A Horse Is a Horse Unless It's a Seahorse
by Kelly Hashway

Seahorses get their names because of their profiles. From the side view, a seahorse resembles a horse. Of course, a seahorse really isn’t much like a horse at all. Maybe that’s because it’s a fish. But oddly enough, this type of fish is a poor swimmer.

Unlike other fish, seahorses swim vertically, or upright. While they use fins to move through the water, they aren’t able to maneuver as well as fish that swim horizontally. Seahorses use their dorsal fins on their backs. But there is a big difference between the dorsal fin on a seahorse and the dorsal fin on a shark. Seahorses flutter their dorsal fins, also use small pectoral fins behind their eyes to steer. They don’t have a caudal fin, which is the tail fin you see on other types of fish. This is why you typically find seahorses resting with their tails wrapped around coral and sea grass. If seahorses are caught in rough water, they can actually die of exhaustion since they aren’t good swimmers.

Seahorses share many characteristics with other animals. Their eyes can move independently of each other, like a chameleon’s. Also like a chameleon, seahorses can change color. They can use this color changing ability to blend into their surroundings and escape predators. They can range in color, spanning white, red, yellow, black, brown, and gray.

Male seahorses have pouches like kangaroos, where they carry their young. Like aardvarks, seahorses have long snouts, which suck up food. They are big eaters, grazing continuously throughout the day on plankton, crustaceans, and shrimp. Seahorses are even like stegosaurus in that they have bone plates covering their bodies. These bone plates are arranged like rings. This acts like a suit of armor to protect the seahorse from predators, but it also limits the seahorse’s flexibility.

These amazing creatures can be found all around the world. And while they share features with many different animals, the seahorse is definitely a creature all its own.
A Horse Is a Horse
Unless It's a Seahorse
by Kelly Hashway

1. Where is a seahorse's pectoral fin located?
   a. on it's back  
   b. on its tail  
   c. on its nose  
   d. behind its eyes

2. How does a seahorse's ability to change color help it survive?

3. Name

4. A seahorse is a type of fish. Based on this information, which of the following is not true?
   a. Seahorses cannot breathe air.
   b. Seahorses have gills.
   c. Seahorses are cold-blooded.
   d. Seahorses are invertebrates.

5. What type of passage is this?
   a. science fiction  
   b. realistic fiction  
   c. non-fiction  
   d. fantasy
A Horse Is a Horse
Unless It's a Seahorse

Vocabulary Activity

Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. ___ o f i ___ s
   hint: side views

2. ___ d ___ i
   hint: s

3. ___ o ___ n t ___ y
   hint: l

4. ___ h a ___ c t e ___ i ___ t ___ c s
   hint: traits; properties

5. ___ a ___ l e o___
   hint: species of lizard that can change color

6. ___ r a ___ g
   hint: eating continually throughout the day

7. ___ l e ___ i ___ l ___ y
   hint: ability to move and bend
In the article, “A Horse Is a Horse Unless It’s a Seahorse”, you learned many facts about seahorses.

Write paragraph about seahorses. Include some sentences that are opinions and some that are facts. Underline the facts with a green crayon. Underline the opinions with a blue crayon.
A Horse Is a Horse
Unless It's a Seahorse

by Kelly Hashway

1. Where is a seahorse’s pectoral fin located?  
   a. on its back  
   b. on its tail  
   c. on its nose  
   d. behind its eyes

2. How does a seahorse’s ability to change color help it survive?

   It can become the color of its surroundings to avoid being noticed.

3. Name three things seahorses eat.
   plankton, crustaceans, and shrimp

4. A seahorse is a type of fish. Based on this information, which of the following is not true?  
   a. Seahorses cannot breathe air.  
   b. Seahorses have gills.  
   c. Seahorses are cold-blooded.  
   d. Seahorses are invertebrates.

5. What type of passage is this?  
   a. science fiction  
   b. realistic fiction  
   c. non-fiction  
   d. fantasy
A Horse Is a Horse
Unless It's a Seahorse

Vocabulary Activity

Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. p r o f i l e s  profiles
   hint: side views

2. o d d l y  oddly
   hint: strangely

3. h o r i z o n t a l l y  horizontally
   hint: left-to-right

4. c h a r a c t e r i s t i c s  characteristics
   hint: traits; properties

5. c h a m e l e o n  chameleon
   hint: species of lizard that can change color

6. g r a z i n g  grazing
   hint: eating continually throughout the day

7. f l e x i b i l i t y  flexibility
   hint: ability to move and bend

Please log in or register to download the printable version of this worksheet.