's name can have only 20 characters with no dashes or apostrophes.

Extend

- Visit the American Quarter Horse Association Web site at www.aqha.com to learn more about the American Quarter Horse.
- Visit the American Quarter Horse Heritage Center & Museum in Amarillo, Texas.

The American Quarter Horse



- Is the first breed of horse native to the United States.
- Is known for its cow sense (the ability to outmaneuver cattle) and calm disposition, the AQH was ideally suited for the challenge of the West.
- Is an average of 15 hands tall at the withers and weighs 1,100 pounds. The withers is the ridge between the shoulder bones which usually holds the saddle in place.
- Can be one of 16 colors and is allowed to have some white markings on the head and legs to be eligible for registration with the American Quarter Horse Association. (If you see white anywhere else in spots or patches on the horse, besides the face or below the knees, you're not looking at an American Quarter Horse.)
- Is most often the color called sorrel (sar' ul). Sorrel refers to a body color that is reddish or copper-red, and the horse's mane and tail can be the same color as the body or can be flaxen, which is similar to blonde.
- Is found in all 50 states and more than 70 foreign countries.
- Is known for its versatility and calm disposition.
- Helped settle the West and was the cowboy's favorite breed of horse for driving and working cattle.
- Outnumbers the population of other breeds. Since 1940, when official records were begun, there have been more than 4.4 million American Quarter Horses registered.

Breed

Height in Hands

American Quarter Horse	15
Appaloosa	15
Arabian	14.3
Clydesdale	17
Saddlebred	15.2
Tennessee Walking Horse	15.2
Thoroughbred	16.1

Information provided by the American Quarter Horse Heritage Center & Museum, Amarillo, Texas.

Names of Horses

During the late 1800s, cowboys often called Quarter Horses “Steeldusts.” Steel Dust meant good luck, and many cowboys carried “steel dust” in small leather pouches for good luck. The name Steel Dust also refers to a Quarter Horse stallion in Texas who was famous throughout the southwestern United States for his race wins. Even today, cowboys and cowgirls often boast about their horses’ ancestors. Sometimes they memorize a horse’s pedigree, which is like a family tree.

Every American Quarter Horse must have a name to be registered or recorded with the American Quarter Horse Association. Many times a horse’s name includes part of his ancestor’s names. Look at the pedigree below and see from whom Drifts Chip, a Four Sixes Ranch horse, got his name. The sire, or father, is listed on the upper right line. The dam, or mother, is listed on the lower line.

Drifts Chip

