

Horses unit study

A homeschool curriculum built around horses — equine science, history, and the reading, math and biology inside the barn, for K-12.

GRADE BANDS K-2 · 3-5 · 6-8 · 9-12

FULL GUIDE <https://handsdowneducation.com/homeschool/horses>

How to use this planner

The six weeks below are sequenced from the guide's sample week: five weeks that each take one core subject through the topic, then a showcase week that turns the portfolio into a final product. Run each activity at the level your child is at (the grade band notes tell you how), keep the output, and by week six you have a portfolio that shows the unit end to end.

Pace is yours. A week here is three to five working sessions; a topic that is going well can take two calendar weeks, and one that has run dry can be closed early. Tick the box when a week's output is in the portfolio.

Six-week scope and sequence

Wk	Focus	Key activity	Portfolio output	Done
1	Reading & Writing through horses	Read a chapter of a working vet's memoir, then write a case file for an imagined patient: symptoms, differential, treatment plan, outcome.	Portfolio entry: the week's reading & writing piece, dated, with one line from your child on what they found out.	☐
2	Math through horses	Plan a week of feed for three horses of different weights using real feeding ratios per 100 pounds of body weight — then price it from a real feed catalog.	Portfolio entry: the week's math piece, dated, with one line from your child on what they found out.	☐
3	Science through horses	Study the four gaits in slow-motion video and chart footfall patterns; connect gait mechanics to skeletal anatomy with a printable diagram.	Portfolio entry: the week's science piece, dated, with one line from your child on what they found out.	☐
4	Social Studies through horses	Trace how horses changed one civilization — Mongol cavalry, Plains nations, or the Pony Express — and what changed again when engines arrived.	Portfolio entry: the week's social studies piece, dated, with one line from your child on what they found out.	☐
5	Art through horses	Master the classic horse-drawing construction method (circles and lines to full figure) that art teachers have used for a century — genuinely hard, genuinely satisfying.	Portfolio entry: the week's art piece, dated, with one line from your child on what they found out.	☐
6	Showcase and review	Choose one final product that pulls the unit together — a presentation, an exhibit, a field guide or a short documentary — and give the week to making it. Finish with a portfolio review: lay every week's output on the table and let your child narrate what changed in what they know about horses.	The final product plus a one-page unit summary in your child's words, filed with the portfolio.	☐

Running it at your child's level

K-2 learners name parts, colors and breeds, count hands for height, and read early-reader horse fiction — vocabulary-dense and highly motivating.

Older students go deep into genetics (coat-color inheritance is a superb Punnett-square subject), equine business economics, and the ethics debates inside racing and competition.

A sample week, subject by subject

Reading & Writing

Read a chapter of a working vet's memoir, then write a case file for an imagined patient: symptoms, differential, treatment plan, outcome.

Math

Plan a week of feed for three horses of different weights using real feeding ratios per 100 pounds of body weight — then price it from a real feed catalog.

Science

Study the four gaits in slow-motion video and chart footfall patterns; connect gait mechanics to skeletal anatomy with a printable diagram.

Social Studies

Trace how horses changed one civilization — Mongol cavalry, Plains nations, or the Pony Express — and what changed again when engines arrived.

Art

Master the classic horse-drawing construction method (circles and lines to full figure) that art teachers have used for a century — genuinely hard, genuinely satisfying.

Common questions

We can't afford riding lessons. Does the curriculum still work?

Completely. The academic content — biology, history, literature, math — requires no horse. Many barns also offer volunteer chores-for-time arrangements worth asking about.

Is 'horse science' real science?

Equine science is a university major. Anatomy, nutrition, genetics and biomechanics taught through horses is rigorous biology with a specific model organism.

How do I stretch this beyond biology?

Through history it touches war, trade, agriculture and transport; through economics, breeding and racing industries; through literature, one of the richest animal canons there is.

Turn this into a full, standards-aligned curriculum

Generate a complete plan around horses for your child's grade and pace — free to try, no account required.

<https://handsdowneducation.com/curriculum/generate>