

Riding Safely

Objective: Students will understand risks and horse safety by writing about horse-related incidents.

Concept: Making connections between horse-related incidents and repercussions of resulting tragedy will help students make the association between their action and the consequences of unsafe behavior.

Targeted Age: Middle to high school

ACTIVITY 1

Materials:

- ▶ Newspaper articles
- ▶ Computer with internet access

Find newspaper articles about injuries associated with horse riding, handling, grooming and transporting. The Christopher Reeves story is an easily identifiable case. Local stories about people the students may know will also make a big impact.

Ask students to identify:

- ▶ the age of the involved person
- ▶ situation leading to the incident
- ▶ prevention methods that could have made a difference in the results

Ask students to rewrite the story using a positive ending. Entitle the story something like "Horse-Related Tragedy Avoided by Quick Thinking Youth."

Q: Other than riding, what other ways can people be injured by horses?

A: Crushed while feeding; stepped on while grooming; knocked down while leading.

ACTIVITY 2

Conduct a contest where students write prevention articles, editorials or public service announcements (PSAs) stressing the importance of wearing proper personal protective equipment and safe techniques when riding. Have a group of local experts such as the veterinarian or horse trainers judge the entries. Submit the winners to the local paper or radio for publication.

Q: How can your writing influence others to safely work, ride and be around animals?

A: Identify the facts about animal injuries. Tell others about the risks associated with animals. Be persuasive when writing and speaking. Write PSAs that are concise, to the point and informative and will help others understand the importance of safety. Write to grab the reader's attention.

