

Just Horsin' Around: Measuring the Clydesdale

Objective:

This lesson will identify traits of the Clydesdale horse, compare Clydesdale heights to different breeds, and learn how to measure the height of a horse in hands.

Oklahoma Academic Standards

Grade 3:

Skills Standard 1: A.1, A.3

Vocabulary

Remuda: a group of horses

Foal: a young horse under one year of age

Bay: a brown-bodied horse with black mane, tail, and lower legs

Sorrel: a reddish or copper color, lighter than chestnut

Roan: an even mixture of colored and white-pigmented hairs

Withers: the highest part of the back of a horse

Feathering: long hair on the lower legs and ankles

Hands: a unit of measurement to measure the height of horses

Materials:

Butcher paper

Markers

Rulers

Procedure:

- Read about the Clydesdale horse on the activity sheet
- Use the activity sheet to learn how to measure in “hands”
- Using a sheet of butcher paper, make a class chart of everyone’s height in hands. Use a ruler to mark off four inches, rather than using differently sized hands.
- Measure the height of a Clydesdale on the same butcher paper. How much taller is the horse compared to the tallest student? The shortest?

Extend:

- Visit the Pawnee Bill Ranch to see Clydesdales in person at the exhibition pasture

The Clydesdale Horse

- The Clydesdale is a breed of heavy draft horses, famously known for pulling large loads and carriages and heavy labor.
- Clydesdale derives its name from the district it was originated in Clydesdale, Scotland, which is now known as Lanarkshire.
- Mature Clydesdales weight between 1,600 and 2,400 pounds
- Clydesdales are typically bay, chestnut, sorrel, or roan. Commonly they have white legs.
- Clydesdales are known for having hair, or feather, above their hooves. This was to protect the horses' legs during the cold Scottish climate.
- The Clydesdale horse breed is best known for its height, ranging from 16 to 18 hands.



Measuring in Hands

The height of a horse is measured in the units of hands. It is used primarily in English-speaking countries such as Australia, Canada, the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Hands may be abbreviated to “h” or “hh.”

Hands was originally based on the width of the human hand, with the fingers together and horizontal to the ground. However, due to people’s hands not being the same width, hands has been standardized to four inches.

Breed	Height in hands - average
Clydesdale	17
American Quarter Horse	15
Appaloosa	15
Saddlebred	15
Thoroughbred	16
Tennessee Walking Horse	15

Information provided by Oklahoma State University’s Department of Animal Science