

HORSING AROUND WITH WRITING

Creative
Writing
Made
Easy



Jan May



Horsing Around with Writing

Write a Horse Adventure! The Fun Way to Hook a Reluctant Writer.

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Freebie Edition

Education and Language Arts

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First Edition

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This Unit is From the Book: *Horsing Around with Writing*.

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Welcome to Horsing Around with Writing Mini Unit!

This is a fun and exciting creative writing curriculum designed to eliminate work for the teacher. This self-guided curriculum can be used with one homeschool student, with multiple ages, or with a co-op group.



It is user friendly for grades 3-6 with easy step-by-step instructions. Whether your student is a skilled writer or just starting out, this curriculum will inspire a love for writing. This book teaches:

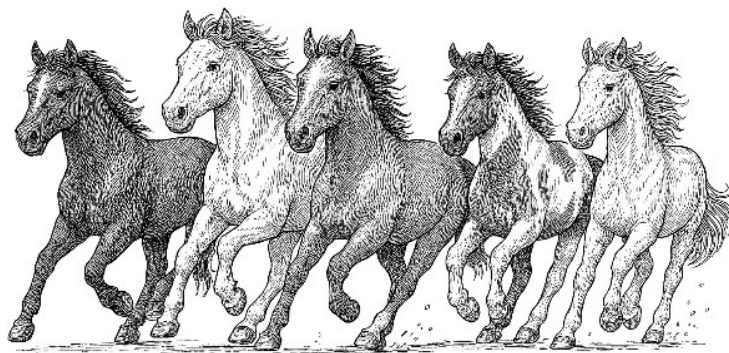
- Developing a character
- Using your senses to create a setting
- Spicing up your dialogue
- Creating an interesting plot
- *Show, Don't Tell*, the golden rule of writing
- Incorporating literary tools like onomatopoeia

Each lesson is designed to last 45-60 minutes. It can be split up into two weekly sessions. The student can keep moving on to the next lesson if you choose and set the pace. This is a great time to check out living books from the library. There is a library list on the next page of horse related themes.

Check out my Pinterest page for How to Draw Horses and Horse Crafts:

<https://www.pinterest.com/janmay2012/draw-a-horse/>

<https://www.pinterest.com/janmay2012/horse-crafts/>



Horse Reading List for Kids 8-11 years

Black Beauty	Anna Sewell	1877
Misty of Chincoteague	Marguerite Henry	1947
The Black Stallion	Walter Farley	1941
Billy and Blaze	C.W. Anderson	1936
National Velvet	Enid Bagnold	1935
My Friend Flicka	Mary O'Hara	1941
Canterwood Crest (Series)	Jessica Burkhart	2009-2013
The Saddle Club (Series)	Bonnie Bryant	1988-2001
Pony Club Secrets (Series)	Stacy Gregg	2007-2013
Circle C Adventures (Series)	Susan K Marlow	2005 - 2024
Winnie the Horse Gentler	Dandi Daley Mackall	2002-2006
Isabel's Secret	Jan May	2015
Isabel's Fun Fair Fiasco	Jan May	2017
My Book of Horses and Ponies	DK Publishing	2023

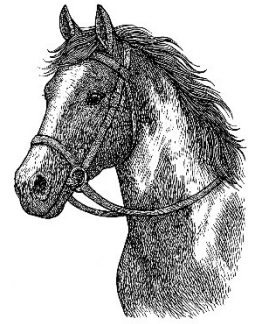


Reference Books: *Ultimate Horse Book for Kids* — Jenny Kellett, 2022, fun facts, and beginner horse science.

Horse Breeds: A Kid's Guide — Kristen Rajczak, 2013, Short, accessible breed summaries—great for research projects

My First Horse and Pony Book — DK Publishing, 2011, gentle grooming, riding basics, and horse behavior.

Introduction-Teacher's Notes



How to Get the Most from These Lessons

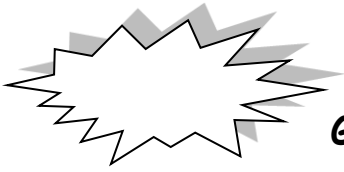
I have taught creative writing for over fifteen years and have found that given the right tools, any child can write and love it. I always stress creativity over grammar, and I praise every small effort they make. I encourage parent-child brainstorming thus creating a "writing adventure" instead of a dull writing lesson. I have discovered that by keeping these things in mind, even the most reluctant writer will dive into the writing pool.

There are six lessons with easy fill in the blank instructions that take your students step-by-step into writing a fictional story. This greatly aids a storyteller who needs to learn how to organize their thoughts.

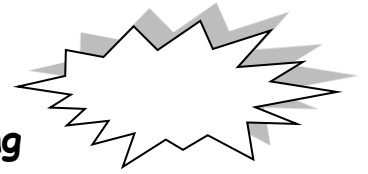
Creative writing time can be enhanced by geography, history, reading, and art turning it into a unit study. There is a brief history of horses, horse reading list, horse crafts, and horse fieldtrips to enjoy.

Brainstorming with the students for story ideas and plots creates excitement, and you will find the children begging for writing time. Kids have terrific ideas of what they are interested in, so listen with an open mind.

Give kids a reason to write. End the semester with a field trip or horse craft! End the unit with a Flashlight Theater celebration. The children can make a simple theater box by cutting out a square in the middle of a BIG TV box or drape sheets over chairs. Turn out the lights and shine flashlights on the reader (and bring snacks!). Each child can read their stories. Friends can bring stories they have written and participate in the theater. This is great for a co-op idea with another family. Invite friends, grandparents, or neighbors to watch. Allow the children to practice presenting by introducing themselves with a smile, offering a greeting, talking loudly, and making periodic eye contact with the audience.



Get the Most out of These Lessons by Using The Five Writing Superpowers



These Five Superpowers will help your students gain confidence and will be bridge builders for more formal writing.

Brainstorming - Never underestimate the creative power of brainstorming! Talking things out with your students helps to form ideas and primes the pump of creativity. Continue asking them about their characters and brainstorming ideas throughout the lessons. This also creates excitement when they can share their ideas with you. This begins the writing adventure!

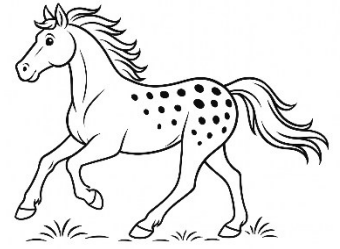
Prewriting - could be anything from writing down simple ideas to organizing thoughts on a list. Each prewriting activity helps the student formulate the story and organize their thoughts. It's like constructing a building in the students' minds so when it's time to put pencils on paper, they have tons of ideas to draw from.

Freewriting- is writing down whatever comes into a person's mind. Let your students write about what they love - zany plots, whacky characters, made-up fantasy worlds, and all. This will unleash the storyteller in your child and if they have been "stuck" it will open the flood gates for writing.

Gentle grading - Do not make creative writing lessons in grammar or spelling. Children will feel stifled if they must stop and sound out every word and fear that you will mark it wrong. Let them have a good start first to build confidence, then begin correcting *gently*. This could easily be after a month or two. Introduce grammar rules in writing one at a time so they can build mastery before going on to a new rule. Keep teaching grammar during grammar time and it will trickle down.

Theme immersion - Give your students fun activities that immerse them into the theme they are writing about like crafts, food, or fieldtrips. This creates a rich atmosphere that nourishes the imagination and creates a fun writing adventure that will springboard them into writing.

Horse History: Working & Wild



Long ago, horses were not part of everyday human life. That changed when people began training them to help with travel, farming, and carrying goods. Horses became trusted partners—strong, fast, and loyal.

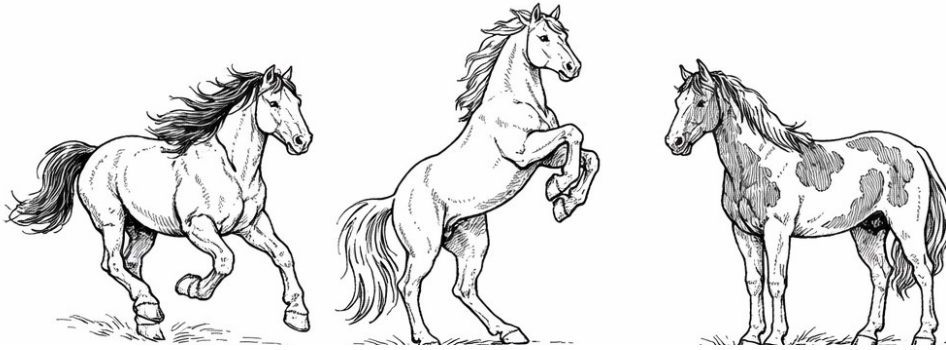
Working Horses

- In ancient kingdoms, horses pulled chariots and carried messengers across great distances.
- Knights rode powerful warhorses into battle, often wearing armor alongside their riders.
- Farmers used horses to plow fields and haul heavy loads before machines were invented.
- In cities, horses pulled carriages and wagons, helping people and goods move from place to place.
- During World War I, over a million horses were used to carry supplies and soldiers through muddy battlefields. **Wild Horses**

- Some horses escaped from farms or ranches and formed wild herds, especially in the American West.
- These wild horses, often called **mustangs**, roamed freely across plains and deserts.
- By the 1800s, there were millions of wild horses in the U.S., but many were hunted or captured.
- In 1971, a law was passed to protect wild horses and burros, calling them “living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West”.

Today, horses still work on farms and ranches, compete in sports, and live wild in protected areas. Whether galloping across open land or trotting beside a rider, horses continue to inspire stories, adventures, and friendships.

Popular Horse Breeds



- **Arabian** - Elegant, spirited, and known for endurance and a dished face.
Coloring: Bay, gray, chestnut, black
- **Thoroughbred** - Fast and athletic, famous for racing.
Coloring: Bay, gray, chestnut, black
- **Quarter Horse** - Versatile and muscular, great for ranch work and rodeo.
Coloring: Sorrel, bay, black, palomino, buckskin
- **Clydesdale** - Gentle giants with feathered hooves, often seen in parades.
Coloring: Bay, black, roan, chestnut
- **Friesian** - Black-coated beauties with flowing manes and high-stepping gaits.
Coloring: Solid black
- **Appaloosa** - Spotted coats and bold personalities; great for trail riding.
Coloring: White with spots (leopard, blanket, snowflake)
- **Paint Horse** - Colorful patterns and calm temperament.
Coloring: White with black, brown, or chestnut patches
- **Shetland Pony** - Small, sturdy, and often a child's first pony.
Coloring: Black, bay, chestnut, pinto
- **Haflinger** - Golden coat and flaxen mane; sweet and strong.
Coloring: Golden chestnut with flaxen mane and tail
- **Icelandic Horse** - Compact and hardy, with a unique gait called the "tölt."
Coloring: Chestnut, bay, black, gray, dun

HORSE

HIDDEN TALENTS



1. Some horses can tell when a storm is coming
2. A few horses can pick locks with their teeth.
3. Certain horses can find their way home from miles away.
4. Some horses can untie a knot with their lips.
5. A few horses can open gates without being taught.
6. Certain horses can sense when people are sad.
7. Some horses remember the way to places they've only visited once.
8. A few horses can work together without making a sound.
9. Certain horses can understand different languages.

Lesson 1

Creating a Horse Character

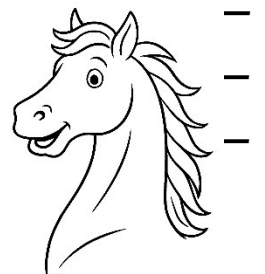
Instructions: Review the three previous pages entitled *Popular Horse Breeds*, *Horse Personalities*, and *Horse Hidden Talents*. Then come back and fill in the worksheets on the next two pages.

Worksheet 1: Meet the Herd — Create Your Horse

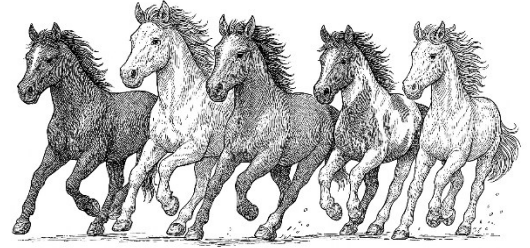
Instructions: Fill in the blanks to create your horse character.

- My horse's name is: _____
- What breed is it? _____ Look at the next page for ideas.
- Its' color and markings: _____
- Its' personality is: _____ (e.g., brave, shy, curious)
- Its' special talent or secret: _____
- It lives in: _____ (e.g., enchanted forest, cozy stable)
- What makes it unique or special: _____

Instructions: Write a short paragraph below introducing your main horse as the hero of a story.



Who are the other horses in the herd?



#1 Horse's name

is: _____

What breed is it? _____

Its color and markings _____

Its personality is: _____ (e.g., brave, shy, curious)

Its special talent or secret: _____

What makes it unique or special _____

#2 Horse's name is: _____

What breed is it? _____

Its color and markings _____

Its personality is: _____ (e.g., brave, shy, curious)

Its special talent or secret: _____

What makes it unique or special _____

#3 Horse's name is: _____

What breed is it? _____

Its color and markings _____

Its personality is: _____ (e.g., brave, shy, curious)

Its special talent or secret: _____

What makes it unique or special _____

Creating a Human Character

Name your character _____

How old? _____ Girl or Boy?

What is his/her job? Are they students?

Describe what he/she looks like.

What's his/her favorite food?

What's his/her favorite thing to do?

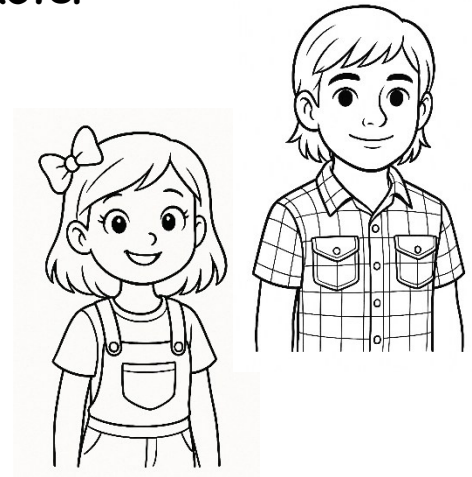
Where does he/she live? _____

Describe it: _____

Does he/she dream about doing anything special with horses in their life? What?

What are a few of your character's weaknesses? Are they clumsy, awkward, or forgetful?

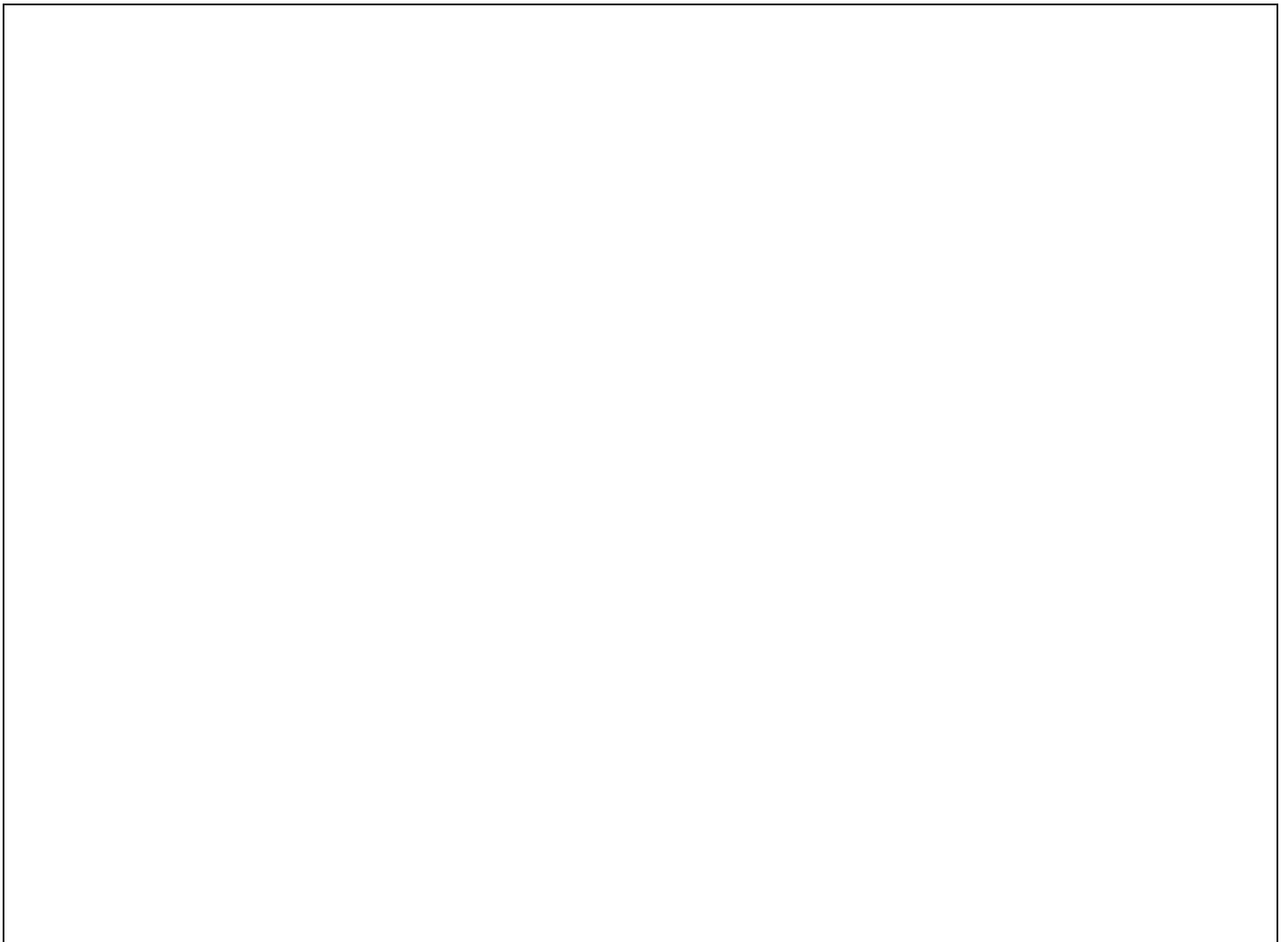
What makes your character excited?



Tell about his/her family:

What makes your character likeable?

Draw a picture of your characters in the box below.



Lesson 2

Horse Habitat — Setting the Scene

Instructions: Imagine where your horse lives. The place where your story happens is called the setting. Use your five senses to describe it. The five senses are the way you experience the world around you. They are sight, sound, taste, smell, touch. Fill in the spaces below. The setting could be a barn, ranch, mountains, meadow, farm, etc.

Name the Place

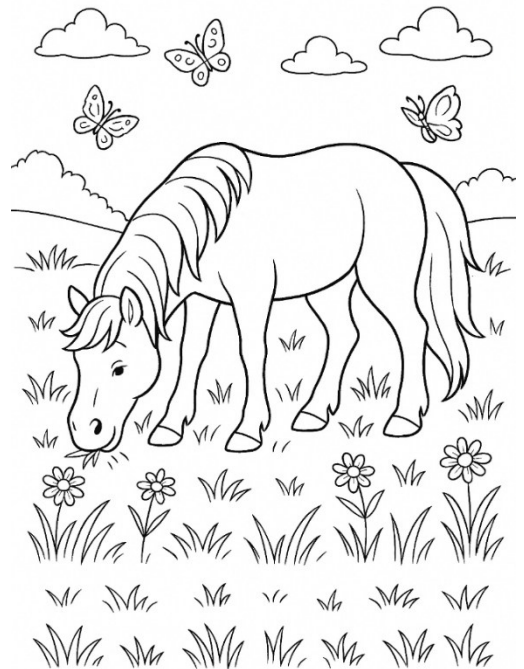
What does your horse see there?

What does it hear there?

What does it smell there?

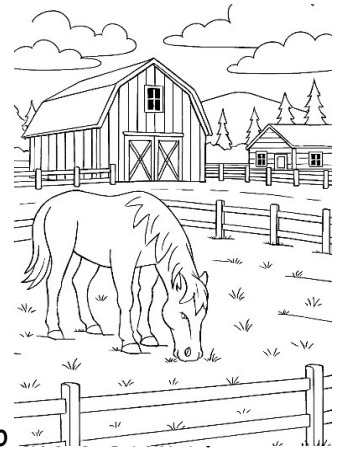
What does it feel under its hooves?

What does it taste like there?



Lesson Three - Story Ideas

Instructions: Read the writing prompts below to give you story ideas. If they spark new ideas, write them down on the lines provided. Then go on to the next page.



Story Starter 1: "The Locked Stall"

When twelve-year-old Lila volunteered at Maple Creek Ranch, she was told to "That horse's not ready," the stable manager said. But when Lila peeked inside, she saw a pair of eyes watching her—and a challenge she couldn't resist.

Story Starter 2: "Midnight Ride Challenge"

Every rider at Pine Hollow Camp had to complete the Midnight Ride to earn their badge. But when Max's horse spooked at the edge of the woods, he discovered something hidden beneath the moonlit trail that changed everything.

Story Starter 3: "The Horse Nobody Wanted"

The new horse at Briar Hill was wild-eyed, scared, and silent. No one could ride him—until Zoe stepped into the ring and whispered, "I'm not afraid." What happened next made her a legend.

Story Starter 4: "The Map in the Saddle"

While cleaning out her grandfather's barn, Ellie found a faded map tucked inside an old saddle. It pointed to a place deep in the hills—and the only way to get there was on horseback.

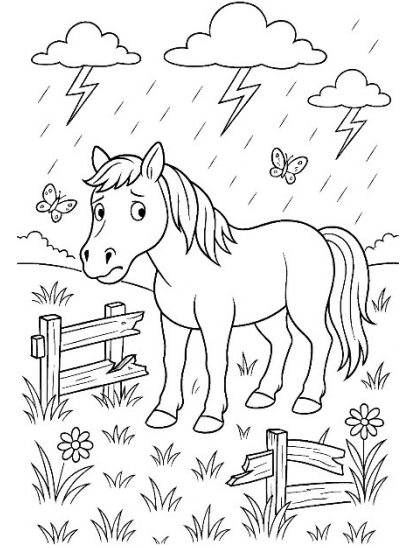
Story Starter 5: "Rider Number 13"

At the county fair's obstacle course, thirteen-year-old Jay was the last rider to compete. His horse was the smallest, his gear was borrowed, and the announcer had just said, "This one's just for fun." Jay had other plans.

Create a Plot for Your Story

Trouble on the Trail Story Map

Instructions: Plan your horse's adventure. Every story needs a problem for the character to solve.



Who is in the story? Name the horses and people:

Create a problem your horse or rider needs to solve? What goes wrong?

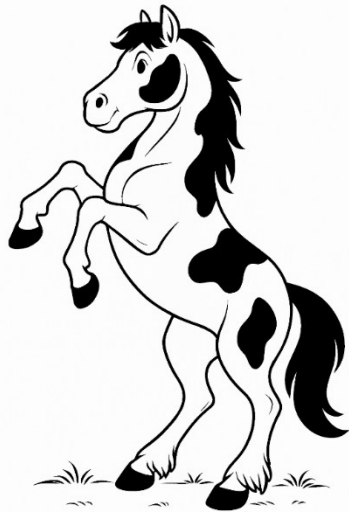
How does your horse feel? How does the rider feel?

What do they do to fix it?

What goes wrong?

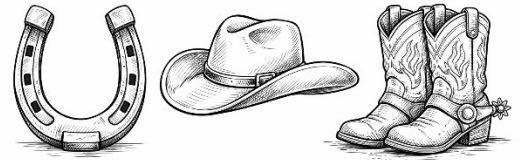
What happens in the end?

Instructions: Write the beginning of your story. Start with action to draw the readers in.



A series of horizontal lines for writing, starting from the top of the page and extending to the bottom. The lines are evenly spaced and cover most of the page width.

Lesson Four Horse Hyperboles



Adding hyperboles to your story is fun!

A hyperbole (pronounced= hy-PER-buh-lee) is an exaggeration. It's not meant to be taken literally, it just makes something sound bigger, funnier, or more dramatic. For example: My horse drank a **lake full of water** today.

Instructions: Use the words below to complete each exaggerated sentence.

Hyperbole Word Bank

million • skyscraper • ton • thousand • endless • lightning • mountain • forever • giant • ocean

Complete the Hyperboles

1. I've cleaned a _____ stalls today.
2. That horse can jump as high as a _____.
3. My boots are so muddy they weigh a _____.
4. She practiced her pattern a _____ times before the show.
5. The trail felt _____, like it went on forever.
6. That horse ran faster than _____ during the race.
7. His hay pile was stacked as tall as a _____.
8. My horse drank enough water to fill an _____.
9. The line for the horse show felt like it took _____.
10. Her horse's neigh was so loud it could wake a _____.

Instructions-Go on to the next page and remember to add hyperboles to your story.

Lesson Five

Horse Activities to Keep the Horse Momentum Going

Instructions: Make a horse craft to spark ideas for your story. Then go on to the next page and continue writing.

1. Paper Bag Pony Puppets

- **Materials:** Brown paper lunch bags, yarn (for mane and tail), googly eyes, markers, glue
 - **Activity:** Kids decorate the bag to look like a horse's face, then glue yarn to the top for a mane and to the bottom flap for a tail. Add ears and a snout with cut paper shapes.
 - **Extension:** Use the puppets to act out a horse-themed story or poem!
-

2. Clothespin Horse Parade

- **Materials:** Clothespins, cardstock (for head and tail), markers, glue, yarn or felt
 - **Activity:** Kids create mini horses using clothespins as legs. They decorate the body with patterns, add a head and tail, and give each horse a name.
 - **Extension:** Host a "parade" where each horse trots across a paper pasture!
-

3. Build-a-Stable Diorama

- **Materials:** Shoeboxes, popsicle sticks, construction paper, toy horses, or paper cutouts
 - **Activity:** Kids build a mini stable inside the shoebox, complete with stalls, hay piles, and name tags for each horse.
 - **Extension:** Add a journal page describing a day in the life of one of the horses.
-

4. Yarn Mane Headbands

- **Materials:** Yarn, elastic bands or paper strips, tape, or glue
- **Activity:** Kids create wearable horse manes by tying yarn strands to a headband base. They can choose colors to match their favorite breed or fantasy horse.
- **Extension:** Pair with a "horse parade" where each child introduces their character.

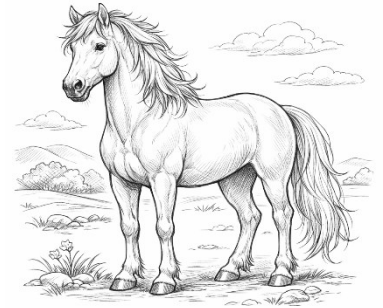
Lesson Six

Trail Map Story Paths

Instructions: Draw a simple "trail map" with 5-7 stops (e.g., creek crossing, old barn, meadow, hilltop, forest path). At each stop, write one sentence that moves the story forward. Then go on to the next page.



Putting it All Together



Instructions: After you have finished your story, have a parent help check the spelling.

Number all your final story pages along with all maps and drawings. Arrange them by putting all the drawings and maps in the right places between the story pages. Three-holes punch all the pages then fasten them into a plastic essay binder. Essay binders can be purchased at a superstore or office supply store. You can also staple them all together.

Activity-Horse Flashlight Theater

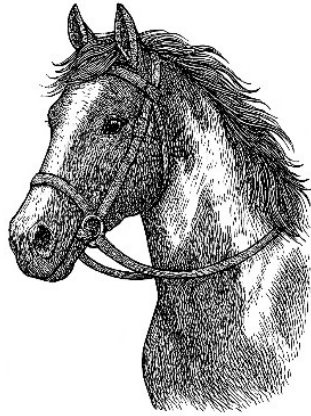
Host a reading party by inviting grandparents, friends, or neighbors to hear you read your story. Wear cowboy hat, scarf, or other props. Make fun horse snacks to enjoy! Hosting it for your siblings and parents is fun too!

Choose a table or comfortable family room chair. Turn out the lights and let the audience flash flashlights on the reader as they read their story.

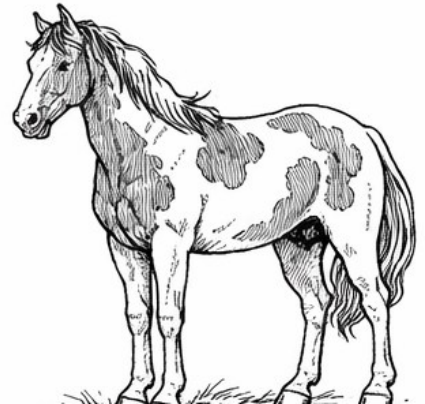
For a fun option, make a theater stage box by cutting out a large square from a large box making it look like a TV. Add paint or glitter. Readers can sit behind it and read their stories.

Share good flashlight-behavior beforehand: No flashing in anyone's eyes or waving them around to make fun distracting patterns on the wall.

If you have made any horse art projects, this is a fun time to display them!

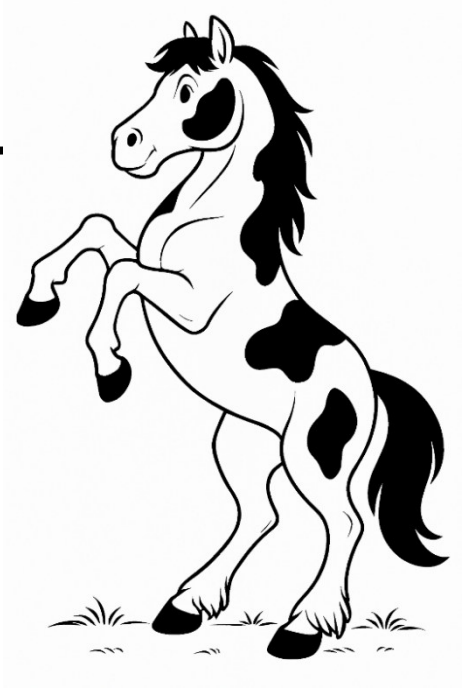
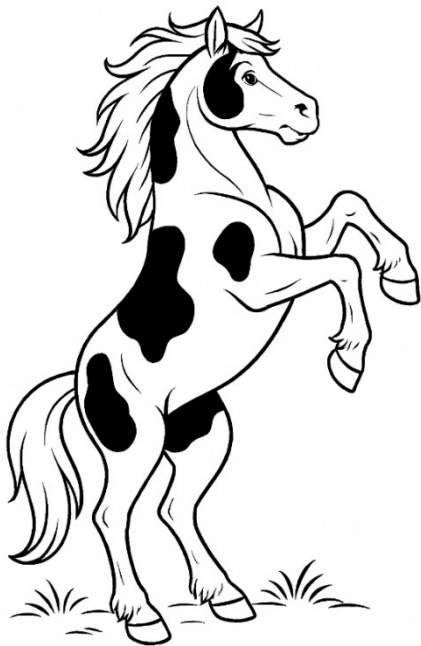


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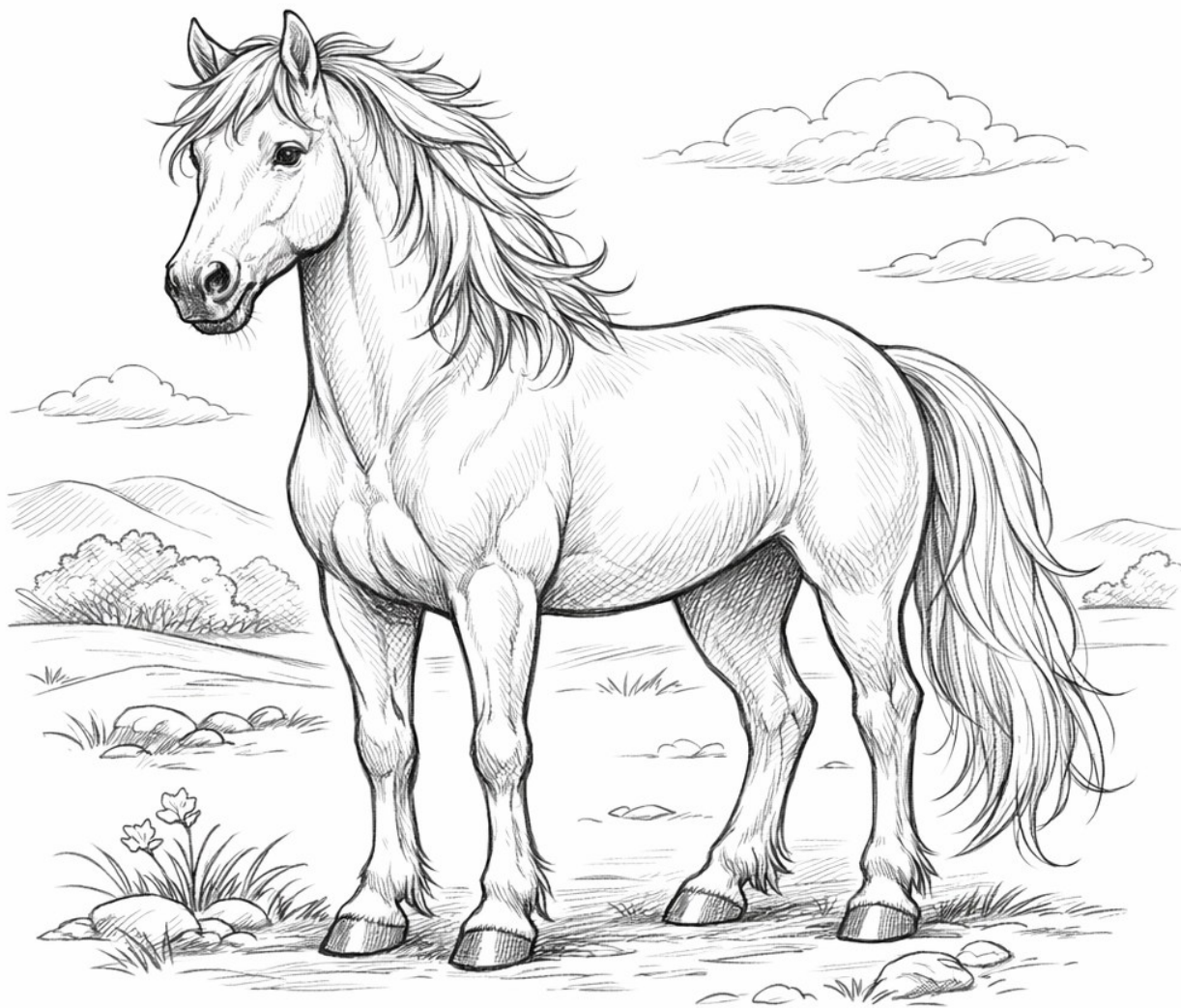




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Optional Coloring Pages











Horse Themed Snacks

1. "Apple Hay Bales" Snack Cups

Inspiration: Horses love apples and this treat combine both in a fun way!

Ingredients:

- Diced apples
- Shredded wheat cereal (for "hay")
- A drizzle of honey or yogurt (optional)

Instructions:

Layer diced apples in a small cup, sprinkle shredded wheat on top to look like hay, and add a drizzle of honey or yogurt for extra flavor. Serve with a mini spoon and call it a "stable snack!"

2. "Carrot Stick Trotters" with Dip

Inspiration: Horses trot for treats—especially carrots!

Ingredients:

- Baby carrots or carrot sticks
- Ranch or hummus dip.
- Pretzel sticks (optional for "fence rails")

Instructions:

Arrange carrot sticks like horse legs trotting across a plate. Add a small cup of dip in the center as the "watering trough." Use pretzel sticks to build a mini fence around the plate for extra flair.

3. "Horse Cookie Faces"

Inspiration: Let kids decorate their own horse faces!

Ingredients:

- Round sugar cookies
- Chocolate chips, raisins, and licorice strings, frosting or nut-free spreads.

Instructions:

Give each child a cookie and let them decorate it to look like a horse's face—chocolate chips for eyes, raisins for nostrils, and licorice for the mane. Use frosting to help everything stick. Bonus: Name your cookie horse before eating!

About the Author

Jan May loved homeschooling her two children through high school. Whether it was attending re-enactments of the Revolutionary War or collecting an amphibian zoo, hands-on education was always at the forefront of her curriculum. She is author of the *Creative Writing Made Easy* series that engages even the most reluctant writers. All the books are filled with fun interactive language activities involving each type of learner: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic—perfect for the wiggly in boys.

Having been a creative writing teacher for over fifteen years, she believes that given the right tools, every child can learn to write and love it!



Visit her **website** for fun downloads and activities. Watch her online teaching schedule—leading students and teens in a fun and engaging writing experience.

If you enjoyed this book, you might also enjoy:

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