



Lesson Five

Well Run versus Well Intentioned: The Measure of a Horse Rescue

- Content includes rescue and sanctuary challenges and successes: Status of horse rescue industry in U.S., examples of facility types, questions to ask before donating to a rescue or sanctuary, ways to assist rescues and sanctuaries, public entities that are accountable in dealing with unwanted horses

Teacher Guide and Resources:

Goals

1. Learner will develop critical thinking skills
2. Learner will use new information to adjust and extend personal knowledge base
3. Learner will develop communication skill through creating questions for and conducting an interview

Common Core State Standards

RIT.1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
RIT.4	Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
RIT.10	Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
W.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
W.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation
W.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
W.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research
W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
SL.1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively
SL.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate
5.NOB10	Perform operations with multi-digit whole numbers and find common factors and multiples
6.NS	Compute fluently with multi-digit numbers and find common factors and multiples

Activities for this lesson

Lesson Five Herd Time:

Exercise 1: Student will participate in developing list of interview questions for manager of rescue or sanctuary where they may volunteer.

Exercise 2: Student will find vocabulary words to complete crossword puzzle from clues and reading handout

Lesson Five Pasture Time:

Exercise 1: Student will use interview questions to explore volunteer opportunities at local rescue or sanctuary

Exercise 2: Volunteer some time to a horse rescue or sanctuary

Exercise 3: Plan a fundraiser to help a well-run horse rescue or sanctuary





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Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

Lesson Five

Background Information

When a horse becomes unwanted and its owner can no longer care for it, there are three primary ways the disposition of the animal can be handled: It can be sold, it can be given away (relinquished), or it can be euthanized. For many reasons owners may not be able to sell their unwanted horse, and may also be unwilling to euthanize the animal. In some cases giving the horse away as a donation to an individual or group that can use it works well for both the recipient and the owner. If the group receiving the horse is a non-profit registered with and recognized by the state and IRS as a charity (501c), the owner may benefit from the tax exempt status of that charity by being able to write-off the value of the donation. A number of types of organizations may be able to accept a donated horse; examples include both for-profit businesses and nonprofit charities:

- **Colleges and Universities** – Schools that have riding, breeding, and veterinary or animal research programs may accept horse donations for animals that meet their program specifications.
- **Leases** – If a horse can be used by someone able to care for the animal but unable to purchase it right away, a lease (an agreement to care for but not own) might be arranged, typically for a specific time period, often as a try-before-you buy program.
- **Mounted Police Units** – Police horses typically are used in controlling large crowds of people; these horses must be in good health and meet a variety of criteria to perform this special job.
- **Prison Programs** – Some prisons use an equine care and training program to help prisoners learn empathy, compassion and skills that may help them with employment once released from prison.
- **Retirement Facility** – Specializing in care of horses to the end of their life, these facilities frequently deal with older horses or those with debilitating injuries and often charge owners for the service.
- **Riding Academies** – If the unwanted horse could be useful as a school horse for riding lessons, a business that teaches riders may be willing to accept a donated horse.
- **Therapeutic Riding Centers** – These facilities, often organized as a nonprofit, frequently accept horses that meet their mission to work with riders with disabilities.
- **Sanctuaries** – Facilities that care for old or unusable horses to the end of life, these are typically nonprofits dependent on donations. The BLM runs sanctuaries referred to as Long Term Holding for unadopted wild horses and burros; these are dependent on government funding.
- **Horse Rescues** - Facilities that accept unwanted horses, often those that have been neglected, abandoned or abused; Horse rescues are typically involved with animal control or livestock inspectors or other law enforcement cases. This category includes both private rescues and nonprofits and is the subject of much focus in the issue of unwanted horses.
 - **Private rescues** are individuals, families, or small groups who rescue horses. They fund the rescue primarily out of their own pocket but may do some fundraising and get gifts from others who want to help. They are technically businesses but not registered charities.
 - **Nonprofit rescues** are businesses that are organized and recognized by the state and federal government as a charity (501c). Their bylaws and annual reports are subject to public accountability.





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Horse rescues and sanctuaries are two types of equine care businesses that usually deal exclusively with unwanted horses. Unfortunately the supply of unwanted horses has overwhelmed the **capacity** of these facilities. About 100,000 horses become unwanted in the United States each year. According to a 2010 survey by researchers at the University of California-Davis there are only 234 registered Equine Rescues and Sanctuaries in the US with a capacity to help about 13,400 horses a year. The estimate of non-profit tax exempt horse rescues range from 109 listed with the IRS to 432 on the American Horse Defense Fund (a large horse welfare organization). There are many more private horse rescues that missed being counted in these surveys but news reports indicate that they too struggle. Most of these facilities can house only 10-20 horses at one time; and according to the survey, between 2006 and 2008 only 3 of 4 horses that were taken in by the rescues could be **rehomed** through sale or **adoption**. This means many rescues must turn away many requests to take on more horses. The Unwanted Horse Coalition's 2009 survey revealed that 39% of rescues are at maximum **capacity** and another 30% are at near-capacity. On average, rescues are turning away 38% of horses brought to them. These numbers have been substantiated by researchers at the University of California-Davis who found similar numbers in their survey.

Some rescues specialize in **retraining** the unwanted horses for a second career; for example a racehorse may be retrained to be a hunt horse, or a show horse to a school horse, or an unschooled youngster to be a reliable pleasure horse. Another typical goal of horse rescues is the **rehabilitation** of those rescued horses that arrive with injuries, malnutrition, an absence of training, or illness. These rescues require a lot of skill and knowledge to bring horses back to health. The big goal of most horse rescues is to place the rescued horse in a good home where they will be taken care of properly and used.

Some horse rescues have been a strong voice advocating for a ban on the processing of horses for food, partnering with animal rights groups like the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). The HSUS is an animal rights lobbying group and should not be confused with your local Humane Society – which is most likely doing the animal welfare work of the community and reflecting the values their community holds.

Some horse rescues buy only horses that are being sold in auctions and are believed to otherwise be destined for processing as food. Some horse rescues do not take horses that are **relinquished** directly by their owners, saving their facility's capacity for abused or neglected horses **seized** by local authorities such as **animal control**, brand inspectors, **local humane society**, or law enforcement. Horse rescues and sanctuaries are an important part of the answer to unwanted horses in the United States; however they are not a panacea.

Some horse rescues have even been cited¹ with animal abuse and neglect; this may happen when a well-intentioned person becomes overwhelmed with an operation that is too cash strapped and short of help to properly care for the horses they attempted to rescue. This business may also be attractive to a personality type known as an animal **hoarder**, a person who takes in more animals than they can properly care for and cannot find appropriate new homes for them or bring themselves to have the excess animals euthanized. Again this person typically has good intentions but cannot meet the demands for which they signed on.

To have a successful horse rescue the operators must be realistic. They must use their heads even when their hearts are pulling at them. They must ensure their capacity to care for the horses they accept and be able to make tough decisions to humanely euthanize those animals that cannot be made comfortable or that will never be safe to handle.





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Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

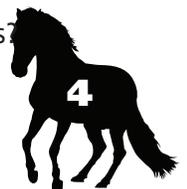
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Most horse rescues do a good job and work hard to care for the animals in their program. Well run rescues and sanctuaries have accomplished a lot of good to further reduce the number of unwanted horses. These organizations follow basic operating principles that include **policies** that balance facility resources against responsibilities; they establish the appropriate number of horses in their programs based on ability to provide food, care, training and maintenance. They typically need a lot of **volunteer** support; although many run entirely on volunteer manpower, some have paid staff. A well run horse rescue is likely to have a formal volunteer program complete with regular training sessions and a variety of volunteer assignments. Help doesn't have to be all about direct work with the horses, like mucking stalls and feeding, grooming, and exercising, or trailering a rescue to or from the facility; it can mean helping with paperwork, answering the phone, distributing promotional materials and more. Some horse rescues even foster out rescued horses to their volunteers until permanent homes can be found. Fostering may also be done with the continuing care provided at the rescue; in these cases an individual or group who may visit the horse and provide both physical care (brushing or riding) and monetary support. A one-time, monthly or semester-based donation may provide the donor(s) with fostering status. Horse rescues and sanctuaries work continuously on **fundraising** to ensure they have enough resources to care for these horses. Ideas to raise money for a rescue are as varied as the creativity of those planning the fundraiser.

Although AAEP has created guidelines for care at horse rescues, and several equine programs have voluntary programs to accredit or certify equine facilities, there is no trade association or regulatory agency for horse rescues and sanctuaries. Two states, NM and MD, have department of agriculture programs that inspect or register horse rescues and public equine facilities. New rescues and sanctuaries open every year, and unfortunately many existing rescues and sanctuaries must close. People who care about horses and want to see the size of the unwanted horse population decline would do well to volunteer to help a horse rescue or sanctuary.

To identify a responsible horse rescue or sanctuary consider this list of questions that the horse rescue owner or manager should be able to answer:

1. Why are you (the owner/manager) involved in rescue?
2. How long has this rescue been in business?
3. What type of business is this (for-profit or nonprofit, Sole Proprietor, LLC, Partnership, Corporation)?
4. Do you follow operating guidelines such as "Care Guidelines for Rescue and Retirement Facilities" by the American Association of Equine Practitioners or any other guidelines?
5. Who is your veterinarian and who is your farrier?
6. How do you fund the rescue?
7. Do you apply for grants?
8. If yes, how many grants have you applied for? What grants have you been awarded?
9. How many hours a day are people working with the horses here?
10. Do the horses have turn-out on pasture to graze?
11. Where do your rescued horses come from?
12. How much growth has your rescue had in the past year? Since you began rescuing?
13. How many equines are adopted each year?
14. Are stallions left intact or do you geld them?
15. Does this rescue have written policies setting standards for adoption? Do you visit potential adopters' facilities?





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16. Does this rescue have post-adoption policies about breeding, reselling, or returning the animal?
17. How many adopted equines are returned to you every year?
18. Describe your horse experience.
19. Does this rescue use volunteers?
20. How old do you have to be to volunteer?
21. Do you have a formal training process for volunteers?
22. How many volunteers work at this horse rescue?
23. How much time do volunteers actually spend with the horses?
24. Can volunteers ride the rescue horses?
25. How long do you typically keep a horse?
26. What happens to horses that you cannot find an adoptive home for or horses you cannot make comfortable due to injury or illness?

Verify an organization's tax-exempt status, if stated. To find their registration, check at www.irs.gov or www.guidestar.org

Visit the facility and see for yourself the conditions in which the horse rescue or sanctuary maintains the horses. Are they safe and serviceable? Are the horses well cared for? Don't be too quick to judge the horse by his body condition – ask how long any thin or poor looking horses have been there.

More needs to be done--we need to collaborate and cooperate. If the interview process convinces you the rescue or sanctuary is doing a good job, find a way to pitch in. Helping the people who are working hands-on to find good homes for unwanted horses will help the industry tremendously to reduce this problem. Do what you can to stay informed and involved. Be a part of the solution.

"Founder of a horse rescue operation in Larimer County who is facing animal cruelty charges turned herself in to authorities." Source: Reporter Herald - Feb 1, 2008

Resources for further reading

American Association of Equine Practitioners. *Care guidelines for Equine Rescue and Retirement Facilities*, 2004.

Rosenthal, MS, Marie. *"Unwanted Horses: Rescue and Sanctuary Organizations Unable to Keep Up."* The Horse Article number #17070, Oct. 07, 2010

Unwanted Horse Coalition. *2009 Unwanted Horses Survey: Creating Advocates for Responsible Ownership*

U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Report to Committees of Congress on HORSE WELFARE: Action Needed to Address Unintended Consequences from Cessation of Domestic Slaughter* (GAO-11-228), Released June 2011

Williams, Dr. Jennifer. "The Current Status of Rescue", a presentation at AAEP Unwanted Horse Summit, Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society, Inc. Washington, D.C., April 2005





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Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

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Well Run versus Well Intentioned: The Measure of a Horse Rescue

1. Explain to students the format of the lesson

- a. Introduce the topic, horse rescues and sanctuaries
- b. Distribute Student Background handout (SB1-4) for students to use in completing the exercises.
- c. "Herd time" - Provide students with handouts and worksheets.
- d. "Pasture time" - Explain procedure for setting up visits and doing interviews.

5. What happens to unwanted horses

- a. 3 main options: Sell, Euthanize, Donate / **Relinquish**
- b. All three approaches can be difficult:
 - i. The owner may not be able to locate a buyer.
 - ii. Euthanasia may seem like the wrong thing to the owner for their horse.
 - iii. Organizations or businesses that take relinquished horses may be full or the offered horse not suit them.
- c. All three have advantages:
 - i. A sale generates income for the previous owner and may match the horse with a responsible owner with a good purpose for the horse.
 - ii. Euthanasia comes with finality that the owner is assured their animal will never suffer any neglect, misuse, pain or distress as may have been the case had its life continued.
 - iii. Relinquishing ownership offers the potential for a second career to the animal, and in some cases offers credit for a charitable donation on income taxes to the owner.

3. Who might take a usable unwanted horse?

- a. Colleges and Universities , Private Leases, Mounted Police Units, Prison Programs, Retirement Facilities, Riding Academies, Therapeutic Riding Centers, Sanctuaries, Horse Rescues. (**Private rescues or Nonprofit**)
- b. Ask the students if they can think of other places that might take an unwanted horse.
- c. Discuss the types of horses that might be used in these different programs and businesses.

4. The Horse Rescue and Sanctuary: the Business of Unwanted Horses

- a. The **horse rescue** and **sanctuary** operations deal mostly with unwanted horses.
- b. There are between 109 and 432 horse rescues and sanctuaries in the United States according to three sources including the internal revenue service, a University of CA – Davis National Survey, and American Horse Defense Fund (a large horse welfare organization).
- c. The rescues and sanctuaries can be **private rescues**, meaning that their owners are individuals, families or groups rather than public organizations, or they can be **nonprofit** charities, 501c with public accountability. Horse Rescues often house horses they anticipate can be rehabilitated or retrained and adopted or sold to responsible homes. Sanctuaries more commonly target old, ill, or lame horses that are expected to live their life at the facility, or at least spend a recovery period there.
- d. The Unwanted Horse surveys mentioned above showed that 69% of the identified rescues and sanctuaries were either at or near **capacity**. The University of California study estimates if all the rescues and sanctuaries in the US were full to capacity they could serve 13,400.





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- e. Remember how many horses each year are considered unwanted? About 100,000. Given the overall capacity of rescues and sanctuaries, ask students to do the quick math to calculate how many unwanted horses would need to find a different solution. (Give some type of recognition to the student who comes up with this answer first.) This means a lot of unwanted horses are turned away from rescues and sanctuaries because there is not enough space or money **capacity**—to care for them. What do you think happens to these unwanted horses? (Processing, neglect, abuse?)
 - f. Some horse rescues and sanctuaries are very active in lobbying for a ban on processing horses for food in the US and on transporting horses out of the US for that purpose; they partner with animal rights groups like the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)— which is not the parent organization for your local **humane society**. This ban will place additional strain on the resources the rescues and sanctuaries now have.
 - g. Most rescues have as a primary goal the job of **rehoming** their rescued animals. Some specialize in specific categories of horses for their efforts, like a specific breed or discipline, horses **seized** for abuse and neglect in legal actions by law enforcement, animal control, local humane societies, or brand inspectors. Some only buy horses at auction that they believe would otherwise go to plants for processing as food.
 - h. Collaborative efforts can succeed: One newer effort between a charitable organization and the Bureau of Land Management is the Mustang Heritage Foundation’s diligent work to make adoption of wild horses and burros more popular through programs like the Extreme Mustang Makeover and TIP – Trainer Incentive Program.
 - i. Fostering can work with a Rescue in the same way leasing does if an interested person can reach an agreement with the rescue or sanctuary to provide some support for a specific horse. This arrangement can also offer the supporter an opportunity to develop better horsemanship skills and build knowledge without the entire responsibility of ownership.
 - j. Horse rescues and sanctuaries are an important part of the solution to the issue of unwanted horses; they are not, however, a panacea (cure-all).
 - k. Good intentions may not be enough. Some horse rescues allow emotion to overrule rational behavior, leading to management over-committing limited resources. Often this results in neglect of the very horses pledged into the rescue’s care. This business may also be attractive to a personality type known as an animal **hoarder** – someone who takes in more animals than they have the ability to care for and who cannot let go of excess animals through **rehoming** or euthanasia. These people are well intentioned but unable to meet the demands of the responsibility they took on. To have a successful horse rescue the operators must be realistic. They must use their heads even when their hearts are pulling at them. They must ensure their capacity to care for the horses they accept and be able to make tough decisions to humanely euthanize those animals that cannot be made comfortable or that will never be safe to handle.
 - l. Well run rescues and sanctuaries typically have well thought-out plans, **policies**, and programs that help them maintain the facilities. They know their limits and work hard to provide proper care and a second chance for the animals they rescue. They are creative in the ways they develop resources to help unwanted horses.
 - m. These businesses typically rely heavily on volunteers. Ask the students to identify some jobs that volunteers at a horse rescue or sanctuary might do. Look at possibilities both for working directly with the horses and for helping with business work like promotion and fundraising.
- 4. Lending a hand – What should you know to help those with hands-on unwanted horses?**
- a. If solving the problem of unwanted horses is important why not look into what you can do yourself to help out?
- 5. Review the Student Exercises for Herd Time and Pasture Time (refer to student handouts)**
- a. Ask the students to start the Herd Time exercise #1 and complete as a group discussion.
 - b. Work through Herd Time crossword puzzle exercise #2 or if time does not allow, set the expectations for students to return the completed crossword.
 - c. Talk through how you want them to do the pasture exercise (Working together or separately? When and how will they report results?). You may want to make a list in advance of area rescues and sanctuaries they can contact and brief the managers or owners in advance to gain their cooperation.





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Answer Key - "Herd Time" Student Handouts

1. Lending a Hand: What You Should Know Before Signing Up

Instructions: "What do you want to know about horse rescues and sanctuaries? Create a list of 12 or more questions for an interview with a local horse rescue. Make sure you find out what the rescue does to have enough money to care for the horses they rescue. Find out what kind of business they are and if they need volunteers. A few sample questions have been provided to get you off to a good start."

Answers: To be considered a responsible horse rescue or sanctuary the owner or manager should be able to answer these questions:

1. Why are you (the owner/manager) involved in rescue?
2. How long has this rescue been in business?
3. What type of business is this (for-profit or nonprofit, Sole Proprietor, LLC, Partnership, Corporation)?
4. Do you follow operating guidelines such as "Care Guidelines for Rescue and Retirement Facilities" by the American Association of Equine Practitioners or any other guidelines?
5. Who is your veterinarian and who is your farrier?
6. How do you fund the rescue?
7. Do you apply for grants?
8. If yes, how many grants have you applied for? What grants have you been awarded?
9. How many hours a day are people working with the horses here?
10. Do the horses have turn-out on pasture to graze?
11. Where do your rescued horses come from?
12. How much growth has your rescue had in the past year? Since you began rescuing?
13. How many equines are adopted each year?
14. Are stallions left intact or do you geld them?
15. Does this rescue have written policies setting standards for adoption? Do you visit potential adopters' facilities?
16. Does this rescue have post-adoption policies about breeding, reselling, or returning the animal?
17. How many adopted equines are returned to you every year?
18. Describe your horse experience.
19. Does this rescue use volunteers?
20. How old do you have to be to volunteer?
21. Do you have a formal training process for volunteers?
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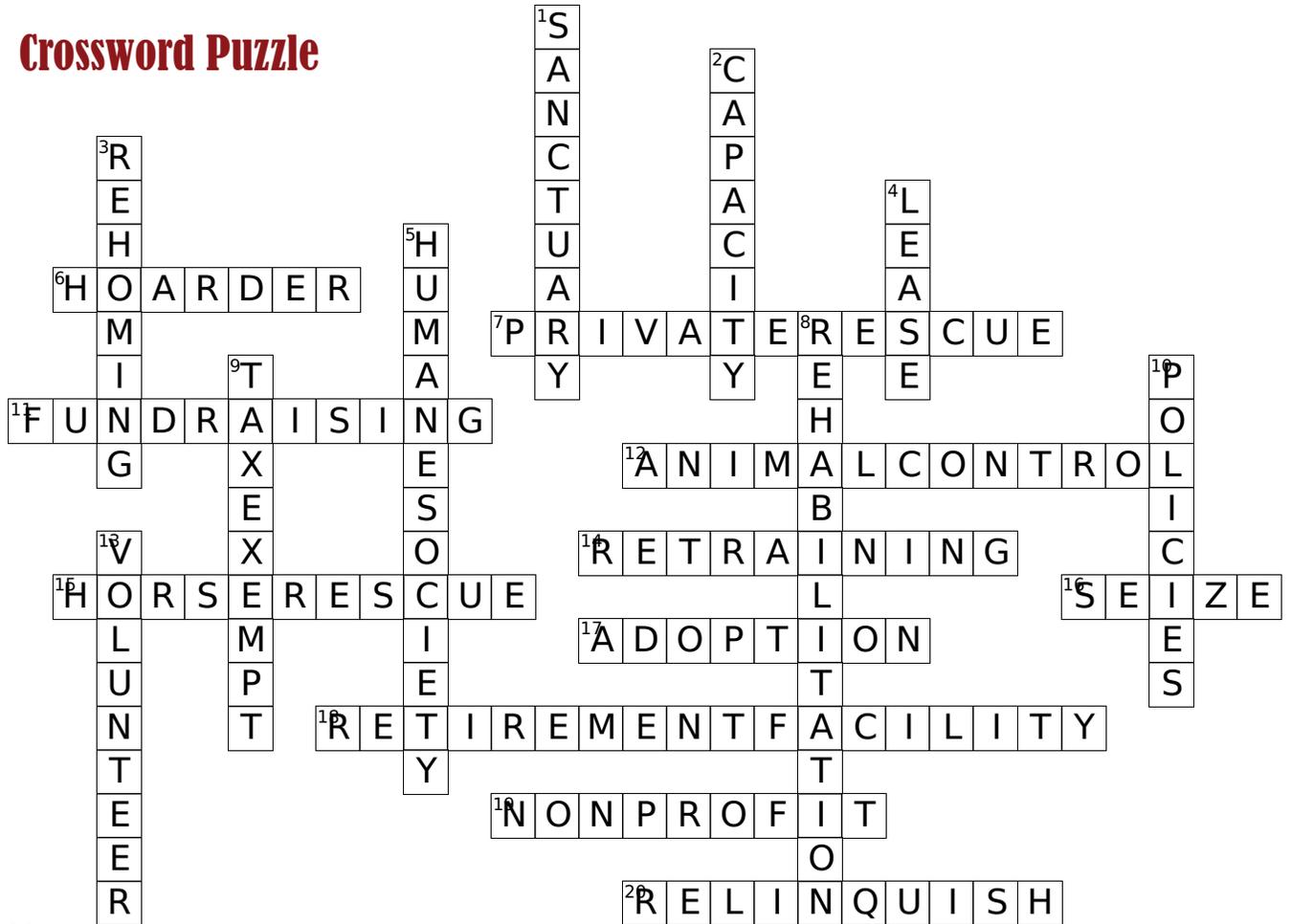


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Answer Key - "Herd Time" Student Handouts

2. Crossword Puzzle

Crossword created at www.puzzlemaker.com



ACROSS:

- 6 Person who takes in more animals than they can care for: Hoarder
- 7 Animal shelter owned by individual, not a corporation: Private Rescue
- 11 Activities that generate money: Fundraising
- 12 Local government agency responsible for enforcing regulations regarding pets and sometimes livestock: Animal Control
- 14 Preparing horse for second career: Retraining
- 15 Take in unwanted horses: Horse Rescue
- 16 Legal action to take animal from owner due to neglect or cruelty: Seize
- 17 Taking on ownership of a horse usually from a rescue: Adoption
- 18 Place to keep animals for remainder of life, usually for a fee: Retirement Facility
- 19 Charity classification 501-c with public accountability: Nonprofit
- 20 Donate, give away or surrender: Relinquish

DOWN:

- 1 Place to keep horse for remainder of life, usually charity: Sanctuary
- 2 Maximum number of animals the facility can maintain: Capacity
- 3 Placing a horse in a new, suitable home: Rehoming
- 4 Agreement to care for a horse without owning it: Lease
- 5 Local animal welfare organization: Humane Society
- 8 Manage care and training of animal to return to health and usability: Rehabilitation
- 9 When donation can be written off (deducted): Tax Exempt
- 10 Guidelines that provide direction for doing business: Policies
- 13 Donate time and energy: Volunteer

Note: Clues may have two words, no spaces.





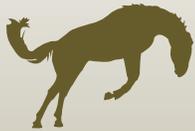
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Lessons about the Unwanted Horse: Lesson Five

Well Run versus Well Intentioned: The Measure of a Horse Rescue

Student Background Information



When a horse becomes unwanted and its owner can no longer care for it, there are three primary ways the owner can dispose of the horse: It can be sold, it can be **relinquished** (donated, or given away) or it can be euthanized. For many reasons owners may not be able to sell their unwanted horse and may be unwilling to euthanize it. In some cases giving the horse away to an individual or group that can use it works well for both the recipient and the owner.

A variety of organizations may be able to accept a relinquished horse; examples include both for-profit businesses and nonprofit (501c) charities:

- **Colleges and Universities** – Schools with riding, breeding, and veterinary or animal research programs may accept horse donations if the animals meet their program specifications.
- **Lease** – For someone able to care for and use the animal but unable to purchase it right away, a lease (an agreement to care for but not own) might be arranged, typically for a specific time, often as a try-before-you-buy program.
- **Mounted Police Unit** – Police horses typically are used in controlling large crowds of people; these horses must be in good health and meet a variety of criteria to perform this special job.
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- **Retirement Facility** – Specializing in care of horses to the end of their life, these facilities frequently deal with older horses or those with debilitating injuries and often charge owners for the service.
- **Riding Academy** – If the unwanted horse could be useful as a school horse for riding lessons, a riding academy (school) may be willing to accept a donated horse.
- **Therapeutic Riding Center** – These facilities may accept horses suitable for helping people with disabilities.
- **Sanctuary** – This type of facility offer homes for the remainder of life to old, ill, or lame horses. They typically are nonprofits dependent on donations. (The BLM runs sanctuaries referred to as Long Term Holding for wild horses and burros that are not adopted; these are dependent on government funding.)
- **Horse Rescue** - Facilities that accept unwanted horses, often those that have been neglected, abandoned or abused. Horse rescues are frequently involved with animal control, livestock inspectors, or other law enforcement agencies.



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There are two types of horse rescues:

- **Private rescues** are individuals, families, or small groups who rescue horses. They fund the rescue primarily out of their own pocket but may do some fundraising and get gifts from others who want to help. They are technically businesses but not registered charities.
- **Nonprofit rescues** are businesses that are organized and recognized by the state and federal government as a charity ("501c").

Horse rescues and **sanctuaries** are two types of equine care businesses that usually deal exclusively with unwanted horses. A 2010 University of California-Davis survey indicates that the total capacity of U.S. registered horse rescues and sanctuaries is only about 13,400 horses, yet unfortunately about 100,000 horses become unwanted in the United States each year. Most rescue facilities can house only 10-20 horses at one time. The Unwanted Horse Coalition's 2009 survey revealed that 39% of rescues are at maximum capacity and another 30% are at near-capacity. On average, rescues are turning away 38% of horses brought to them.

The big goal of most horse rescues is to **rehome** the rescued horse so it will continue to be taken care of properly and be used. Between 2006 and 2008, only three-quarters (or 10,500) of the horses that were taken in by the rescues could be rehomed through sale or **adoption**. With an estimated 100,000 horses becoming unwanted each year, that leaves 89,500 unwanted horses that will either be euthanized or suffer neglect and abuse.

Focusing on the Horses' Needs

Rescues sometimes focus on helping certain types of rescued animals. Some specialize in **retraining** the unwanted horses for a second career; for example, a racehorse may be retrained as a jumping horse, or a show horse as a trail horse. Many rescues **rehabilitate** horses that arrive with injuries, malnutrition, illness, or lack of training; it requires a lot of skill and knowledge to bring horses back to health. Some rescues do not take directly relinquished horses, saving their facility's capacity for abused or neglected horses **seized** by local authorities such as **animal control**, brand inspectors or law enforcement.

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Horse rescues and sanctuaries are an important part of the answer to unwanted horses in the United States; however they are not a panacea (cure-all).

Unfortunately, not all rescues are run wisely, and some have even been cited¹ with animal abuse and neglect; this may happen when a person becomes overwhelmed with an operation without enough money or



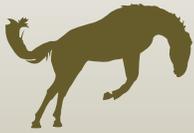


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Lessons about the Unwanted Horse: Lesson Five

Well Run versus Well Intentioned: The Measure of a Horse Rescue



help to properly care for the rescued horses. The rescue business may also be attractive to a personality type known as an animal **hoarder**, a person who takes in more animals than he or she can properly care for and who cannot or will not find appropriate new homes or have the excess animals euthanized. These are two examples of situations in which someone with good intentions cannot meet the true demands of rescuing horses.

Although AAEP has created guidelines for care at horse rescues, and several equine programs have voluntary programs to accredit or certify equine facilities, there is no trade association or regulatory agency for horse rescues and sanctuaries. Two states, NM and MD, have department of agriculture programs that inspect or register horse rescues and public equine facilities. New rescues and sanctuaries open every year, and unfortunately many existing rescues and sanctuaries must close.

Well Run Means Well Managed

To have a successful horse rescue the operators must be realistic. They must use their heads even when their hearts are pulling at them. They must understand their personal strengths and limits as well as those of their rescue facility. They must have horse knowledge and business skills. They must be able to put the horse's welfare above their personal emotions, including sometimes making the tough decision to humanely euthanize an animal that cannot be made comfortable or that will never be safe to handle.

Most horse rescues do a good job and work hard to care for the animals in their programs; many times, these organizations also work to reduce the number of unwanted horses in the community through education, gelding (neutering) clinics, and outreach. These organizations follow basic operating principles that include **policies** that balance facility resources with responsibilities; they establish the appropriate number of horses (**capacity**) for their programs based on the ability to provide food, care, training and maintenance. Some rescues have paid staff, but most typically need a lot of **volunteer** support.

Volunteers Welcome

People who care about horses and want to help decrease the unwanted horse population would do well to volunteer at a horse rescue or sanctuary. A well run horse rescue is likely to have a formal volunteer program complete with regular training sessions and a variety of volunteer assignments. Helping doesn't have to be all about direct work with the horses, like mucking stalls, feeding, grooming, exercising, or trailering a rescue to or from the facility; helping can mean doing paperwork, answering the phone, distributing promotional materials, and more.

Some horse rescues foster out rescued horses to their volunteers until permanent homes can be found. Another kind of fostering may be done at a rescue's site—an interested person can provide hands-on care and/or financial support for a specific horse. Fostering can also help the supporter develop better horsemanship skills and build knowledge without having the entire responsibility of ownership.

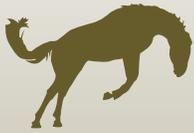




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The biggest need of almost every horse rescue or sanctuary is money, and most rescues work continuously on **fundraising** to ensure they have enough resources to care for their horses. Fundraising can be an important volunteer job. Ideas to raise money for a rescue are as varied as the creativity of those planning the fundraiser.

Regardless of the kind of volunteer work you intend to do, **you will want to give your time and talents only to a responsible, well-run horse rescue or sanctuary.** Plan to visit a potential facility first with a list you've prepared of written questions for the owner or manager. The person in charge should be able to say why he or she is involved in the business and know details such as the rescue's history, length of operation, and legal status. He or she should be able to state the rescue's capacity and explain where its money comes from. The rescue should have (and follow) written policies and procedures to guide the business, and have a plan in place for volunteers to assist in the program effectively. Be sure to understand the requirements to volunteer and the expectations of the job. During your visit, use your eyes and ears (and nose) to determine the conditions in which the horse rescue or sanctuary maintains the horses. Are the facilities safe and serviceable? Are the horses well cared for? Don't be too quick to judge the horse by his body condition – ask how long any thin or poor looking horses have been there. After getting your answers from the person in charge, verify an organization's tax-exempt status, if it calls itself a non-profit. To find their registration, check at www.irs.gov or www.guidestar.org

More needs to be done to lessen the problem of unwanted horses. We need to collaborate and cooperate. If the interview process convinces you the rescue or sanctuary is doing a good job, find a way to pitch in. Volunteering can be very rewarding. Helping the people who are working hands-on to find good homes for unwanted horses will help the industry tremendously to reduce this problem. Do what you can to stay informed and involved. Be a part of the solution.

¹ "Founder of a horse rescue operation in Larimer County, CO who is facing animal cruelty charges turned herself in to authorities." Source: Reporter Herald - Feb 1, 2008

Resources for further reading

1. American Association of Equine Practitioners. *Care guidelines for Equine Rescue and Retirement Facilities*, 2004.
2. Rosenthal, MS, Marie. "Unwanted Horses: Rescue and Sanctuary Organizations Unable to Keep Up." *The Horse* Article #17070, Oct. 07, 2010
3. Unwanted Horse Coalition. *2009 Unwanted Horses Survey: Creating Advocates for Responsible Ownership*
4. U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Report to Committees of Congress on HORSE WELFARE: Action Needed to Address Unintended Consequences from Cessation of Domestic Slaughter* (GAO-11-228), Released June 2011
5. Williams, Dr. Jennifer. "The Current Status of Rescue", a presentation at AAEP Unwanted Horse Summit, Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society, Inc. Washington, D.C., April 2005





1. Lending a Hand: What You Should Know Before Signing Up

What do you want to know about horse rescues and sanctuaries? Create a list of 12 or more questions for an interview with a local horse rescue. Make sure you find out what the rescue does to have enough money to care for the horses they rescue. Find out what kind of business they are and if they need volunteers. A few sample questions have been provided to get you off to a good start.

1. How many horses did this rescue bring in and find homes for this year?
2. Do you follow operating guidelines such as "Care Guidelines for Rescue and Retirement Facilities" by the American Association of Equine Practitioners or any other guidelines?
3. Who is your veterinarian and who is your farrier?
4. How do you fund the rescue?
5. Does this rescue use volunteers?
6. How old do you have to be to be a volunteer?
7. Do you have a formal training process for volunteers?

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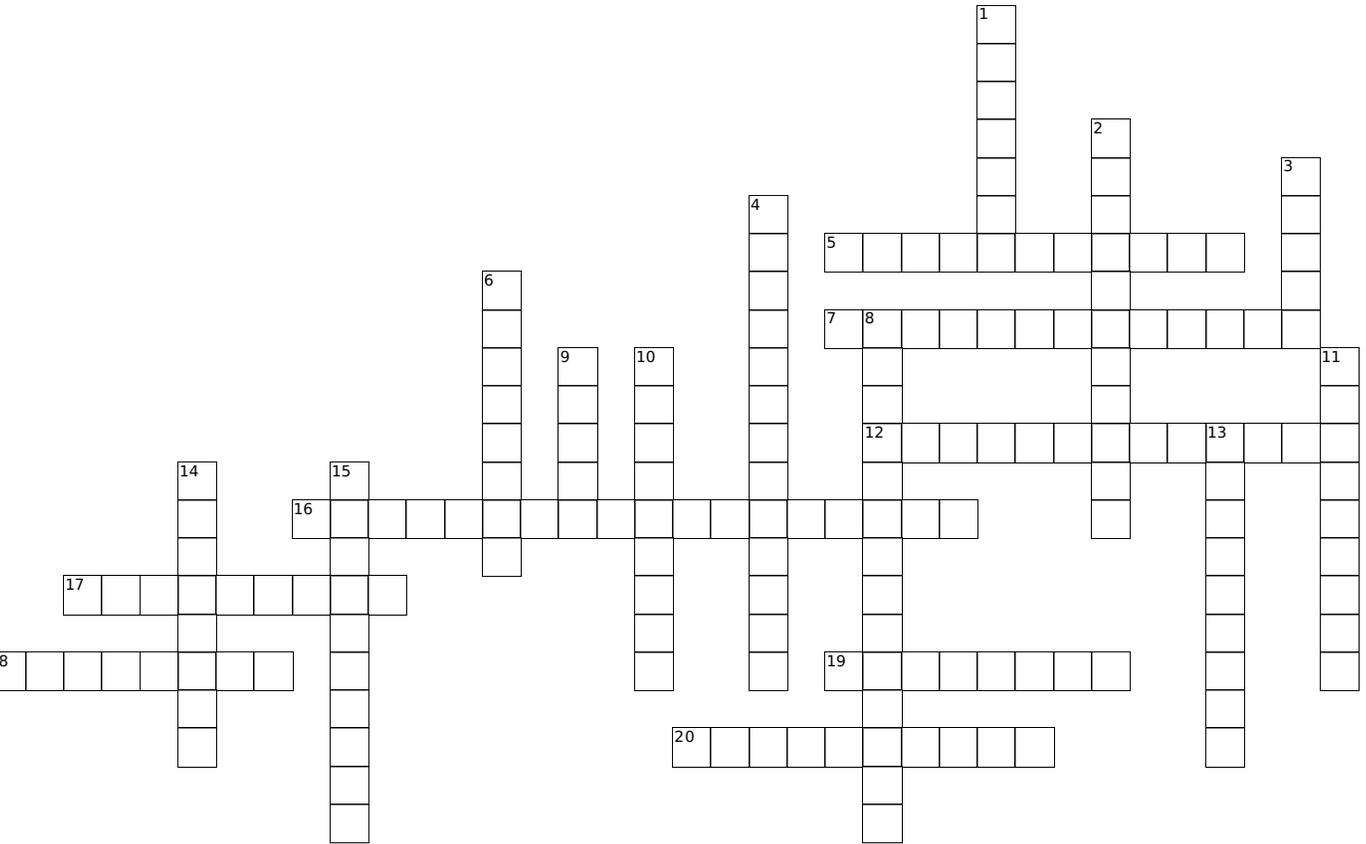


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2. Crossword: Sanctuaries and Rescues

Crossword created at www.puzzlemaker.com



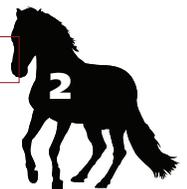
ACROSS

- 6 Person who takes in more animals than they can care for
- 7 Animal shelter owned by individual, not a corporation
- 11 Activities that generate money
- 12 Local government agency responsible for enforcing regulations regarding pets and sometimes livestock
- 14 Preparing horse for second career
- 15 Take in unwanted horses
- 16 Legal action to take animal from owner due to neglect or cruelty
- 17 Taking on ownership of a horse usually from a rescue
- 18 Place to keep animals for remainder of life, usually for a fee
- 19 Charity classification 501-c with public accountability
- 20 Donate, give away or surrender

DOWN

- 1 Place to keep horse for remainder of life, usually charity
- 2 Maximum number of animals the facility can maintain
- 3 Placing a horse in a new, suitable home
- 4 Agreement to care for a horse without owning it
- 5 Local animal welfare organization
- 8 Manage care and training of animal to return to health and usability
- 9 When donation can be written off (deducted)
- 10 Guidelines that provide direction for doing business
- 13 Donate time and energy

Note: Clues may have two words, no spaces.



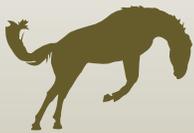


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Field Exercises

- 1.** Interview your local horse rescue or sanctuary with the question list you developed.
- 2.** Volunteer some time to help at the rescue you believe is well run. If you can get to the actual facility, participate in their volunteer training program and then help out. If you can't get to the facility ask about what you can do to help them from your home.
- 3.** Plan a fund-raiser for a well-run horse rescue. This could be as simple as a car wash, a bake sale, or something you and your friends could do. One idea for a fundraiser is a mop-pony auction with proceeds going to the horse rescue (see separate instruction sheet.)





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Mop Pony Instructions

The instructions for a mop-pony auction:

1. Supplies for a mop pony: an inexpensive string mop; rubber bands to mold the head, nose and ears; yarn, string, or twine to make a bridle or halter; colored marking pens or paint, glue and wiggly eye buttons for adding the pony's eyes and nostrils.
2. Pull forward from the mop about a third of the strings and fold them in half with the loose ends underneath. Use a rubber band to secure these strings in place first at the top of the mop – like a throatlatch-- and you have a pony's head. Use a second rubber band to shape your pony's nose.
3. Pull a few strings at the top of the mop on each side and braid, twist or fold them to form ears for your pony. You can trim these ears to length – long for mule or donkey ponies, short for quarter and miniature horses, or whatever length you think is right for your pony. Use rubber bands to hold them in place. Shape the mane and forelock out of the remaining loose strings.
4. Add a bridle or halter with the sting, yarn, twine, or whatever materials you want to use.
5. Give your pony some "horse-sonality": pick a breed, make it a horse color with markings, pick a discipline, make a pedigree for it. Your imagination is the limit. The bigger the story, the better the price at auction.
6. Line up the auction to correspond with a horse event that will draw lots of people, and get the auction on the program. Introduce the ponies with their creators describing the attributes the pony has and sell the pony to the highest bidder, then give the money to the horse rescue.

