



Credits: C.A. Porr, C.C. Crisman, R.K. Splan, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA

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Horses Wear Clothes, Too!

Having the proper equipment for the task not only works better, but it's safer.

Introduction

Just as different people do different jobs, so do different horses perform different tasks. In order to do their jobs well, they need to have the right tack or equipment.

The two most popular forms of tack are Western and English. **Western tack** is used in events like Western Pleasure, Reining, and Cutting. Many trail riders use Western tack. **English tack** is used in events like Hunter and Jumper classes, Fox Hunting, and Dressage.

The parts of the **Western saddle** include the seat, horn, fender, stirrup, cantle, and skirt. The design of a western saddle helps the rider stay more securely in the saddle and has been historically used on horses that worked cattle, requiring the horse to stop quickly and turn tight corners.

An **English saddle** has a seat, flap, stirrup leather, stirrup, cantle, and pommel. English saddles are lighter and smaller than western saddles, adding less weight to a horse that is often jumping fences or obstacles.

A **Western bridle** has a headstall, browband, cheekpieces, reins, and a bit. Some Western bridles do not have a browband, but instead have a loop to go over one or both ears. An **English bridle** includes a headstall, cheekpieces, throatlatch, browband, noseband, reins and a bit.

Other tack horses wear might include **saddle pads** to protect their back, **blankets** to keep them warm and dry, **sheets** to keep the flies off, and **bell boots** to protect their hooves. A **halter** and **lead rope** are common pieces of tack that every horse is familiar with!



What's a horse to wear?

Skill Level: Cloverbud, K-3

Learner Outcomes

1. Identify equipment used for different types of work with horses.
2. Explain how different tack allows horses to do different jobs.

Science Standard(s): Life Science/Characteristics of Organisms

Success Indicator: Correctly associate tack with proper job/activity.

Life Skill(s): Decision-making, Critical thinking

Tags: Cloverbud, horse, tack

Time Needed: 15-20 minutes

Materials List

- Horse magazines and/or tack catalogues that can be cut up
- Construction paper, glue, scissors
- Western bridle and saddle
- English bridle and saddle
- Print out of pictures of Western and English saddles
- Print out of picture of other tack and equipment (saddle pads, blankets, and bell boots)
- Print out of outline of horse

Did You Know?

A hackamore is a “bitless” bridle!

Glossary Words

Bell boots – bell-shaped rubber material designed to protect the coronary band and hoof

Cantle – raised rear portion of a saddle (both Western and English)

Fender – leather flap that protects the rider’s leg from the girth and rigging of a Western saddle

Flap – leather piece that protects the rider’s leg from the girth on an English saddle

Pommel – the upper front part of an English saddle

Saddle horn – raised front part of a Western saddle, designed to allow a cowboy to tie a rope to when working cattle

Skirt – area at the back of a Western saddle, resting over the horse’s back and sides, designed to protect the horse from equipment hanging from the saddle

Tack – refers to the equipment placed on a horse, including saddles, bridles, halters, blankets, and boots

Experience / What to Do

Part 1: Saddles

1. Give each child a picture of a Western and an English saddle.
2. Using the real saddles, explain parts of the Western saddle. As you point them out, have the children color the appropriate part on their picture.
3. Do the same with the English saddle.
4. Have the children then explain the differences and similarities between the two saddles.

Part 2: Bridles

1. Give each child a picture of a Western and an English bridle.
2. Using the real bridles, explain parts of the Western bridle. As you point them out, have the children color the appropriate part on their picture.
3. Do the same with the English bridle.
4. Have the children then explain the differences and similarities between the two bridles.

Part 3: Other Tack

1. Distribute the horse outline and tack pictures.
2. Have the children color the tack and the horse.
3. Have the children cut out the tack of their choice and glue it on the horse outline.
4. Let the children then describe what sort of activity the horse would be doing while wearing that tack.

Favorite Jobs

1. Using magazines or catalogues that have been brought in or provided, allow children to select pictures of horses doing different activities while wearing tack or equipment.
2. Have them cut out their selected pictures and glue them to construction paper to make a collage.
3. Have each child share with the group what activities their horses are doing.

For More Information

Search www.extension.org/ for additional information.

References

“Equine Science – Basic Knowledge for Horse People of All Ages” by Jean T. Griffiths. www.Horsebooksetc.com or Phone: 1-800-952-5813

“Horse Science” by Ray Antoniewicz. www.4-hmall.org/detail.aspx?ID=16681

“Horses & Horsemanship” by Ray Antoniewicz. www.4-hmall.org/detail.aspx?ID=16680

Talk It Over

Share . . .

1. What kinds of jobs or activities can horses do? Are all horses involved in the same activities?
2. What kind of tack is appropriate for a jumping horse? A western pleasure horse?

Reflect . . .

1. What makes a horse better suited for one job than another?
2. Do people ever change jobs? Do horses? Why or why not?

Generalize . . .

1. Why is it important for us to have good, safe equipment for the jobs we do?
2. How is making a decision about which tack to use important to the job of horses?

Apply . . .

1. When might you use the skills you learned today?
2. How would you teach others the skills you learned today?

More Ideas!

Horses Drive, Too!

Equipment used for driving is different than for Western or English riding. An English-style bridle is commonly used, but with the addition of blinkers or blinders that block the horse's view to the sides. A harness is used to connect the horse to the cart. Some important parts are a collar (to help distribute the weight of the cart when the horse pulls), breeching (a strap behind the haunches to help the horse brake the cart), traces (help distribute the weight of the cart along the collar), a saddle or pad (lies across the horse's back to help distribute weight), girth (to hold the harness to the saddle), a crupper (goes under the tail to keep the harness from sliding forward), a belly band (to keep the shafts of the cart from rising), and a back band (takes the weight of the shafts).

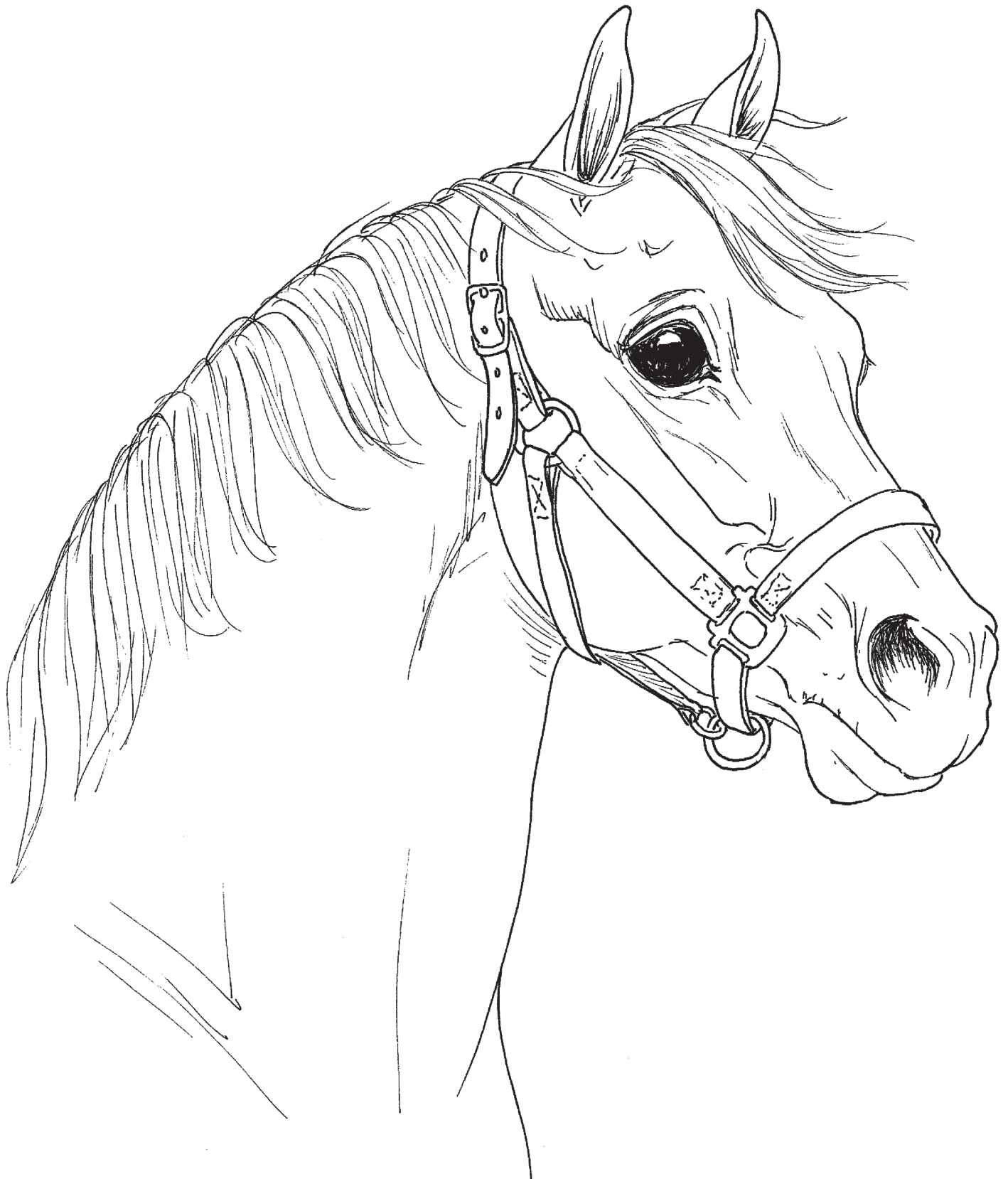
1. This activity would be similar to the saddle and bridle activities – identify the parts and point them out to the youth.
2. Let youth color in a picture as the parts are identified.
3. Have the youth explain similarities or differences between riding and driving tack.

Horse Puppet Show

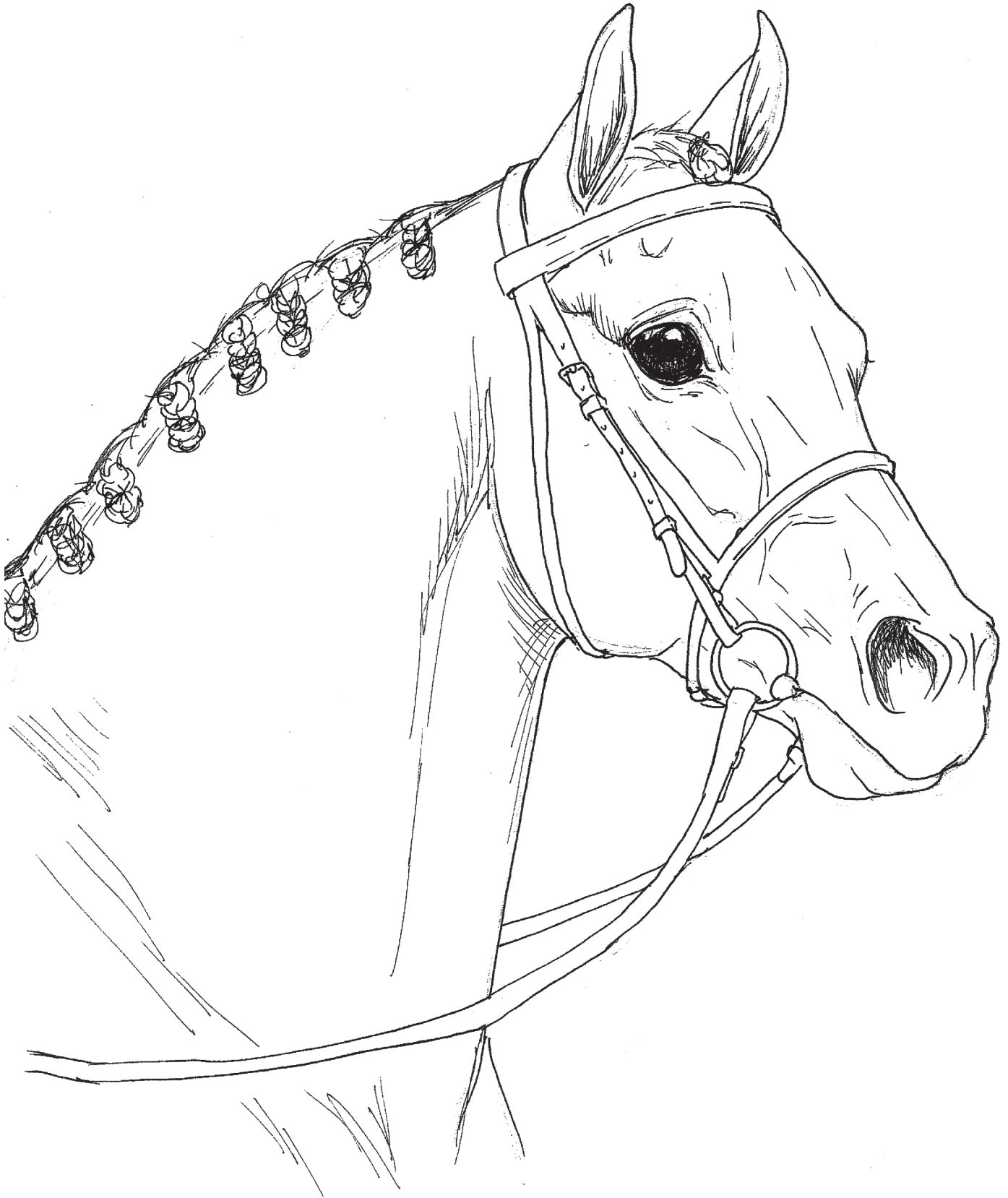
Glue the horse figures from the “Other Tack” activity, or from the “Favorite Jobs” activity to a popsicle stick and have the children participate in a “horse show.”

Alternate Horse Model

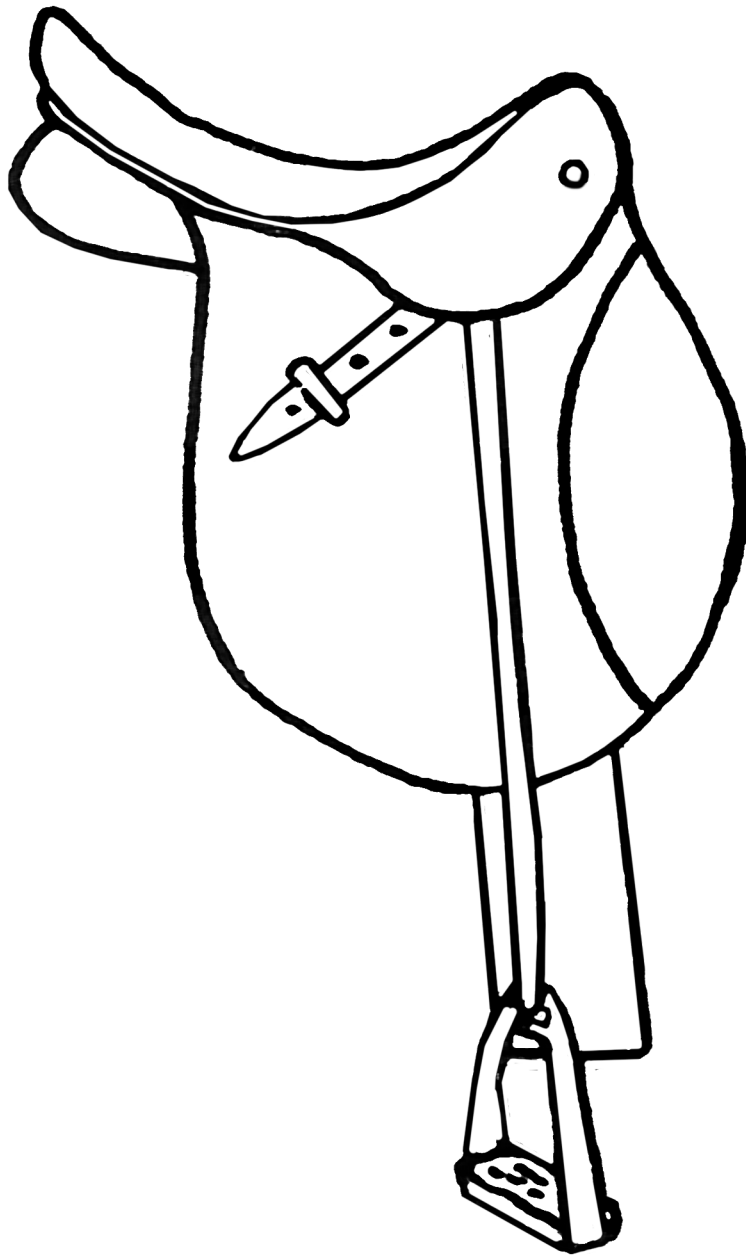
Have the children bring in a Breyer model or stuffed horse. Provide felt or other material and a pattern for a blanket. Have the children cut out a blanket for their model horse. Provide string and a hole punch to tie the blanket into place. Fabric paint will add another activity as they decorate their horse's clothing. They could then do a fashion show for their designs.

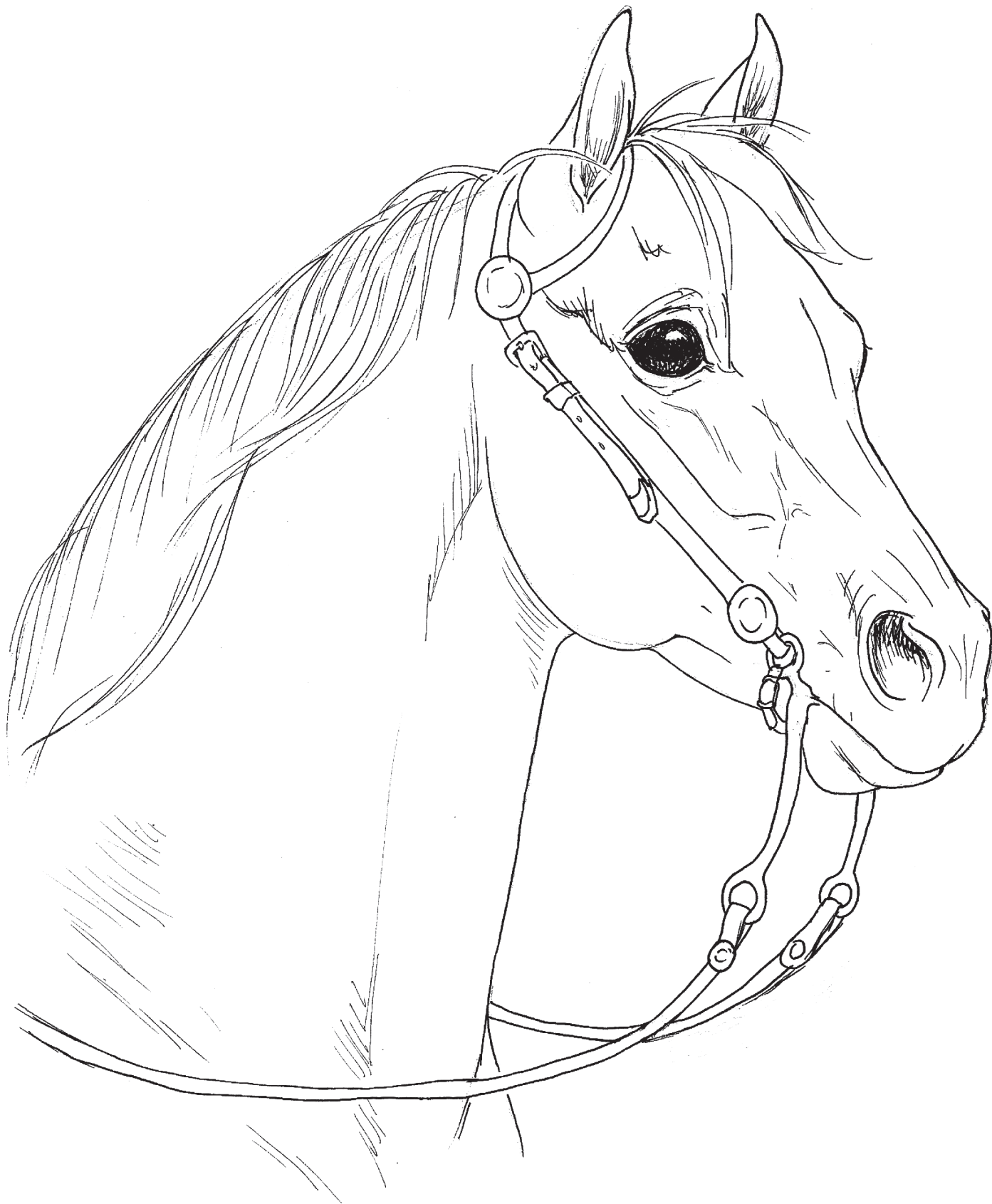


Horses Wear Clothes, Too!

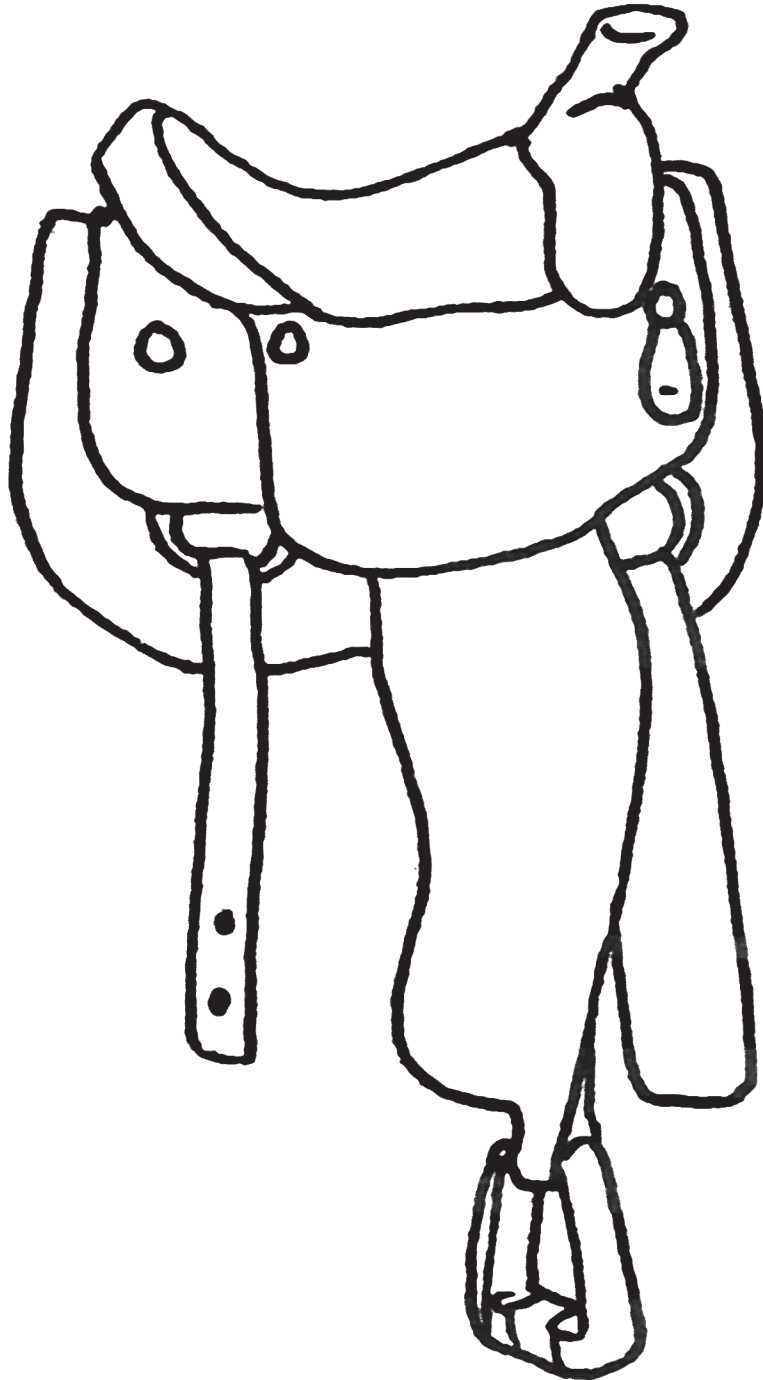


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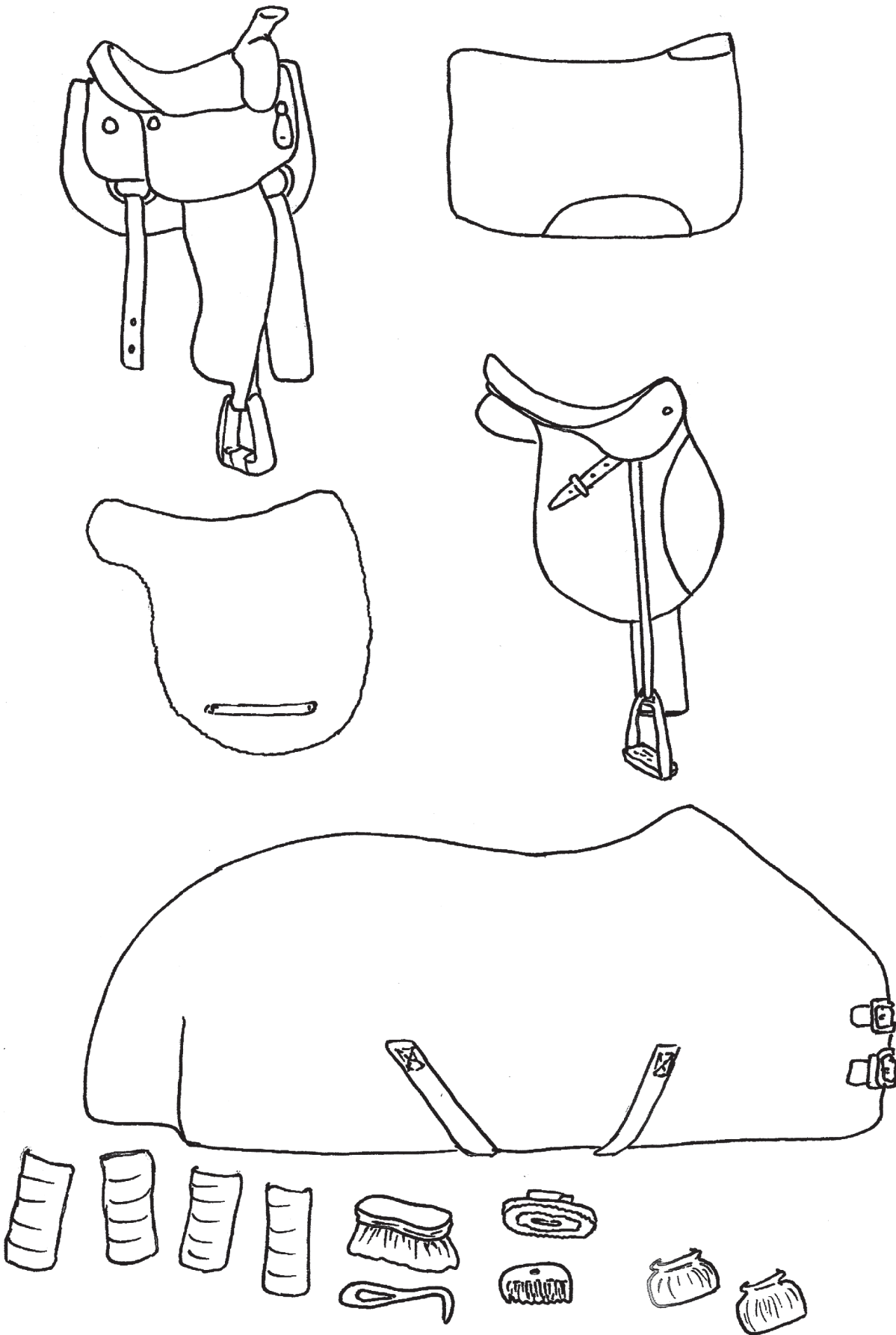


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Virginia 4-H  Horse Activities for K-3 Youth



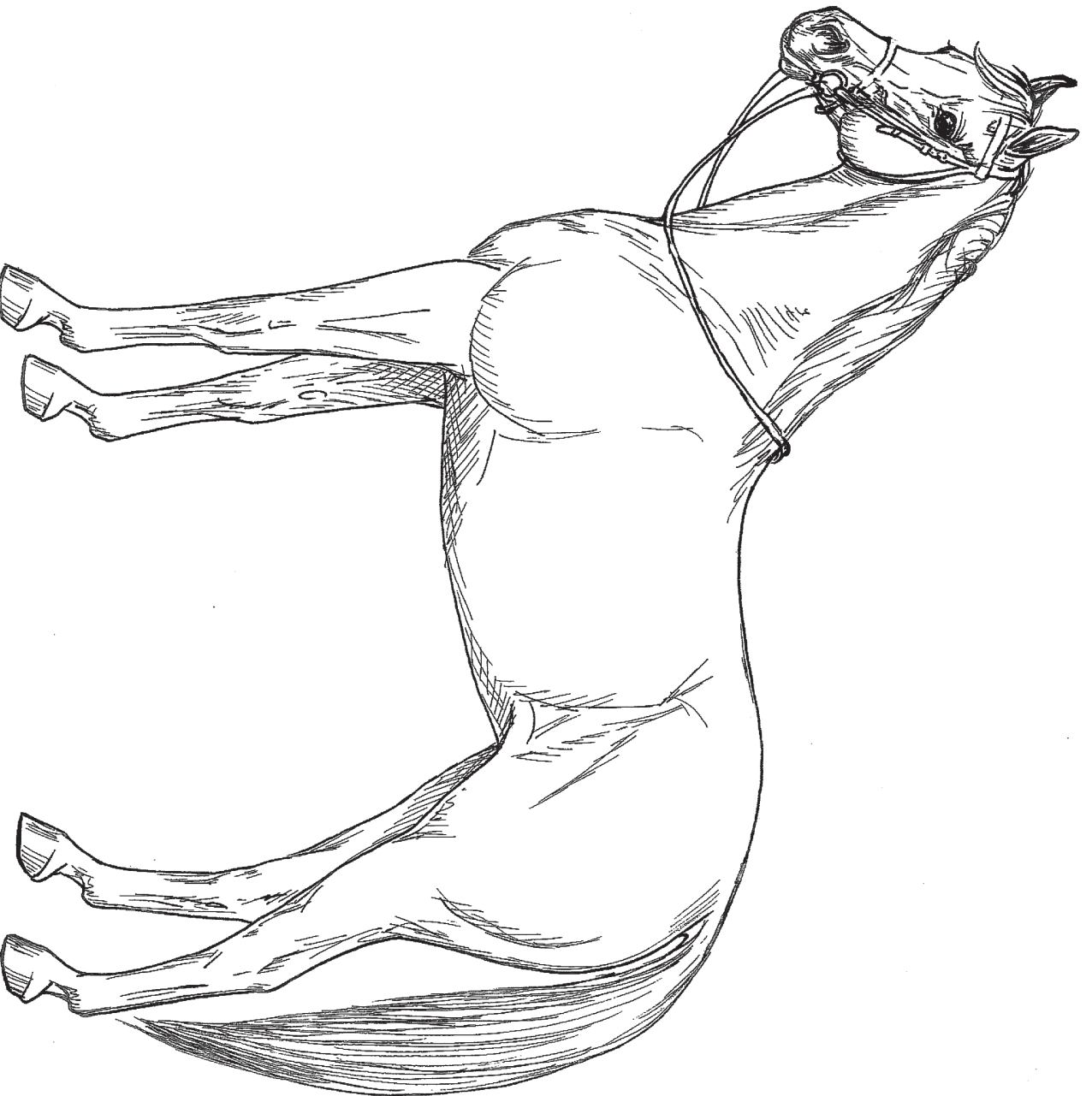
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