

Horse in Myth and Legend



Name _____ Date _____

In this educational packet, students will learn about the way horses are portrayed in folklore, legends and myths. Students will also learn about the history of horses throughout different time periods and why the horse is important to many different groups of people.

This packet is intended for fourth grade students, to be completed individually or in groups.



For Teachers: Common Core Standards

Grade 4 Skills and Concepts – Drama/Theatre

Students will

- associate storytelling, myths, legends, or folktales they experience or perform with specific cultures (Native American, Appalachian, West African); describe how literature and oral tradition reflect the cultures
- associate folktales, legends, or myths they experience or perform with the Colonial American period in history; describe how literature and oral tradition reflect the Colonial American time period
- describe storytelling, myths, legends, or folktales of specific cultures using drama/theatre terminology



Legends and myths about horses have been around as long as horses have been around. Horses have been **domesticated** for 6,000 years. They have been a critical part in human life ever since. They help with hard labor, war and travel. Because horses are so strong and powerful they become the stars of legends, like the myth of the unicorn and pegasus. These legends were passed down from generation to generation, until they were written down. Legends can have some parts that are true, but most of the time they are make-believe.

Pegasus

The legend of Pegasus originates from Greece. Pegasus is the son of Medousa, the demon that had snakes for hair and turned anyone who looked at her to stone. Pegasus' father is Poseidon, the god of the ocean. Pegasus looks like a regular horse but has two large wings coming out of his back to help him fly. Pegasus flies up to the top of Mount Olympus, where Greek gods live, and becomes Zeus' horse. Zeus gave Pegasus his own **constellation** to reward him.



Pegasus at the spring, Apulian red-figure vase
C 4th B.C., Tampa Museum of Art

Unicorn

The myth of the unicorn portrays the creature as horse like with one long horn **protruding** from its forehead. Many different cultures have **variations** of unicorn creatures. In China, a myth tells us of an animal that looks like a dragon but has one horn called the qilin. The myths tells that the qilin sprung from the center of the earth. In Persia, they told stories of the Karkadann. The Karkadann has a horn like a unicorn but has a bad temper. Some believe that the Indian Rhinoceroses that live in the region are the **origin** of this legend.



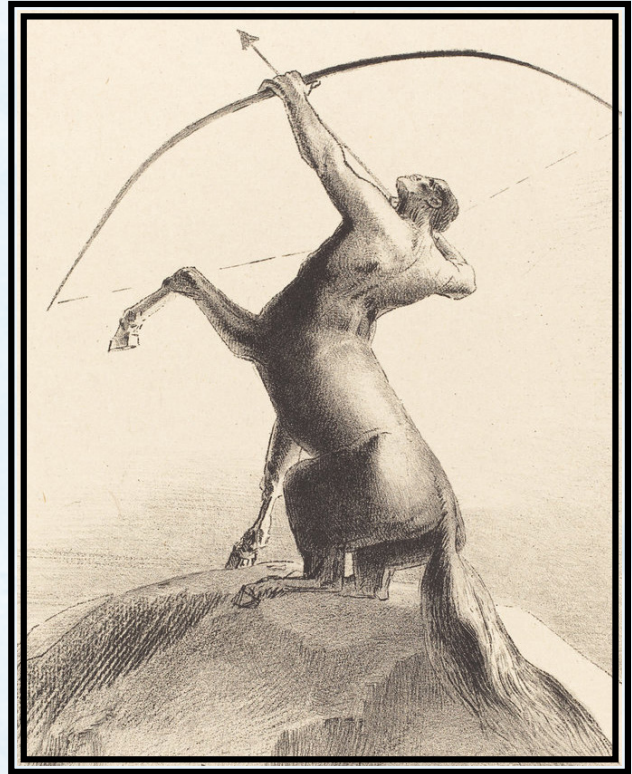
A seventeenth-century adaptation of a Persian manuscript dated 1460. The Karkadann waits patiently for the ring dove to alight on its horn.



Chinese Porcelain k'i-lin, taken from a mold of the K'ang Hsi period (1662-1773) and made during the late Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Centaur

Centaur's have the body of a horse with four legs and the upper body of a human. They appear in Greek mythology as violent and **savage**. They often show skill in **archery**. Zeus fathered all the centaurs. The centaurs live in the wilderness and make their homes in caves. A tribe of centaurs fought Hercules, the famed half-god half-man.



Centaur aiming at the Clouds

Did You Know...

Most of the creatures that are in this packet are called **hybrids**. These are animals that have a parts of their bodies from two or more different animals. The Pegasus is half bird, half horse, and the Hayagriva is half human and half horse.



Hayagriva



The Hayagriva is an Indian Hindu god with a horse head and a human body. He has very white skin with white clothing and four arms. He holds a book in one of his hands to show that he is a teacher and wise. People worship him for his wisdom and strength. His smile that he has in his paintings makes him seem very friendly and peaceful.

Hippocampus

The Hippocampus is a sea creature that has the head and front legs of a horse with the tail of a fish. The Greeks thought that the sea-horses we know today were the babies of the Hippocampus and were not full-grown yet. Hippocampus are the size of an adult horse and sometimes have wings as well. These creatures pull Poseidon's chariot because he was the god of the ocean.



Vocabulary

archery

The sport or practice of shooting with a bow and arrow

constellation

a group of stars in the sky that is thought to look like, and is named after, an animal, object, or person

domesticated

an animal that is tame

hybrids

something that is formed by combining two or more things

origin

the place that a person or thing comes from

protruding

to be sticking out

savage

very cruel or violent

variations

something that is similar to something else but also different in some way



Drama

With a partner, write a short dialogue between Pegasus and Zeus in which Zeus is welcoming Pegasus to Mount Olympus. Is Pegasus happy about being in Mount Olympus? What is Pegasus going to miss about being on the ground? Is Zeus going to ride Pegasus in battles? Are the two going to get along together? Act out your dialogue with your partner in front of your class.

Art

Most of the animals in this packet have been hybrid creatures. This is a creature that is a mix of two or more different animals. On the next page, create your own hybrid creature. The animal needs to have one body part that is from a horse. Create a name for your new hybrid animal.

Example:



Name _____

Date _____

My Creature's Name Is:



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