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# People and the Animals they tamed (and did not!)

## Description

**Online Activities:** The activities include interesting information about animals that people kept around their homes: horses, cows, donkeys, rabbits, pigs and llamas. There is also interesting information about some of the animals people have never tamed, - and some of the reasons why. Finally, there is a related quiz.

**Further Reading:** [MORE ANIMAL RIDDLES](#)

by

[Charlotte Sebag-Montefiore](#)

**Parental involvement:** This is recommended

**Minimum age:** 4. No maximum age.

**Time:** 1 hour.

## Specified learning outcomes:

1. Increased knowledge of the functions that people bred dogs for including guarding, hunting, rounding up animals, pulling sledges, and calming down horses.
2. Increased knowledge of animals living in or near water including whales, lobsters, crocodiles, cormorants, flamingos, starfishes and seahorses.

# Have Fun With Animals

Further Reading: **MORE ANIMAL RIDDLES**

by

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## LEARN ABOUT ANIMALS PEOPLE KEPT AT HOME

The range of animals people tamed to keep at home or nearby is as varied as the human societies where they live. The llama, for example, does not have much in common with the pig. My interest in domesticated animals lies in what they tell us about the lives of their human owners.

- **Horses:** today, in developed countries, horses are mostly kept for pleasure and racing. In the past, the reasons people kept horses were a lot more varied.
  - Horses were kept for transport: people rode horses to get somewhere, and also horses pulled coaches.
  - Horses were eaten by people in large parts of the world, - from Japan and Kazakhstan to Switzerland and Europe.
  - In some parts of the world, including Asia, fermented mare's milk was a valued drink.
  - Horses were widely used for farm work, and also in other work in rural areas.



- Horses were used for hunting.
- Horses were used for war in many cultures, including our own.

(If you want to learn about dogs, go to the Activity related to my book WHO AM I?)

Now let's have a look at some of the other animals people kept near their homes. These include:

- **Cows**

- Cows have a stomach with four parts to it, as the grass they eat is so difficult to digest.
- Cows have good memories, - so be nice to them, they will recognize you.
- Cows are herd animals, and give each other emotional support. They may lick each other to give reassurance.



- There are many different sorts of cows. Some are bred to provide milk, and some to provide meat. Their skin can be used for leather or rugs.

- **Donkeys**

- Donkeys are used as pack animals, and are very sure-footed. This means they can be used in places where a horse cannot.



- They have very good hearing, and can hear a dog from 60 miles away.
- Donkeys and horses together give birth to mules.
- Donkeys come from the Middle East and Africa. Their big ears help them keep cool!

- **Rabbits**

- In the wild, rabbits warn each other of danger by thumping on the ground.
- Traditionally, people keep rabbits at home, because they don't take up much room, and make a good food supply. Their skin can be used for clothes.
- Rabbits are wonderful jumpers, which is why they have big feet. When they are very happy, they sometimes twist round in mid-air.



- Rabbits have teeth which grow throughout their lives. All that chomping on grass wears them down!

- **Pigs**

- People farm pigs for meat.
- Pigs roll in mud, as they use it for a sunscreen, and to keep cool.
- Pigs do not sweat.
- Pigs are clever and social animals. If another pig shows they are expecting something good or bad by their behaviour, the others will too!



- **Llamas**

- Llamas are herd animals, and have been pack animals for 4,000 - 5,000 years.
- If f you try to overload a llama, it may lie down or simply refuse to move.

- A llama's wool is light, warm and water repellent.
- Llamas are very good at guarding livestock. Only one is needed, and it may call out if there is an intruder and chase or kick it.



## LEARN ABOUT ANIMALS PEOPLE HAVE NEVER TAMED

Finally, you might like to think about animals like zebras: why did people never train them, as they trained horses and llamas? There is a very good reason: zebras are not only very difficult to catch, but they are often bad tempered, and once they bite, they tend not to let go!

Would you like to tame a zebra?

There are so many animals that people have never tamed. Sometimes it is because it is too difficult (as with the zebra), and sometimes it is because the animal can't do anything that would be useful to humans.

Here are two animals I find very interesting.

- **Octopus**
  - The octopus has 8 arms



- They have blue blood and 3 hearts!
- They can smell through their arms!
- The octopus can use tools, and is the cleverest animal without a backbone (invertebrate).



- **Jellyfish**

- Jellyfish were around with the dinosaurs!
- They have no brains.
- They have structures or things at the of their tentacles which help them see and smell.
- Jellyfish are mostly water (98%).

That's it. I do hope you have enjoyed this *Activity*. Now it's time for you try the Quiz!

# Quiz for Animal Lovers

(Do this after completing **HAVE FUN WITH ANIMALS!**)

Further Reading: [MORE ANIMAL RIDDLES](#)

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What animal sits down if the load on its back is too heavy?

Why does a rabbit have big feet?

Name three things that people used or use horses for.



What do cows do to be nice to each other?

Why do donkeys have big ears?

Why do pigs roll in mud?

What do llamas do if you try to make it carry more than it can manage?

Why don't people train zebras?

What colour is the blood of an octopus?

What are jellyfish (mostly) made of?

