

# THE BOOTH MUSEUM

## A Horse of a Different Color

*"The history of mankind is carried on the back of a horse." -Author Unknown*

### Teacher Resource:

### Interdisciplinary Art Lesson

Written by Education Outreach Coordinator, Lynnette Torres Ivey.

**Summary:** This lesson highlights a painting from the Booth Western Art Museum's permanent collection, *Past History* by local Georgia artist, Amy Wilmoth Watts. Discussion questions guide examination into the story of the horse throughout American history. The importance of horses in American culture, colonization, transportation, economics, agriculture and the military is addressed. To bridge meaning, students will create their own horse portraits in the artist's colorful, patterned style. Best for 4th and 5th grades to use as an independent art lesson or as a pre/post lesson for the Booth Museum's *Westward Ho!* tour program.



Amy Wilmoth Watts, *Past History*, 2011, Oil on Canvas,  
Collection of the Booth Western Art Museum.

**Length of Lesson:** 30—60 minute session or extended to include more content.

**Subject Areas:** Visual Arts, Social Studies, English Language Arts, Science.

**Georgia Standards of Excellence:** SS4H3b,c., SS4H5c,e., SS4G2b., SS5E1b., VA4.CR.2a,b., VA4.CR.3a., VA5.CR.2a,b,d., VA5.CR.3a., VA4.CN.1a., VA4.CN.2b., VA4.CN.3, VA5CN.1a,c., VA5.CN.3, ELAGSE4RL1,2., ELAGSE5RL1., ELAGSE4RI1,2,3., ELAGSE5RI1,2,3., ELAGSE4SL1a,b,c,d., ELAGSE5SL1a,b,c,d., S4L1a., S5L1a.

**Objectives:** After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

1. discuss and interpret details, themes and stories within a visual text by engaging with Amy Wilmoth Watt's painting *Past History* through Visual Thinking Strategies.
2. Recognize the horse's impact throughout American History on colonization, American Indian culture, westward expansion, the civil war, and cattle trails.
3. Analyze and identify horses through scientific classification procedures and their roles as organisms within their ecosystems.
4. Create their own artwork inspired by the style of local Georgia artist, Amy Wilmoth Watts, utilizing multiple elements of art and principles of design within their artwork (e.g. colors and patterns).

### **Materials Provided:**

Lesson Plan with teacher background information, student handouts, and art template and activities.

### **Materials Needed:**

Pencils, piece of paper, pencil with eraser, coloring supplies such as crayons, colored pencils, markers, etc.

## Discussion guided by Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

Begin this lesson by facilitating discussion with students about Amy Wilmoth Watt's painting, **Past History**. Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) is an inquiry-based teaching strategy for all grade levels. You do not need any special art training to use this strategy. The goal of VTS is not to teach the history of a work of art but, rather, to encourage students to observe independently and to back up their comments with evidence. To facilitate VTS, choose a work that is not abstract like **Past History**. Ask students to look closely and silently at it for a minute or two. Three questions guide the discussion.

"What's going on here?"

"What do you see that makes you say that?"

"What more can we find?"

Spend time looking at this painting with students and pointing to elements in the painting as they are brought up. At the beginning, students should simply identify things they see, not matter how big or small. Artists always have a reason for including small details within their artwork! Affirm students by paraphrasing their answers. Discussion questions could include, "There are American symbols hidden within the painting. Can you find them? (Flag and Map pictured adjacent). How many horses can you find in this painting? What do the patterns and colors remind you of?"

After discussing what they see, the discussion can delve into what the painting means by asking questions like, "Who do you think the men in the painting are? Why do you think the artist include so many patterns? What do you believe the artist is trying to tell us?"



### Amy Wilmoth Watts

Watts runs a farm near Athens, Georgia where she raises beef cattle and trains horses. She describes herself as having been a cowgirl all her life. She grew up in Nebraska, moved to Georgia when she was 15, and received her degree in art illustration from the Atlanta College of Art. A visit to the Booth Western Art Museum inspired her to make western themed artwork. Using her own life as inspiration, she painted her own horses and used patterns inspired by her grandmother's quilts. Watts was invited to have her own solo exhibition at the Booth Western Art Museum in 2013.

### Elements of Art and Principles of Design

The **colors** and **patterns** in Watt's artwork are similar to kaleidoscopes, mosaics, stained glass, and quilts. It takes a keen eye to find the images that are camouflaged and hidden amongst the patterns. When we look at Watt's painting, the variety of **patterns** and objects engage our eyes and keep us looking in hopes to discover something new. The **colors** in Watt's painting are vibrant and diverse, yet are not so saturated that the viewer is overwhelmed by their brightness. The brown tones throughout the piece help to unify all of the patterns together in a harmonious story. Refer to page 8 for a descriptive list of the Elements of Art and Principles of Design.







## Past History

This painting tells the story of the horse throughout America's history. There are three primary stories being told through the three main figures in the painting.

### Spanish Explorers



Horses roamed throughout North America millions of years ago. However, they later moved to Asia and Europe and became extinct in their American homeland. The reason behind their extinction is debated, but the two primary hypotheses suggest that it was either due to climate change, a global cooling which caused changes of vegetation, or the arrival of humans in North America. Horses returned to America when Christopher Columbus brought them during his travels in 1493. Europeans and Spaniards began to explore and settle in North America for the hope of discovering wealth like land and gold. Later, Spanish Conquistadors like Hernán Cortés brought large numbers of horses to the American southwest in 1519 during their colonization

of the Americas. Horses were dressed in armor, and were a powerful weapon against indigenous people. Conquistadors were able to cross challenging geography quickly as they explored North America because of their horses.

*"A horse is worth more than riches". –Spanish Proverb*

### American Indians



Southwest American Indian tribes obtained horses from the Spanish conquistadors. Before they had horses, American Indians used dogs to pull heavy objects and hunt. The horse was used in a variety of ways to better the way of living for American Indians, and were sold and traded amongst tribes throughout the country. Cherokee and Creek tribes used the horse as a tool and economic asset in their deerskin trade by aiding in the travel and transportation of their local resources. They also saw horses as a prestigious commodity and began raising, ranching, breeding and trading horses. Horses became an important part of Plains Indian culture "as objects of pride, as tokens of tradition, and for the ancient values they help channel:

pageantry, discipline, concern for other creatures, and the passing of skills across generations" (Quammen, 2014).

*"For some Native peoples, the horse still is an essential part of daily life. For others, the horse will always remain an element of our identity and our history". —Emil Her Many Horses (Oglala Lakota)*

### U.S. Military



Horses have been used in warfare throughout world history. Cavalry soldiers were used during the American Revolutionary War. "During the Civil War the cavalry reached its zenith, marking the highest position the horse soldier would ever hold in the American military" (Sayers, 2020). At the beginning of the Gettysburg Campaign, The Battle of Brandy Station was the largest cavalry battle ever fought on U.S. soil. This would be a great turning point in the war that would eventually lead to the Union's victory. The blue uniform worn by this soldier is similar to the ones worn by Union soldiers during the American Civil War.

## How have horses been important to American history and culture?

### Agriculture and Work

For millennia, people have used horses to haul goods, herd cattle, plow fields and mine coal. Horses are hard workers and their power can be used in a variety of ways.

### Travel and Trade

Before trains and cars were invented, horses provided speedy transportation. Horses were used during westward expansion to move people out west by drawing wagons and prairie schooners over the difficult terrain of the Oregon Trail in the mid-1800's.

### Vaqueros and Cowboys

Spanish ranchers, called Vaqueros, taught American cowboys how to herd cattle. Horses became the symbol for cowboys who ran cattle drives to meet the increased demand for beef across the United States.



Horses are still used for these same purposes, but their jobs are being replaced with machines like cars and tractors. Today, horses are used in races, for entertainment, and for therapy.

## How do biologists classify horses?

Biologists organize living things, or **organisms**, into groups, or **classifications**, so they are easier to study.

### **Kingdom: Animals**

Organisms made up of more than one cell.



### **Phylum: Vertebrates**

Animals with backbones.



### **Class: Mammals**

Warm blooded. have lungs to breath, have fur or hair, nurse young with milk, and give birth to live offspring.



### **Order: Perissodactyla**

Odd-toed hoofed animals like zebras, rhinoceroses, and tapirs.

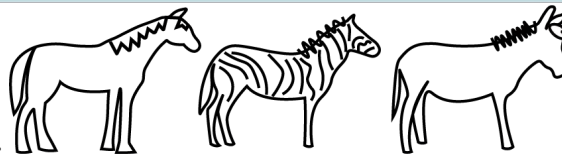


### **Family: Equidae**

All living species are in the genus of Equus. Other genus are only known through fossils.

### **Genus: Equus**

Horses and related animals like donkeys and zebras.



### **Species: Equus Ferus**

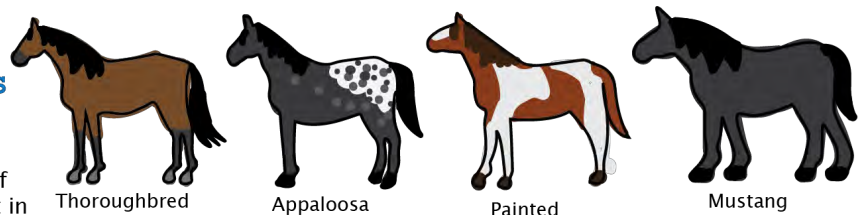
Wild horses.

### **Sub-Species: Equus Ferus Caballus**

Domesticated horses.

### **Breeds**

All of these horses belong to the same sub-species of Equus Ferus Caballus even though they look different in their colors, patterns, and size.



Thoroughbred

Appaloosa

Painted

Mustang

Horses are **consumers**, meaning that they need to eat organic matter, like plants, for energy to survive and grow. Horses are **herbivores**, meaning that they get their energy from eating plants like grass, hay, corn and oats. The plants that they eat are **producers**, meaning they make their own food from inorganic matter like water, oxygen, and carbon dioxide through processes like photosynthesis.



## Art Lesson:

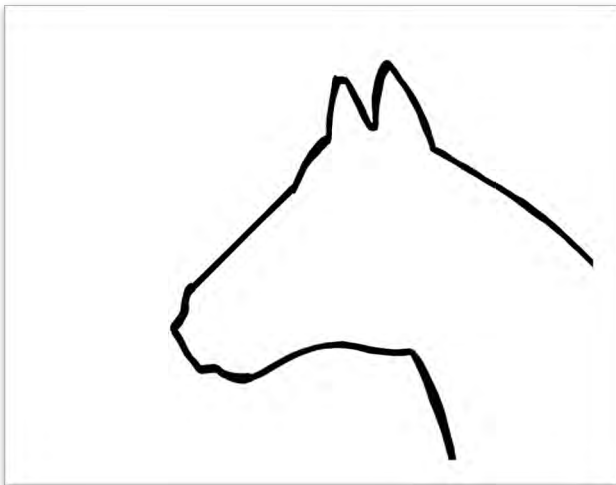
### Draw a Horse Portrait Like Amy Wilmoth Watts

#### Materials:

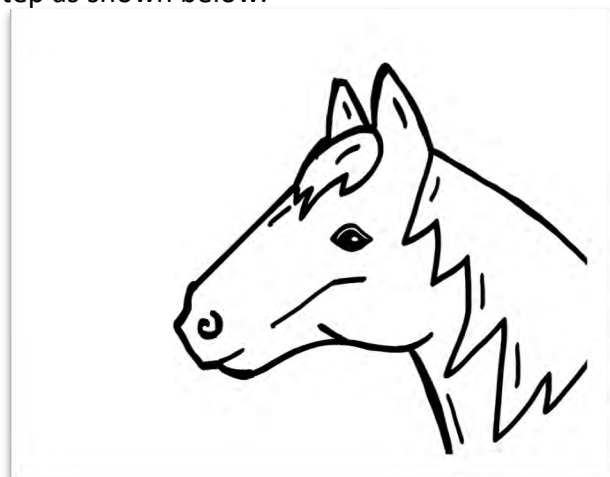
- Piece of paper
- Pencil with eraser
- Coloring supplies such as crayons, colored pencils, markers, etc.

#### Procedures:

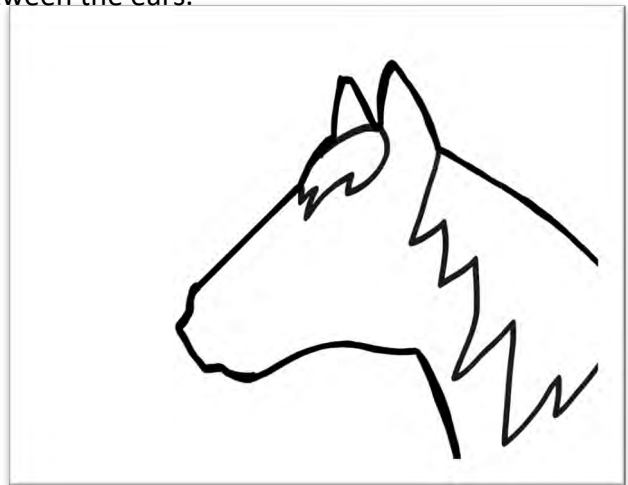
1. Students will draw the **outline** of the horse from a profile view. This lesson plan includes a template (p. 6) that can be cut out and traced as a guide.



3. Students will fill in the **facial features** of the horse including the eyes, noes and mouth. Additional detail lines can be added during this step as shown below.

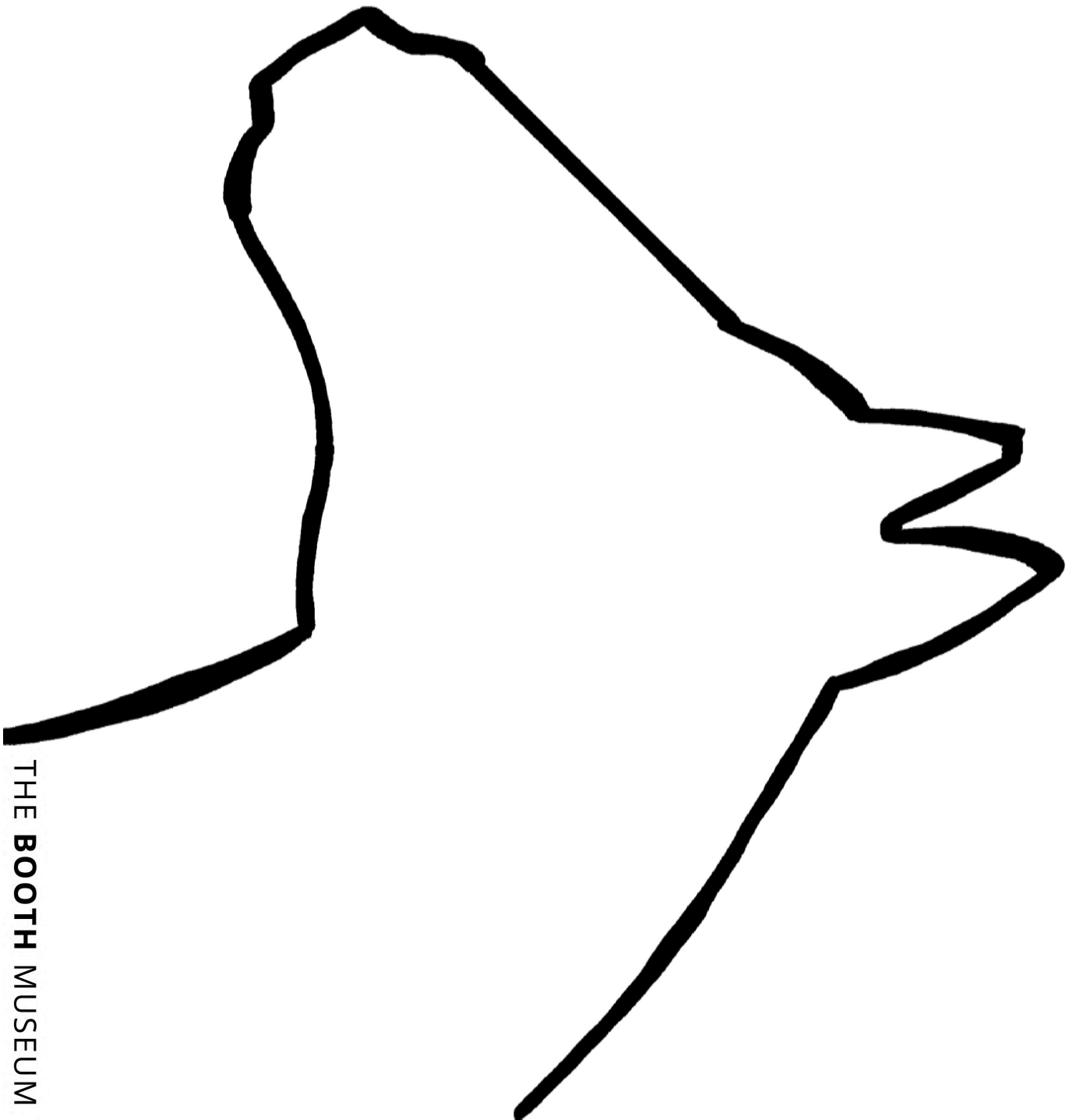


2. Students will draw the **mane** of their horse by using curved diagonal lines, similar to zig zag lines. They should create hair along the neck of the horse and between the ears.



4. Students will use line to create shapes and **patterns** throughout their piece. Use ***Past History*** as an inspiration or designs seen in kaleidoscopes, mosaics, stained glass, and quilts. Color with your **medium** of choice!





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Amy Wilmoth Watts, *Past History*, 2011, Oil on Canvas, Collection of the Booth Western Art Museum.

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## Elements of Art & Principles of Design

### Line

A path created by a point moving in space. A mark with greater length than width. Can be vertical, horizontal, straight, curved, thick, thin, etc.



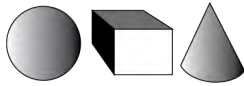
### Shape

A two-dimensional (2D), or flat enclosed line. Shapes can be **geometric**, like circles, squares and triangles, or **organic**, mimicing shapes found in nature.



### Form

a three-dimensional (3D) shape that has length, width and **depth**. This includes spheres, cubes and pyramids.



### Texture

A surface that can be seen (**implied**) or felt (**actual**). Examples of words that describe texture are rough, smooth, soft, prickly, etc.



### Color

Light reflected off of an object. White is pure light and black is the absence of light. A color's **hue** is the unique name, like red, blue, purple, etc. A color's **value** is how light or dark it is. A color's **intensity** or saturation is how bright or dull it is.



### Space

The area around, between or within objects. **Positive** space describes the shape of object itself. **Negative** space is the area around objects that has shape. Space can also describe depth.



### Value

The lightness or darkness of a color. The progression of value creates a gradation scale. **Tints** are when white is mixed with a hue. **Shades** are when black is mixed with a hue.



### Balance

The distribution of visual weight to create **stability**. **Symmetrical** balance occurs when objects are equally distributed on both sides. **Asymmetrical** balance occurs when objects are different on both sides. **Radial** balance occurs when elements are arranged around a central point.



### Emphasis/Dominance

The part of the design where the viewer's eye goes first. The **focal point** is the central point of attention in an artwork. This area could be different in size, color, texture, shape, etc.



### Proportion/Scale

The feeling of unity created when all parts of an artwork (sizes or amounts) relate well with each other.



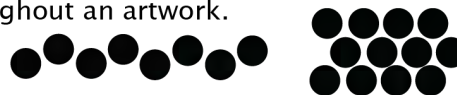
### Movement/Rhythm

The path the viewer's eye takes through an artwork that implies a sense of motion. **Rhythm** is described as a feeling of organized movement throughout an artwork. This can occur through line, shape or color.



### Pattern/Repetition

The repeating of an object or symbol in a planned way throughout an artwork.



### Variety/Contrast

The use of several elements of art that create **difference** within an artwork to convey visual interest.



### Unity

The feeling of **harmony** between all the elements within an artwork which creates a sense of wholeness and completeness.





## Glossary

**Spanish Conquistador:** A leader in the Spanish conquest of the Americas during the 16th century.

**Plains American Indians:** Indigenous tribes who live on the Great Plains in the United States including Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Comanche, Crow, Lakota, Kiowa Apache, Hidatsa, Mandan, Pawnee, etc.

**Southwest American Indians:** Indigenous tribes who live in the southwest region of the United States (present-day Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, California, Utah, Colorado and Utah), including Pueblo, Hopi, Navajo (Diné), Zuni, Mojave, etc.

**Cherokee:** A sovereign tribal government and indigenous tribe of the Southeastern Woodlands of the United States in present-day northeastern Georgia, southwestern North Carolina, southeastern Tennessee, edges of western South Carolina, and northeastern Alabama. The Western Band of Cherokee settles in present-day Oklahoma after the Indian Removal Act forced them to relocate in 1830, which is now referred to as the Trail of Tears.

**Creek (Muscogee):** A self-governed and indigenous tribe of the Southeastern Woodlands of the United States who also live in present-day Oklahoma after the Indian Removal Act forced them to relocate in 1830, which is now referred to as the Trail of Tears.

**Union Army:** During the American Civil War, the Union Army fought to preserve the union of the collective states (also known as the northern states).

**Vaquero:** From the Spanish word *vaca*, meaning cow and *ranchero*, rancher. A cowboy.

**Producers:** Organisms, typically plants, that make their own food, or energy, from inorganic matter like water, oxygen, and carbon dioxide through processes like photosynthesis.

**Consumers:** An organism that cannot make its own food, like mammals. Therefore, they need to eat organic matter, like plants, for energy to survive and grow

**Herbivores:** Animals, like horses, that get their energy from eating plant material.

**Carnivore:** Animals, like lions, that get their energy from eating meat, or other animals.

**Omnivores:** Animals, like bears and humans, that consumes both plant material and meat.

**Scientific Classification:** How scientists, like biologists, sort organisms into groups so they are easier to study.

**Vertebrates:** Animals with backbones.

**Mammals:** Vertebrates that are warm blooded, have lungs to breath, have fur or hair, nurse young with milk, and give birth to live offspring.

## Additional Resources:

NMAI. (2011-2013). **A Song for the Horse Nation:** Horses in Native American Cultures. Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Retrieved from <https://americanindian.si.edu/exhibitions/horsenation/index.html>

Quammen, D. (2014 March). **People of the Horse.** National Geographic Magazine. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2014/03/native-american-horse/>

AMNH. (2008-2009). **The Horse Exhibition** at the American Museum of Natural History. Retrieved from <https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/horse/educator-resources>

Sayers, A. D. (2020). **Introduction to Civil War Cavalry** from The Ohio State University ehistory. Retrieved from <https://ehistory.osu.edu/exhibitions/Regimental/cavalry>

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) <https://vtshome.org/>