

# Equine Unveiled

Students will explore how the horse has elevated the historical esteem society and cultures hold for important figures in national and state history.



Engage!

Play a round of Hero Statue where students assume the stance and position of super heroes that the caller announces. “Batman has just defeated the Joker!” “Spiderman swings from balcony to save a man from falling!” Have fun and laugh a lot!

Ask students why statues are made of certain people? What artistic tricks does the sculptor use to make a person seem heroic or immortal? Where are statues placed? Is the placement important?



Explore!

Take the students on a tour of the stables to meet each horse. Look at saddles and tack. Look at the tools needed to keep horses clean and groomed. Equestrian artists and sculptors must have a great deal of knowledge about saddlery and how horses are groomed for particular events or duties.

Inspect pastures and fields, trails and paths. Look at horses as they graze, walk, and stand alert. Orient students to the cardinal directions - North, East, South, and West. Where does the sun rise and set here? Think about how equestrian artists use light and shadow. Where on the horizon is Washington D.C.? Which direction does the city lie in relation to the stables? Why? Fun Fact! Washington D.C. Contains the largest collection of equestrian statues in the country - more than 30 at last count!

Can students think of who among prominent Americans might be found in Washington D.C. mounted on horses?

Explain

Horses are powerful animals. What attributes do horses possess that give them actual and perceived power? Accept all answers. Introduce students to your equine educator and review rules for behavior around horses. Allow students to run their hands over muscles and mane. Give them an opportunity to look at the horses head, face, eyes, nostrils, and jaw. What about the feature of the horse conveys power and grace?

Show students two examples of equine sculpture that can be found in or near Washington D.C. Look at how the horse is portrayed in relation to the person associated with it. How does the portrayal of the horse emphasize the importance of the person?



“Stonewall Jackson on Sorrel”

Joseph Polia

Manassas National Battlefield



“Abe and Old Bob”

Ivan Schwartz

President Lincoln’s Cottage

Have students compare the statues to the horse in front of them. Which of the two is more accurate? What would be the purpose of distorting the form of the horse? Imagine the unveiling of each of the statues at the public ceremonies. Stonewall Jackson astride his battle horse Little Sorrel was unveiled in 1938. Lincoln standing next to Old Bob was unveiled in 2008. Compare these periods in American political and social history. Why is the equine statue such a powerful representation of our times?

## Elaborate

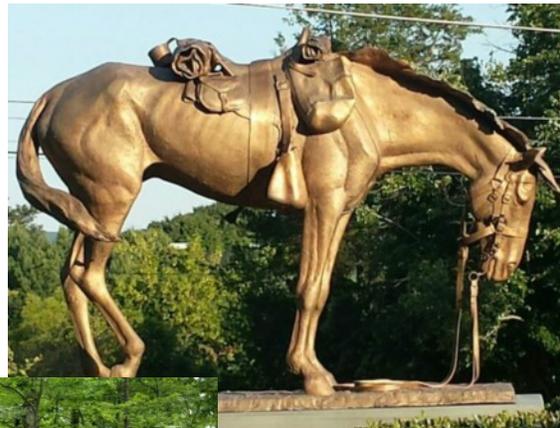
Invite students to construct an equine sculpture with a friend or individually if they prefer. Provide your artists with craft sticks (for leg supports) and clay or play dough. The equine educator, your live horse model, will stay throughout the session and provide students with inspiration and guidance!

Students may want to add a human to their equine sculpture. Who will it be? How will the horse reflect the character or achievements of the human?

Some artists may want to make the horse the hero! Have fun telling tales of famous race horses or war horses that have their own statues. If possible, hang pictures of equine statues that honor a particular horse.



Secretariat



War Mule



Sergeant Reckless

## Evaluate

Take pictures of the students with their sculptures to send to their teacher via email. Celebrate with a gallery walk! Have students describe how the live horse model helped them sculpt their work. What did they learn about the living horse in the process? What did they learn about equine art that helps us understand events and people in an historical context?