

A young woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark blue riding helmet, a blue polo shirt, and dark riding pants with a black belt, is riding a brown horse. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The horse is facing right. The background is a lush green forest with sunlight filtering through the leaves. At the top, a wooden sign with yellow text and an arrow points right.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS! ➔

Horseback Riding

DIANE BAILEY

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KEY ICONS TO LOOK FOR



Words to Understand: These words with their easy-to-understand definitions will increase the reader's understanding of the text, while building vocabulary skills.



Sidebars: This boxed material within the main text allows readers to build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspectives by weaving together additional information to provide realistic and holistic perspectives.



Research Projects: Readers are pointed toward areas of further inquiry connected to each chapter. Suggestions are provided for projects that encourage deeper research and analysis.



Text-Dependent Questions: These questions send the reader back to the text for more careful attention to the evidence presented here.



Series Glossary of Key Terms: This back-of-the-book glossary contains terminology used throughout this series. Words found here increase the reader's ability to read and comprehend higher-level books and articles in this field.



Educational Videos: Readers can view videos by scanning our QR codes, providing them with additional educational content to supplement the text. Examples include news coverage, moments in history, speeches, iconic sports moments and much more!



In the Saddle!



ounted in the saddle, you feel the strength of your horse underneath you. He is a thousand pounds (454 kg) of pure power, laced together with more than 700 muscles, and they are ready to take you wherever you want to go. Your heart beats in fast exhilaration as he soars over a five-foot-tall (1.5-m) fence. Wind rips through your hair as he gallops full-speed across an open field, his hooves pounding the ground.

Or, you may barely feel the light touch of his feet as he steps delicately through a dressage competition, where the only sounds are soft music and the quiet breathing of thousands of people watching from the stands.

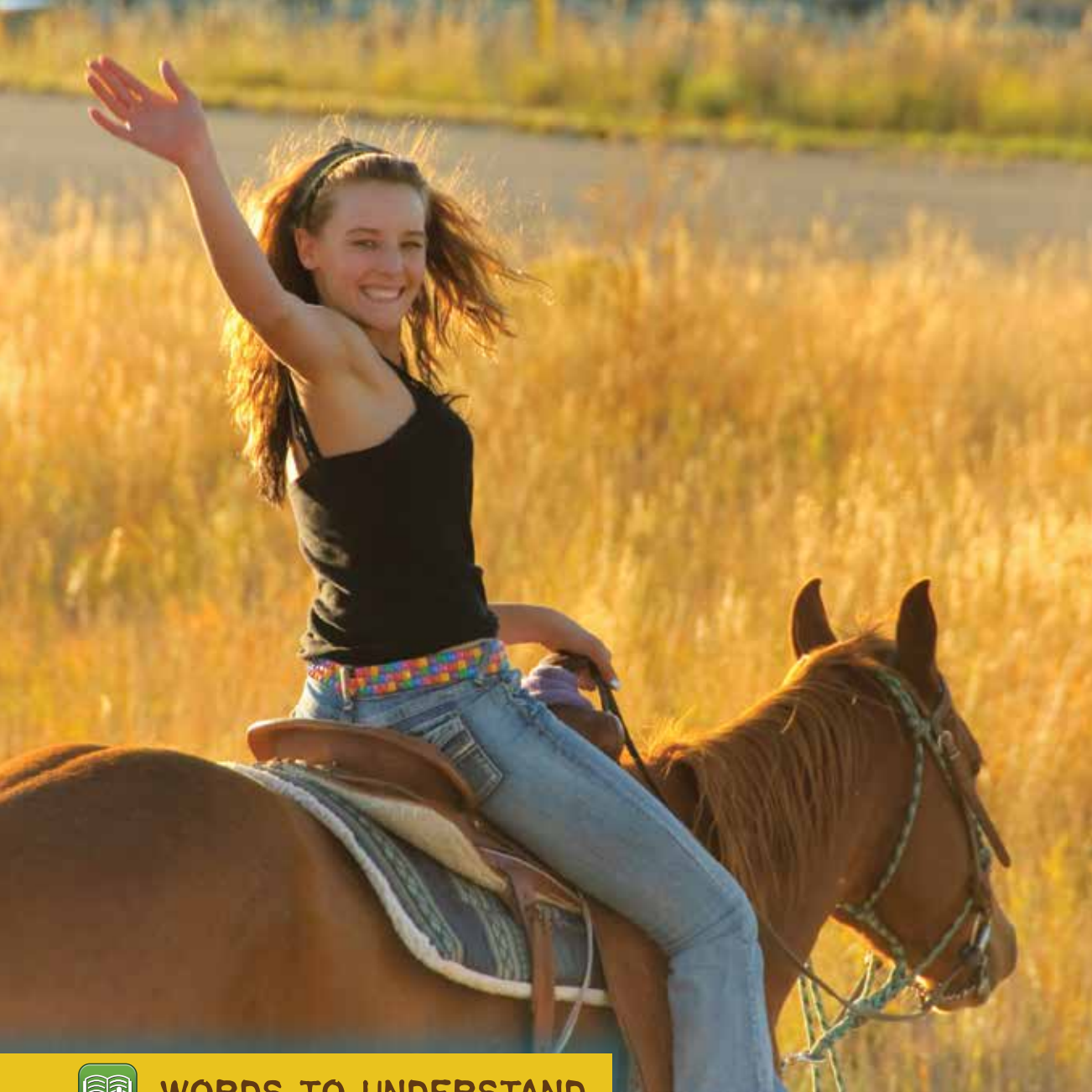
You don't have to be in a competition to enjoy riding, either. You might take a gentle trail ride through a winding forest track. Or go for a ride between campsites on an adventure with your family and friends.

People and horses have been together for thousands of years. Whether your experience is just a pony ride at the zoo or you're a veteran cowboy, you'll find something to enjoy in this book. Learn about styles of riding, how to care for a horse, and some information about how horses move. There are also more ideas on how you can enjoy horseback riding.

Horses are truly gentle giants. A slight touch, a gentle squeeze, a soft word—these are the tools you need to harness a horse's power. Whatever your preferred style of riding, it's important to learn the proper skills to manage your horse—and yourself. Horseback riding is more than a sport. It's about building a relationship between horse and rider.



Horseback riding means building a relationship with another animal.



WORDS TO UNDERSTAND

dressage a type of riding in which the horse makes precise stepping movements

equestrian a horse rider; relating to horseback riding activities

mucked cleaned, usually involving removing hay and manure from a horse stall

tack equipment used in riding a horse

Into the Great Outdoors!



If you were to list some team sports, you might say football, basketball, or hockey. Horseback riding probably would not be at the top of the list. However, it is a team sport in a very important way. A horse and rider must function together, just as team members or partners do. That is the basis of a good relationship. The rider is the boss—but he is not bossy. A skilled **equestrian** is firm but never too forceful. He establishes his dominant position by earning the horse's respect. He is able to communicate clearly with the horse, so that it knows exactly what to do.

History of Horseback Riding



Archaeological evidence shows that people have ridden horses for thousands of years. Sometimes they were used to help perform work. They pulled carts and carriages, or carried heavy loads on their backs. They were also used in war. Warriors rode powerful, armored horses into battle, while messengers took the fastest mounts to deliver important news. The strongest horses were drafted to carry supplies.

For centuries, horses were a primary mode of travel. Trains did not steam onto the transportation scene until the mid-1800s. Cars took another half a century to appear. Even after the arrival of motorized transportation, though, horses remained an important way to travel long distances or to move goods. They were reliable and strong, and could be used on dirt roads or mountains, where other types of vehicles could not go.

Horses were mostly ridden for necessity—but not entirely. Several equestrian events that are thriving today have roots in ancient times. People also have a longstanding interest in horse riding competitions. In ancient Greece and Rome, chariot racing was a popular sport. It tested the athletic abilities of the horses as well as the skills of the drivers. Horses could also be used to measure a person's wealth and importance, even into the grave. An important man might be buried with several horses to mark his status.

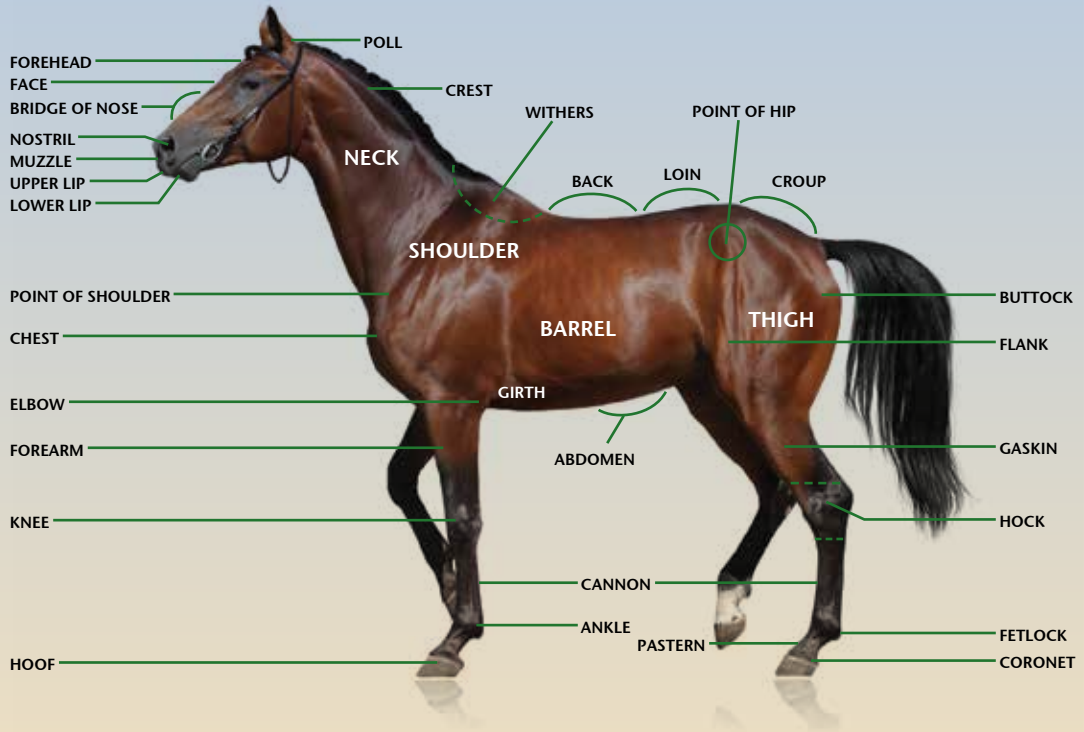
Types of Horseback Riding



People who live on farms or in the country might have a little more room for horseback riding. That does not mean city dwellers have to be left out. Most cities have stables for boarding horses, with indoor or outdoor areas where they can perform basic exercises and moves. They may also have access to fields for longer, faster rides. Even in cities, there are often parks with riding trails, too.

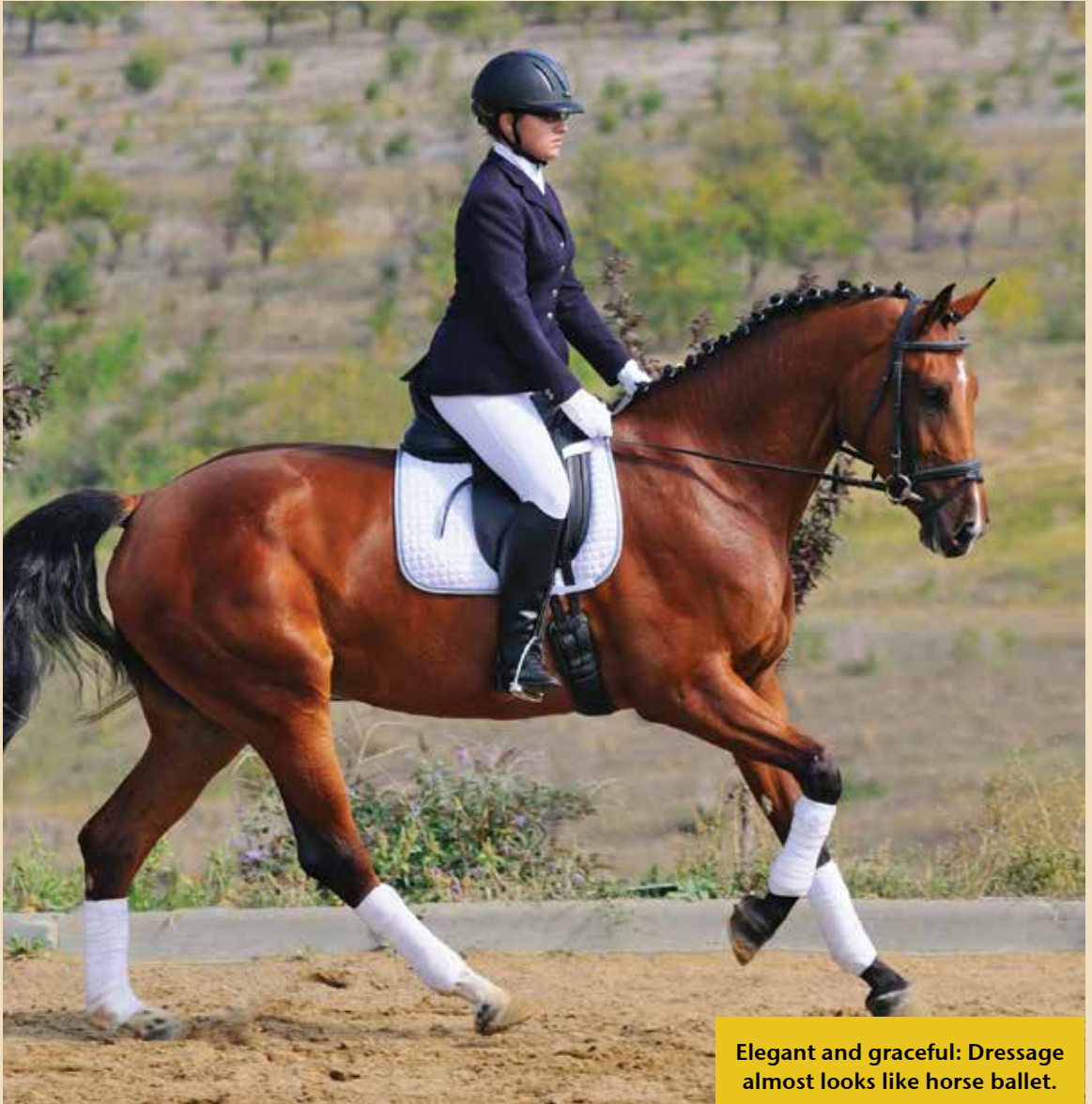


PARTS OF A HORSE



One thing to consider is whether to ride English or Western. The most obvious difference between these two styles is in the **tack**. Western-style saddles were designed for cowboys. They often sat in their saddles all day when working cattle or driving them along a trail. They wanted more comfortable saddles, so Western saddles are larger and more secure than English ones. English-style tack developed from military styles of riding. An English rider has closer physical contact with the horse. The smaller saddle means that the rider can communicate with the horse more with body movements and pressure.

What style of riding do you prefer? You may want the adventure of riding on a trail in the woods. You might want to be a rodeo star, or try **dressage** or show jumping. (Check out Chapter 4 for a more detailed look at different types of riding.) Of course, you do not have to limit yourself to one type, but each comes with its own set of skills and techniques.



Elegant and graceful: Dressage almost looks like horse ballet.



STAYING SAFE

Horses are not naturally aggressive creatures, but they can strike out. This happens when they are afraid or feel threatened. To stay safe around horses, follow these rules:

- Let the horse see you. Remember, horses cannot see directly in front of or behind them. Stay to the side, in their line of vision, whenever possible.
- Keep a hand on the horse all the time, so he knows where you are. This is especially true if you must move around the rear of the horse. This lets him know not to kick or move backward.
- Don't yell. Horses have acute hearing, and loud voices can frighten them.
- Try not to be nervous or afraid. Horses can sense these emotions in people. They may respond negatively.

Getting Started



Beginning riders often start with taking lessons at a local stable or ranch. These places usually have gentle horses that are good for beginners to learn on. The horses are cared for by the stable employees, so all you have to do is show up and ride. This also gives you an opportunity to ride several different horses, until you find one that you click with. Although a rider may have a favorite horse that she prefers, accomplished riders will be able to handle a variety of mounts.

Look for a horse that seems friendly and alert. Does he reach his head over the door of his stall, curious about what is happening around him? Avoid a horse that seems skittish or unpredictable. If you are a beginner, your movements may be sudden or uncertain. You want a horse that will forgive some newbie mistakes.

Before you begin riding seriously, it is important to know what you are getting into. If you get tired of playing basketball, you can just toss the ball in the garage and do something else. However, horseback rid-



Regular, gentle grooming helps build trust between horse and rider.

ing often requires much more responsibility. At advanced levels, riders typically own their own horse and must care for it. This requires a daily commitment, and hours of work each week.

Horses must be fed and groomed regularly. What you feed the horse depends on the size and type of horse. Your horse doctor will make sure you know the right foods and amounts. Horses also always need to have a source of water available.

It's not the most glamorous part of working with horses, but their stall must be **mucked** out. That means putting on some sturdy boots and scooping out the waste and dirty hay that typically lines the stall. Horses use the "bathroom" wherever they are and as you might expect with large animals, that can take up a lot of room. It's your responsibility to make sure the animals' living quarters are kept clean. You do that with a rake or a shovel. You might also need to use a hose to wash the stall occasionally.