



Mainly Manes

Students will be able to braid and weave a horse's mane using basic fiber arts techniques.

Engage!

Lay a long tangled rope on the ground. Make sure its full of knots and twists - a real mess! Invite students to grab hold of a section of open rope and DON'T LET GO as they try to untangle the knot. Students will need to step through loops, twist and turn, and wiggle through the maze. As students work through the puzzle, ask them why it is important to keep a horse's mane and tail in good shape. Why is it important to take care of hair at all? What happens when we don't?

Explore!

Lead students on a tour of the stable and meet the horses. Show students the tools needed to groom horses tails and manes. Identify the brushes and combs and demonstrate their use on one of the horses.

Visit a pasture and look at horses as they graze. What purpose does the horse's mane and tail serve? As you walk, ask students how many animals they can think of that have manes or tails. How are they similar to or different from horse's manes and tail?

Explain

Return to the stable and visit again with the horses. Do you have ribbons or awards to show? Explain to students that grooming is very important for special events. Students may have noticed horses in parades or drills that have had their manes and tails fixed beautifully. Horse grooming can be a fun way to prepare a horse for an event.

Elaborate

Invite students to try their hand at braiding. Braiding boards can be made easily with a wire bail clipboard, tape, and yarn. Give each student a clipboard and 12 to 36 pre-cut lengths of yarn to knot or tie on the wire clip bail. Use tape to keep yarn from sliding across the bail if necessary. Ask students who already know how to braid to buddy with a student who would like to learn. Allow students ample time to master simple braiding technique. Be creative and have fun!



With a patient equine educator, allow students to work in teams to use combs and brushes to try their hand at braiding a mane. Demonstrate how to use grooming tools, with emphasis on hand position, pressure, and direction of comb. Offer students the scenario of preparing the horse(s) for an annual parade in the community. Extra staff or volunteers may be needed to monitor and help teams with their work. Offer a selection of bows and ribbons for decorative flair. Have fun!

Evaluate

Have staff or volunteers lead the horses on a stable parade for students. Celebrate their great work! Why is daily grooming so important? This is especially important when a horse has been enjoying a fun afternoon in a meadow or along a woods edge - or after an energetic roll in the mud!