The horse
from Arabia to Royal Ascot
24 May – 30 September 2012

Teachers’ resources
for Key Stages 1 and 2
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Using the exhibition

Entrance to the exhibition is free for school groups. All visiting groups must pre-book through the British Museum Ticket Desk.

In advance
• Use some of the ideas for pre-visit activities in the classroom.
• Use the PowerPoint presentation and the information on the exhibition briefing sheet to familiarise students and accompanying adults with the exhibition.
• Select which activity sheets you will use with the students in the exhibition and go through the sheets with the students and accompanying adults.
• Decide on a follow-up activity and go through this with the students and accompanying adults to ensure they gather the necessary information from the exhibition to support work back in the classroom.
• Decide on an additional ‘big question’ for the students to think about as they go round the exhibition (see page 6).

On the day
• Divide the class into small groups, with an adult assigned to each group, for working in the exhibition.
• Give each adult a free exhibition guide – available at the exhibition entrance.
• Your visit will take place alongside the general public. Please remind students to behave calmly and politely.
• Photography is not allowed within the exhibition space but students may take photos in the Museum’s permanent galleries.

Afterwards
• Discuss the students’ thoughts and responses to the exhibition.
• Apply information gathered in the exhibition to the relevant follow-up activity.
• Revisit any preparation resources, such as the PowerPoint presentation, which support follow-up activities.
Key exhibition learning outcomes

Horses were first domesticated about 5,000 years ago on the steppe.

Horses were important in the success of early Middle Eastern rulers and helped to shape society in this area.

Horses in the Middle East were well known for their strength, speed and spirit.

The finest horses have always been associated with royalty in the Middle East and beyond.

The Arabian horse is a very distinctive breed. It is well known for its endurance, beauty and spirit and features in Arabian culture.

The introduction of Arabian horses to Britain in the 1700s helped to create the Thoroughbred breed in Britain and transformed the world of racing.

The Arabian is the endurance athlete of the equestrian world.
Exhibition briefing sheet for adults and older students

Each section of the exhibition explains a different aspect of the history of the horse. Here is some key information for each section.

The horse in the Middle East and beyond
Horses were domesticated about 5,000 years ago and played a role in the development of civilisation in the Middle East and elsewhere. From the 1600s Arabian horses were imported to Europe.

Before the horse
Before horses were domesticated, people used asses and donkeys to pull vehicles. These animals were fast but difficult to control. Early chariots were high-status items fit for the gods and rulers, and were also used as weapons of war.

Horses in the early Middle East
Horses were domesticated on the Eurasian grasslands, probably in modern Kazakhstan. They were faster than donkeys and easier to control. Early horses pulled chariots and were given as gifts. By 1000 BC riding was more widespread.

Age of empires
Between 1000 BC and AD 600, a series of empires emerged in the Middle East. Horses were used in battle and for communicating across the vast empires.

Horses in the Islamic world
Horses are prized in the Islamic world and feature in early Arabic poems, stories and art. In medieval times horses were used in battle, for hunting and for sports. The Arabian horse has large eyes, concave nose, arched neck and a high-set tail.

The horse in Arabia
The Arabian horse, the saluki (a hunting dog) and the falcon are central to Arabian culture. Most modern purebred Arabians are descended from horses imported and bred by Lady Anne Blunt in the late 1800s in Sussex.

From the Middle East to Britain
The first Arabian horses in Britain may have been diplomatic gifts or won in battle. They were crossed with British horses to create new types of horse for hunting, racing and warfare. Horses of all kinds continued to be widely used in Britain for transport, agriculture, industry and warfare until the early 1930s.
Exhibition activities

Big question
You may find it useful to set a ‘big question’ for the students to consider and discuss as they go round the exhibition. For example:

• What was the most interesting object in the exhibition?
• What did I learn about horses that I did not know before?
• What sources of evidence does the exhibition include and how useful did I find them?
• What else would I put in the exhibition to make it more interesting/informative?

Exhibition activity sheets
• Organise the students into small groups, each with an accompanying adult.
• Provide each accompanying adult with an exhibition briefing sheet and a copy of the exhibition activity sheet for each student.
• The sheets are designed to be photocopied as four separate sheets of A4, two sheets of A3 with the two sheets side by side or a double sided piece of A3 folded to make a horse booklet.
• You can use whichever of the sheets you think will best support your students in the exhibition or create your own sheets based on those in these resources.
• The sheets include some areas for the students to fill in – ticking, key words and drawing – but are also designed to encourage group discussion without the need to write individual answers.
• Remind accompanying adults about any objects which you will be using for follow-up work so that they can ensure students engage with these in the exhibition.
• Accompanying adults should feel free to encourage discussion about the objects, spend more time at objects which particularly interest the students and share things they find out as they go round.
Exhibition activities

Before you start looking at the exhibition share three things you already know or think about horses with your group.

1

2

3

At the end of the exhibition think about what you found out and tell your group one thing you learnt about horses.

As you go round the exhibition keep an eye out for the horses. Add a tick to the correct box each time you see one:

• standing still

• running

• carrying somebody on their back

• pulling something behind them

As well as horses you will see other animals in this exhibition. Keep an eye open and see if you can spot any of these animals as you go round.

☐ horse

☐ donkey

☐ camel

☐ falcon

☐ dog (saluki hound)
Exhibition activities

‘Tack’ is a word used for all the equipment worn by horses when they are working with humans.

Each time you find a piece of tack:

• practise saying the name
• look at the diagram to check where it goes on the horse
• discover how it helps the rider by looking at the information box

Tick them off as you find them.

- [ ] saddle
- [ ] cheek-pieces
- [ ] girth
- [ ] bit
- [ ] stirrups
- [ ] ring
- [ ] reins

Saddle – a seat for a rider fastened to the horse’s back by a girth
Girth – a wide strap which holds the saddle in place
Stirrups – supports for the rider’s feet that hang down from the saddle
Bit – a small piece of metal placed in the horses’ mouth to help control the horse
Cheek-pieces – the decorative pieces on each end of the bit
Reins – long straps attached to the bit which help the rider steer the horse
Ring – rings used to connect different straps together such as the rein rings

If a horse is pulling a cart or carriage it will need a harness.

Harness – the straps that attach a horse to a cart or carriage
Harness pieces – decorative pieces such as bells which hang on the harness
Exhibition activities

You will see written descriptions and poems about horses. As you go round the exhibition collect some words which describe the horses you see. There are three in the box below to start you off. How many more can you add?

Fast
Mane
Neigh

You can use these words to help you write a horse poem back at school.

Arabian horses often appear in paintings. Choose one of the objects or paintings in the exhibition to help you draw your own horse picture in the frame below.
Exhibition activities

*The Derby Day* by William Powell Frith

Find this painting:

Here is some information about the painting.

The painting shows people at a horse race called the Derby.

The Derby takes place once a year at Epsom racecourse in Surrey.

The painting shows Derby Day in 1856 during Victorian times.

As well as the horse race there were musicians and acrobats to entertain the crowd.

There was food and drink to buy and some people would bring a picnic.

Look carefully at the picture and answer some of these questions with your group.

- Describe one thing you can see happening in the scene.
- Choose one of the people in the scene and say what they may be thinking.
- Imagine you were in the scene. Say something you may see, hear, smell or feel.
- Imagine you were in the scene. What would you want to do next?
- Look at the clothing. Choose one person and describe what they are wearing.
- Find the picnic being laid out. What would you have in your picnic?
Classroom activities

There is a PowerPoint presentation relating directly to the exhibition available at britishmuseum.org/horse

Supporting information for these images is in the Notes section of each slide.

Below you will find a list of suggestions for classroom activities which you can use before or after the exhibition as either preparatory or follow-up work.

The exhibition is an excellent starting point for single-subject and cross-curricular work in a number of areas:

- History: sources of evidence, chronology, communicating findings, historical figures
- Geography: countries of the world
- Citizenship: animal welfare
- Art and Design: representations of horses
- CTD: models with movement
- Literacy: instructions, non-chronological writing, labels

The following is a list of suggested activities which can be undertaken in the classroom to support a visit to the exhibition as either preparatory or follow-up work.

- Look at the PowerPoint presentation to provide the students with an idea of the type of objects they will see in the exhibition.
- Look at horse objects at the Explore section of britishmuseum.org
- Look at a world map to identify different regions of the world mentioned in the exhibition as part of the history of the horse, e.g. Iran, Turkey, Iraq, Sudan, Kazakhstan, Syria, Arabia, Egypt and Britain.
Classroom activities: Lady Anne Blunt

Background information
Lady Anne Blunt features in the exhibition as a key figure in the history of modern Arabian horses. Below is some background information for teachers about her life with some activity sheets for students to use in the classroom based on this information and the objects in the exhibition.

Biography
Lady Anne Blunt was the granddaughter of the poet Lord Byron. In 1877 Lady Anne and her husband Wilfrid Blunt started travelling to the Middle East to buy Arabian horses. They chose the best Arabian horses they could find. Lady Anne wrote about their travels and also drew pictures of what they had seen in her letters to her daughter, in her journals and in books such as A Pilgrimage to Nejd. In 1878 the Blunts started the Crabbet Farm Stud in Sussex. In 1882 they bought the Sheykh Obeyd stud in Egypt so that they could also breed pure Arabians in the Middle East. Today their horses have many descendants living around the world. In 1915 Lady Anne decided to move to her Egyptian stud permanently and she left the running of the Crabbet estate to her only child Judith.

Timeline

22 September 1837  Lady Anne Isabella Noel-King born
8 June 1869       Married Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and became known as Lady Anne Blunt
6 February 1873    Birth of Judith Anne Dorothea Blunt, Anne’s only child
1877               Lady Anne and Wilfrid travel to the Middle East to buy Arabian horses
2 July 1878        Lady Anne and Wilfrid start the Crabbet Park Stud in Sussex to breed Arabian horses
1882               Lady Anne and Wilfrid buy property at Sheykh Obeyd in Egypt
1906               Lady Anne and Wilfrid separate
October 1915       Lady Anne moves to her Egyptian stud permanently, leaving the running of the Crabbet estate to her daughter
15 December 1917   Lady Anne dies in Egypt
Activity sheet: My story about Lady Anne Blunt

Your students can use this activity sheet to create a life story for Lady Anne Blunt. Ask them to think of three events in the life of Lady Anne which they will record on the sheet. The events should be recorded in chronological order from the top to the bottom sheet. The square section of each box can be used to draw a picture of the event with the adjoining rectangular box used to write a sentence (or sentences) about the event shown in the picture. Encourage students to use chronological vocabulary appropriate to the National Curriculum level at which they are working in History. For example: first, next, then, finally, in 1872, in August 1882, 12 years later.

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<td>This is event 1 in 1872.</td>
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<td>This is event 3 12 years later.</td>
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Activity sheet: Lady Anne Blunt – the movie

The activity sheet can be used by students to plan out a storyboard for the key scenes in their story of Lady Anne Blunt. Each scene can be drawn and annotated with key words or speech bubbles. Students can construct the story board in chronological order. This sheet has 9 boxes for 9 scenes – you may decide to ask the students to create fewer scenes than this or you may divide the class into different groups each creating a storyboard for the beginning, middle and end of her life which are then combined to create a complete biography. Individual scenes can be used as inspiration for creating a frozen tableau or students can work in small groups to create a short drama presentation based on the storyboard they have created.

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Activity sheet: Lady Anne Blunt’s postcard

Ask your students to imagine that Lady Anne Blunt wants to send a postcard from Arabia back to her young daughter Judith in Britain. What type of image would Lady Anne like on her postcard? Perhaps she would have a picture of an Arabian horse, a landscape from Arabia, a picture of herself looking at horses. What would she want to say to Judith about her travels and what she is doing? Use the activity sheet to design a postcard and write a message.

Dear Judith,
Classroom activities: The Derby Day

Background information
The painting was painted by William Powell Firth. It took him two years to complete, from 1856 to 1858. When the painting was first put on display at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1858, it was so popular that a barrier had to be put up to keep back the crowds of people who wanted to look at it.

The painting includes three main incidents. On the left, a group of men in top hats watch the magician with his table magic. In the centre are an acrobat and his son. The little boy looks longingly at the picnic being laid out by a footman. To the right are carriages filled with racegoers. The finishing line and the grandstand can be seen in the background of the scene.

Here are a few ideas for classroom activities which use the painting as a starting point:

- Add some speech/thought bubbles to the scene.
- Choose a group of people and act out what they do next.
- Annotate the scene.
- Write a firsthand account of Derby Day – what would you see, hear, smell, feel?
- Send a postcard from Derby Day – don’t forget the Victorian stamp!
- Create a poster advertising Derby Day. Where is it? When is it? What will be happening? What can people do at the racecourse?
- Create a school sports day painting – what would you include?
- Draw yourself in Victorian clothing.
- Create your own picnic.
- Find Epsom on a map and plan your journey from school to Epsom. Remember in Victorian times most people would have travelled by train.
Classroom activities: Art and Design

You could ask the students to:

• make a small clay model of a horse

• use split pins to make a horse or dog with moving legs or a falcon with moving wings

• look at some paintings of horses as inspiration for creating a horse painting – it might show the student as the rider!

• design and make a chariot for a single horse or pair of horses to pull

• design a medal for the winner of a horse event at the 2012 Olympics

• look at some decorated horse equipment such as saddles, reins and blankets, and create a design for one of these pieces of equipment
Exhibition PowerPoint presentation

The images in the presentation can be used to introduce students to the types of objects they will encounter in the exhibition. The presentation can also be used as a source of images which can be used as starting points for follow-up activities back in the classroom. Individual images can be printed out for use during small group work.

The images included in the presentation are:
Further resources

The British Museum website
To investigate horse-related objects in the British Museum, visit britishmuseum.org and click on Explore where you can search the collection.

Book for children
Pocket Timeline of Islamic Civilizations by Nicholas Badcott (British Museum Press, 2009)

Books for adults
Horses: History, Myth, Art by Catherine Johns (British Museum Press, 2006)
The horse: from Arabia to Royal Ascot (exhibition catalogue) by John Curtis (British Museum Press, 2012)