

Breed History



ARABIAN
HORSE ASSOCIATION

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Discover Leg Up Arabian Horse Association

Lesson Plan

1. Arabian Horses—An Ancient History

- A. Before the dawn of recorded history, four species of horse roamed the earth. Only one of these species, *Equus agilis*, exists in its pure state today as the Arabian horse. Arabian horses are considered the oldest pure breed in the world!
- B. The Arabian horse was clearly portrayed on the walls of limestone caves along with other animals of the hunt between 25,000 and

A horse from the
“Panel of the
Chinese Horses”
from the Lascaux
Cave.



40,000 years ago. Early written documentation of the breed more than 3,000 years ago implies that the Arabian horse is the same today as it was then.

- C. Arabian horse bloodlines are traceable back to the desert, where outside breeds were never introduced. There, horses were bred by the Bedouins.
- D. Bedouins were the ancient nomadic tribes of the Arabian deserts. They lived in tents, moved often, and warred frequently. These people bred Arabian horses to carry them on long treks through the desert as well as on quick invasions into enemy camps. Their horses were their most treasured possessions. They received the best food and water, and at times even slept in the tents with the families.



E. How did this culture affect the traits of the present day Arabian horse? Soundness and stamina were necessary to withstand the harsh desert conditions and demanding lifestyle. Thus, only the very best, most durable stock was bred, and the modern Arabian horse is renowned for its soundness, endurance, and longevity. Loyalty and a desire to please was also a prized trait selected in the best breeding stock. Today, the Arabian horse still has a strong bond with people. In fact, the Arabian horse's true affection for humans can be observed during most interactions with people.

F. Many Arabian people were followers of the religion of Islam, and they believed the teachings of a seventh century prophet named Mohammed. He told his people the horse was a gift from Allah, and the Islamic people revered their horse. Mohammed told his followers to increase their herds to help them spread the word of their religion.

2. How Did Arabian Horses Get to Europe?

Religion Played a Huge Part!

- A. As a result of Mohammed's teachings, more Arabian horses were bred and used to help spread the word of Islam. From the back of their magnificent horses, the Arabian people conquered countries as far away as North Africa, the Mediterranean, Spain, and China! The Arabian horse was proven as the mount of choice for warriors.
- B. During the Crusades of the Middle Ages, Christians traveled east into Arabia to spread their own religion. When Crusaders returned to their homes in Europe, they brought back Arabian horses. This helped further spread Arabian horse bloodlines.

3. Arabian Horses Gain Popularity in Europe

- A. In the sixteenth century the use of firearms began to make heavy armor obsolete. It became less important to have huge horses capable of carrying heavy loads of armor and more important for horses to be fast and agile. The Arabian horse filled that need and was sought after for breeding programs in Europe.
- B. Arabian horse breeding programs gained special popularity in England where Arabian horses were used to found, or start, the Thoroughbred breed. They also were imported into Europe to found Arabian horse bloodlines and breeding programs that still exist today.



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4. Arabian Horses in Early America

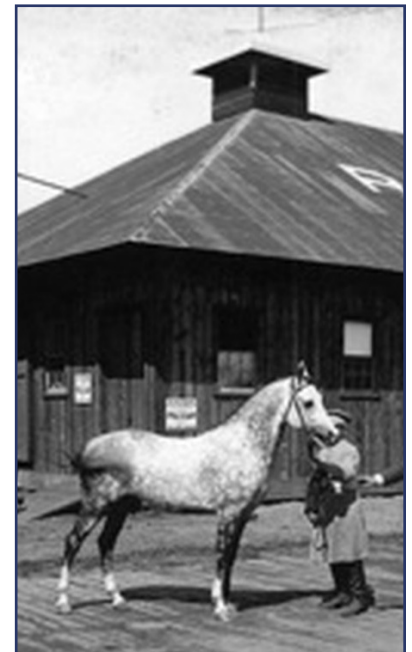


Ulysses S. Grant and his beloved Arabian horse.

- A. Arabian horses have a very long history in the United States, even dating back to Colonial America! The first Arabian stallion was imported to Virginia in 1725. In fact, the first President of the United States of America, George Washington, rode an Arabian horse.
- B. The first significant breeder in the United States was A. Keene Richard, who imported stallions and mares from the desert in the 1850s. Unfortunately, his breeding herd did not survive the Civil War.
- C. A few years after the Civil War ended, General Ulysses S. Grant visited the Sultan of Turkey. He was presented with two stallions named Leopard and Linden Tree, from the Sultan's stable. Leopard eventually was owned by Randolph Huntington, who also imported two mares and two stallions from England in 1888. Huntington's was the first long-term purebred Arabian horse breeding program in the U.S.

5. Popularity for Arabian Horses in the U.S.

- A. Who would have thought a fair could lead to the rise of the Arabian horse in the U.S? The Chicago Worlds Fair of 1893 invited every country in the world to display its homeland treasures. Turkey chose to exhibit 45 Arabian horses, which drew a great deal of attention to the breed.
- B. Importing Arabian horses into the United States then grew in popularity, resulting in a purebred registry a few years later. Two horses exhibited at the Chicago Worlds Fair eventually became numbers 1 and 2 in that registry. The mare Nejdme is No. 1 and the stallion Obeyran is No. 2.
- C. Arabians were used extensively in the United States Army's cavalry program, call the U.S. Remount Service.
 - i. By 1925 the United States Army recognized that Arabian horses were superior endurance athletes, and that they were well-suited as cavalry horses.
 - ii. Thus began a breeding program featuring Arabian horses and crossing them with other breeds
 - iii. The cavalry's breeding program was aided by donations of numerous purebred horses from the directors of the Arabian registry.
 - iv. In the 1940s, when the U.S. Remount Service disposed of its horse operations, the records were used to help form a new half-Arabian registry. That registry was the International Arabian Horse Association and is now part of the Arabian Horse Association.



Calisphere: One of the horses of the Russian Emperor, World's Fair Chicago.1983



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6. Arabian Registration Information

- A. The Arabian Horse Registry of America was formed in 1908 and registered purebred Arabian horses.
- B. The International Arabian Horse Association (IAHA) was formed in 1950 and registered Half-Arabian and Anglo-Arabian horses. IAHA also provided recognized competitions and involvement programs for Arabians, Half-Arabians, and Anglo-Arabians.
- C. These two associations merged in 2002 and now form the Arabian Horse Association; this association is a full-service breed association and registry for owners of Arabian, Half-Arabian, and Anglo-Arabian horses.



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Famous People on Arabian Horses!

Many famous figures and legendary horsemen have chosen the Arabian horse as their most prized mount. This is why the Arabian horse has been viewed throughout history as “The Gift of Kings”!

Alexander the Great reshaped the Greek Empire in the 4th century with his military knowledge and daring. Bucephalus, an Arabian horse, was his favorite horse! Bucephalus (whose name meant “oxhead”) was difficult initially for other people to train, but Alexander understood the big horse was simply afraid of his own shadow and turned him into the sun. Through long years of service, Bucephalus was a loyal mount and Alexander honored him by naming a city after him.



Alexander the Great on Bucephalus



Genghis Khan is usually portrayed on horseback

Genghis Khan was a Mongolian ruler who conquered most of Asia in the 12th and 13th centuries. He and his troops used “ponies”, believed by some to be Arabian horses, as the ultimate war vehicle. Genghis Khan’s armies were legendary warriors, largely because of their skills on horseback, which allowed them to launch surprise attacks and use their weapons accurately while mounted. One of his commanders stated “If the horse dies, I die; if it lives, I survive.”

George Washington the Revolutionary War General and first President of the United States, greatly admired the Arabian stallion Ranger (also known as Lindsay’s Arabian), and used the stud’s offspring for his own mounts as well as the horses which pulled Mrs. Washington’s carriage.

Ulysses S. Grant commanded troops in the Civil War and was also President of the United States. He was widely regarded as a superior horseman. On a trip to Turkey in 1878, he visited the Sultan’s stables. There he admired and was subsequently given two grey Arabian stallions named Leopard and Linden Tree.



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Arabian horses have a place at your breakfast table!

W.K. Kellogg, who made his fortune in breakfast cereals, loved Arabian horses! His Kellogg Ranch imported 14 horses from England in the 1920s and became an important Arabian horse breeding operation. Mr. Kellogg also served as a director of the Arabian Horse Registry of America, and his ranch donated horses to strengthen the U.S. Cavalry breeding program. The Kelloggs eventually donated the Kellogg Ranch to California State Polytechnic University in Pomona which still has an Arabian breeding program today.



WK Kellog

The Arabian horse is the stuff of legends

Tales of the beautiful Arabian horse can be found throughout written and oral history, especially in the Middle East. Some of these stories take on a mythic or surreal quality, and illustrate the belief that the horses were a gift from Allah. Enjoy this traditional Arabian horse legend!

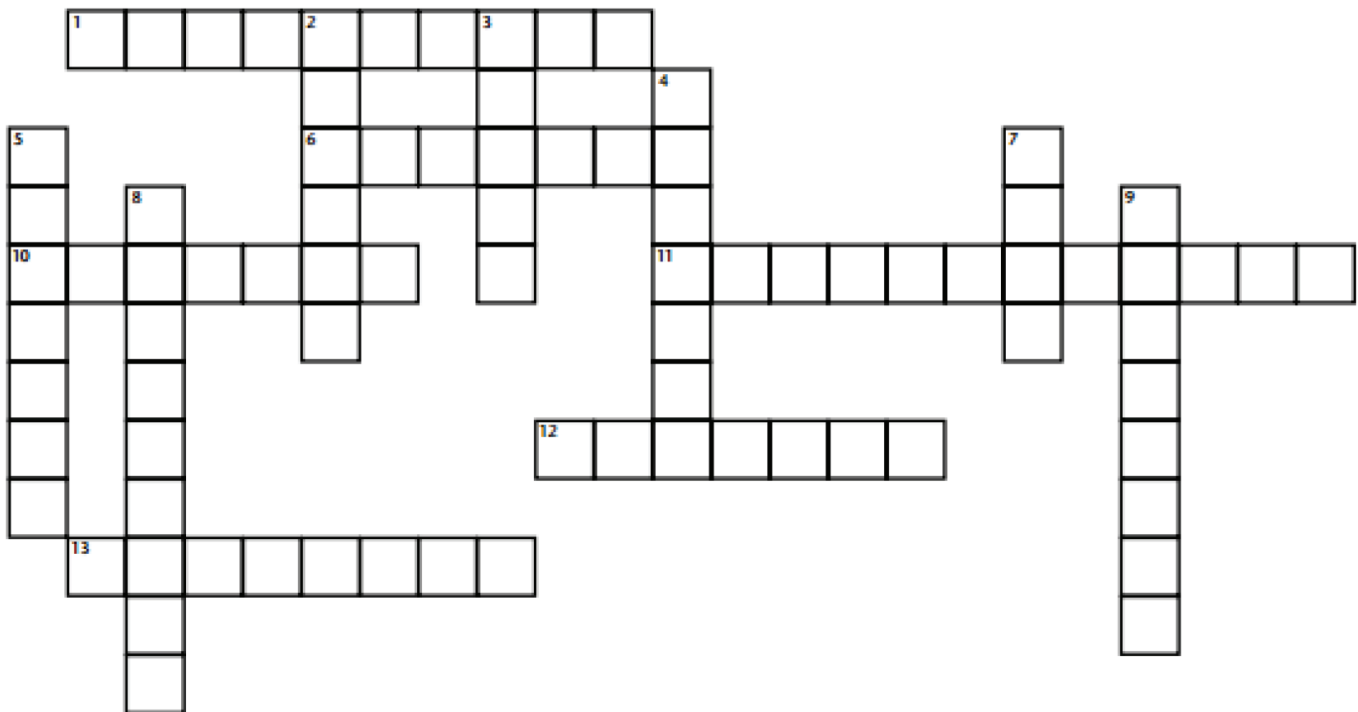
The Legend of the Sixth Sense of the Mare

The wild mare of Arabia was an ultimate achievement of nature, a mature and perfect creature, according to the Bedouins. The gift of an intelligent spirit was bestowed upon the first mare and an intuitive soul to dwell within her beautiful, strong, and symmetrical body. Psychic powers of her animal spirit were gifts of God, but her conscious mind developed through her intimate human association.

The Arabs believe that psychic power is never transmitted through stallions, though they possess it much as the mares. An Arabian sire communicates physical qualities and nervous energies, but never the elements of the mind and soul, which are outside of the domain of physical laws, and which were a spiritual gift to the first mare—Ishmael's mare—who, the Arabs insist, was not only a special, but a twofold creation of God. She was brought into existence in this world with an image of herself in her own womb; a son who was only to serve later as a means of helping to reproduce her semblance on this earth. A perfectly developed male was born in Ishmael's tent in the morning of her creation in the desert. For this supernatural reason, the mare is always considered supremely important among the Bedouins. A Stallion can take only secondary place.



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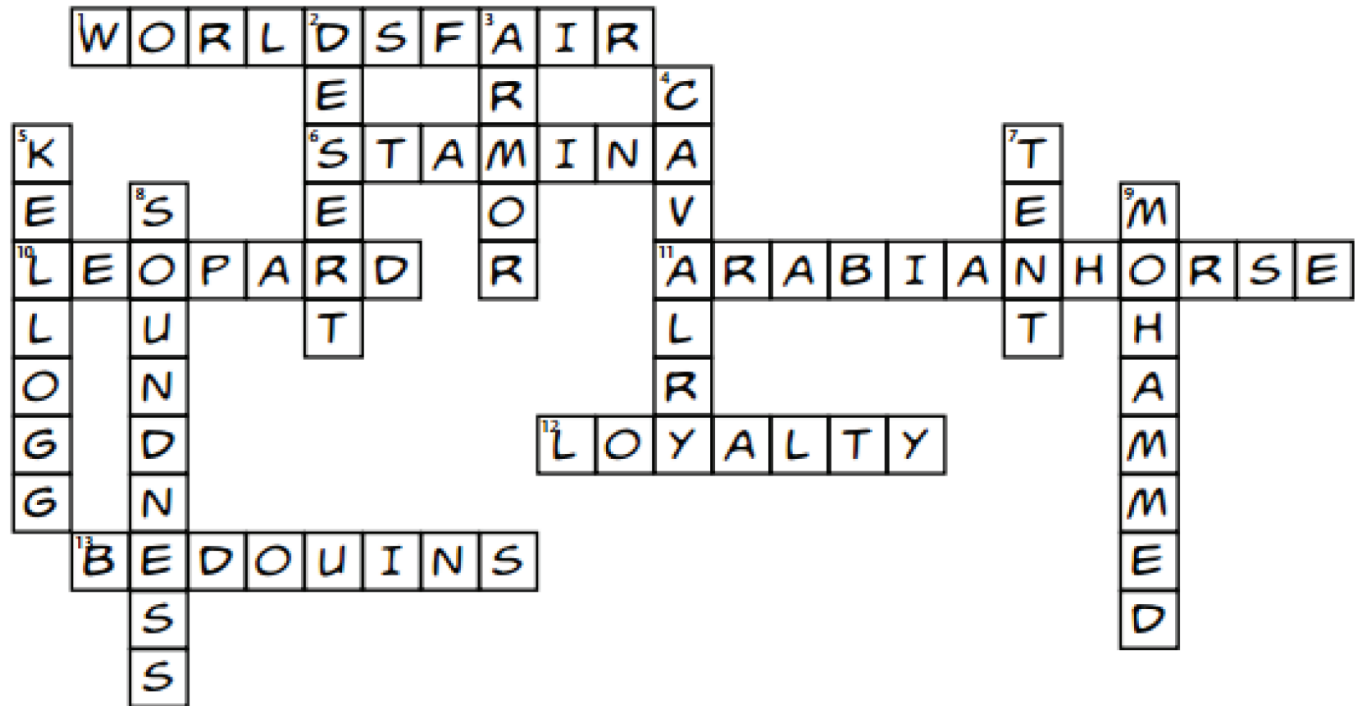
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- 6. Trait needed for long desert treks
- 10. Stallion from first long-term Arabian breeding program in U.S.
- 11. Oldest pure breed
- 12. Prized trait in ancient Arabian horses
- 13. Nomadic desert people

DOWN

- 2. Trace Arabian horse bloodlines here
- 3. Worn in battle
- 4. Used Arabian horses in military breeding program
- 5. Breakfast baron and Arabian horse breeder
- 7. Sleeping place of Arabian horse
- 8. Important Arabian horse quality
- 9. Encouraged breeding of Arabian horses for religious purposes



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