

# Horsepower



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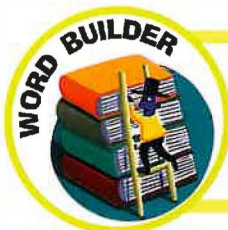
# Features



Could there be strange half-human and half-horse creatures? Read about the centaurs on page 6.



Did you know that beautiful dancing horses were rescued from behind enemy lines during World War II? Read more on page 14.



What can horses and engines possibly have in common? Turn to page 16 to learn more.



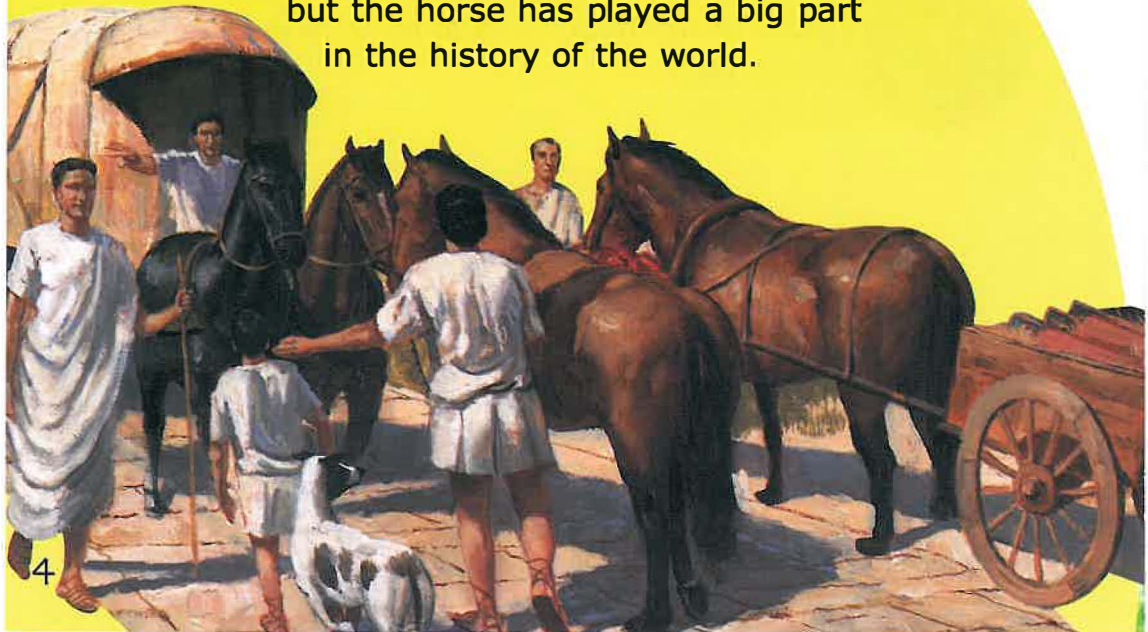
The story of a horse named Black Beauty has won the hearts of children for many years. Turn to page 19 to learn about the author behind this loved tale.

# The Friendly Horse

People first tamed the horse in ancient times. We learned how to train horses and how to harness horses to do work for us. We rode into battle on horses. We explored new lands on horses. The horse became our workmate and friend. Today the horse is still important to many people.



Historians believe that people first began to tame the horse about 5,000 to 6,000 years ago. This is much later than other tamed animals, but the horse has played a big part in the history of the world.





Organizations such as Riding for the Disabled use horses to help people learn new skills and have new experiences.

# The Imaginary Horse

Many centuries ago people were amazed at the speed and strength of the horse.

Horses became the heroes of stories called **myths**. Each imaginary horse was special in some way.

Pegasus was a mythical **stallion** with wings.

Stories about him began long ago in Greece.

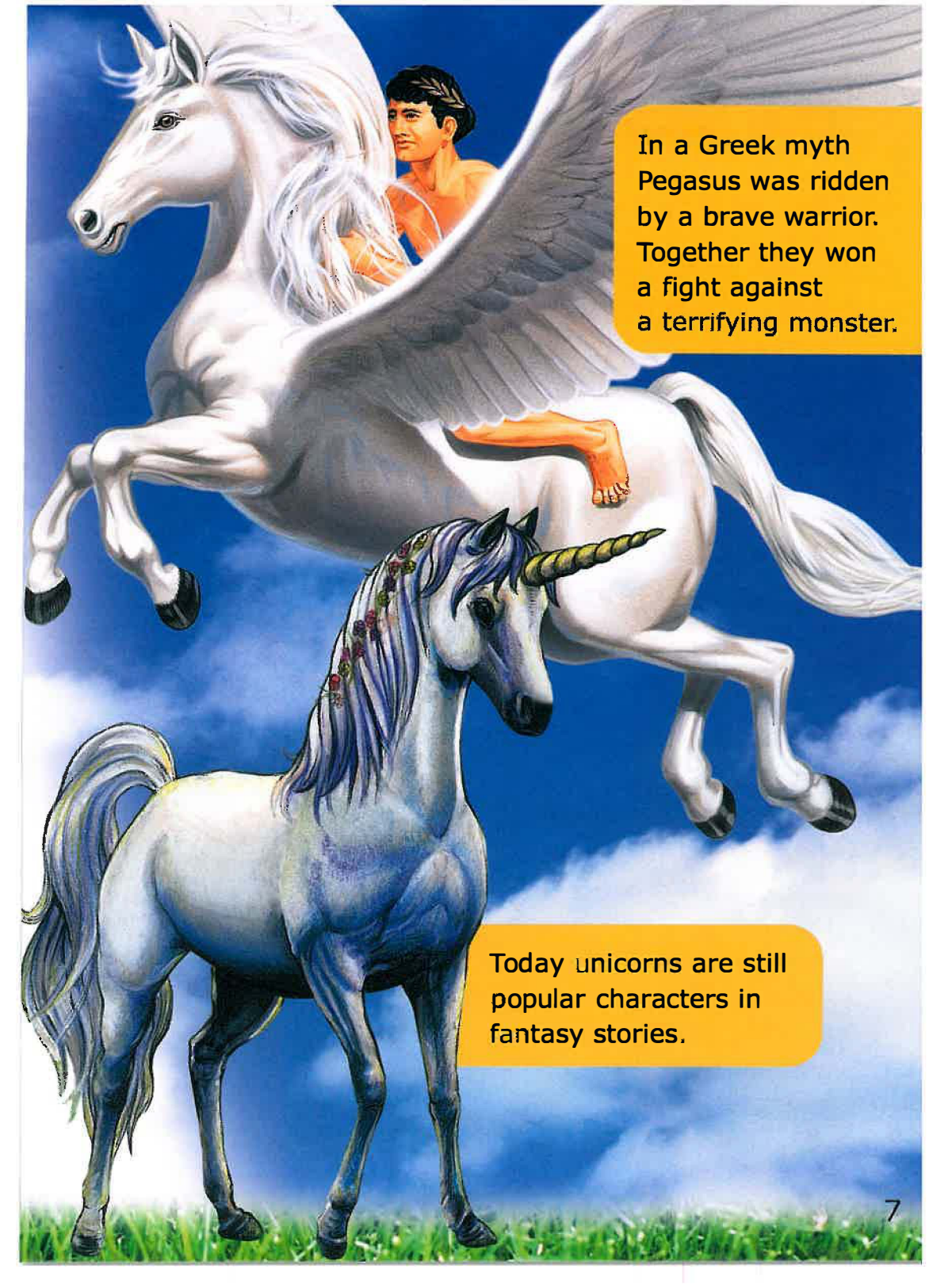
The unicorn was another kind of mythical horse.

It had a long horn on its head. Stories about unicorns were told in Europe over 500 years ago.

FAST FACTS



Centaur, or imaginary half-human and half-horse creatures, are in many stories from ancient times. Myths about centaurs may have begun when Greeks first saw people riding horses.



In a Greek myth Pegasus was ridden by a brave warrior. Together they won a fight against a terrifying monster.

Today unicorns are still popular characters in fantasy stories.

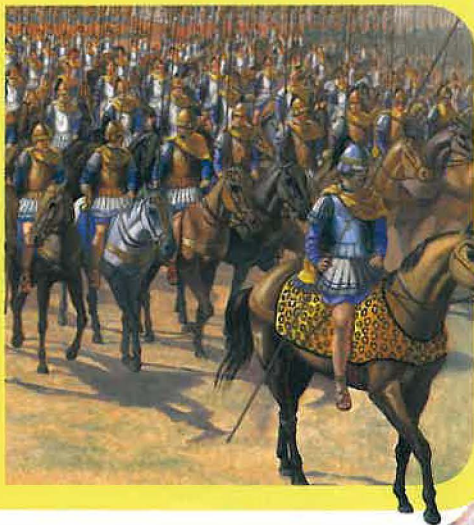
# The Warhorse

Explorers and soldiers could not have discovered and won new lands without the help of horses.


People first used horses in battle thousands of years ago. They hurled their spears from **chariots** pulled by small fast horses. In later times knights rode into battle on big strong horses called **chargers**.



Alexander the Great overcame half the ancient world on his horse Bucephalus. The mighty stallion allowed only Alexander to ride him. When the horse died, Alexander built a city over the grave and called it Bucephala.





A detailed illustration of a knight in full plate armor riding a dark brown horse. The knight is wearing a helmet with a visor and a surcoat with gold and black patterns. He is holding a sword in his right hand, which is extended forward. The horse is galloping, and there is a cloud of dust or mist around its hooves. The background shows a stone wall and a landscape with green hills under a blue sky with a bright sun.

Knights and their horses wore heavy armour to protect them in battle. They took part in **tournaments** which tested their skill and bravery.

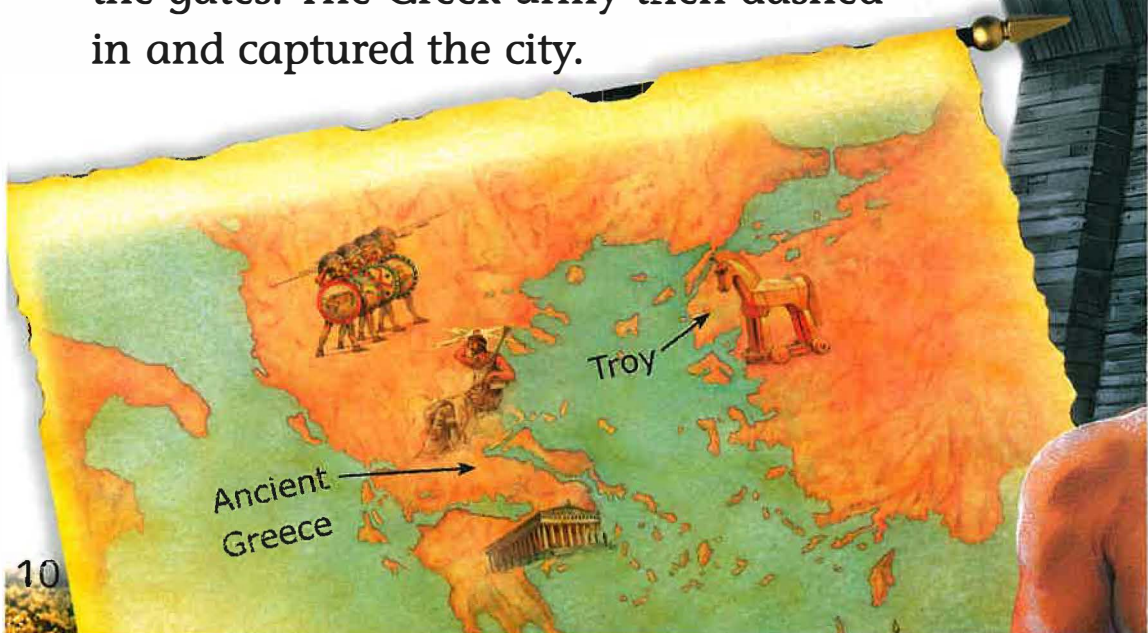
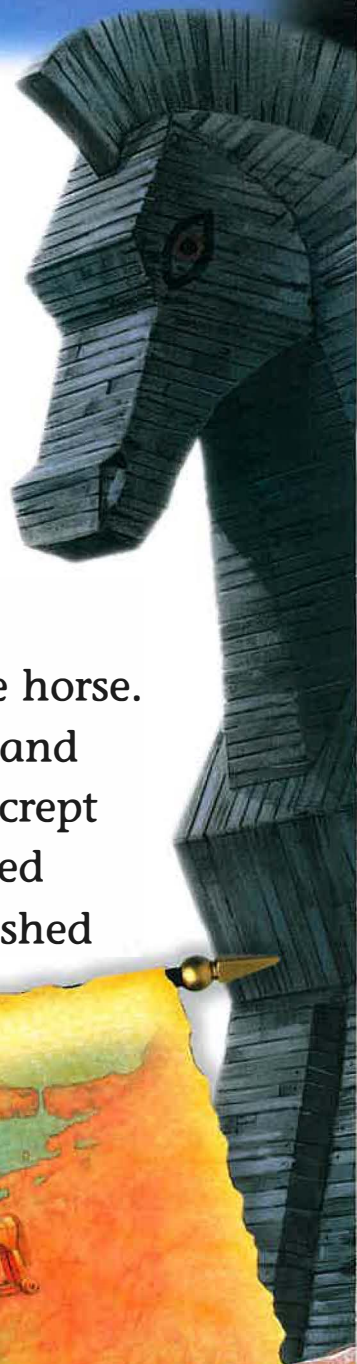
# The Trojan Horse

The most famous warhorse of all was made of wood. In ancient times the Greeks built a huge wooden horse as part of their attack on the city of Troy.

They hid soldiers inside the horse and left it outside the city gates.

The Trojans were curious about the horse.

They dragged it through the gates and into their city. The hidden soldiers crept out of the horse at night and opened the gates. The Greek army then dashed in and captured the city.





# The Parade Horse

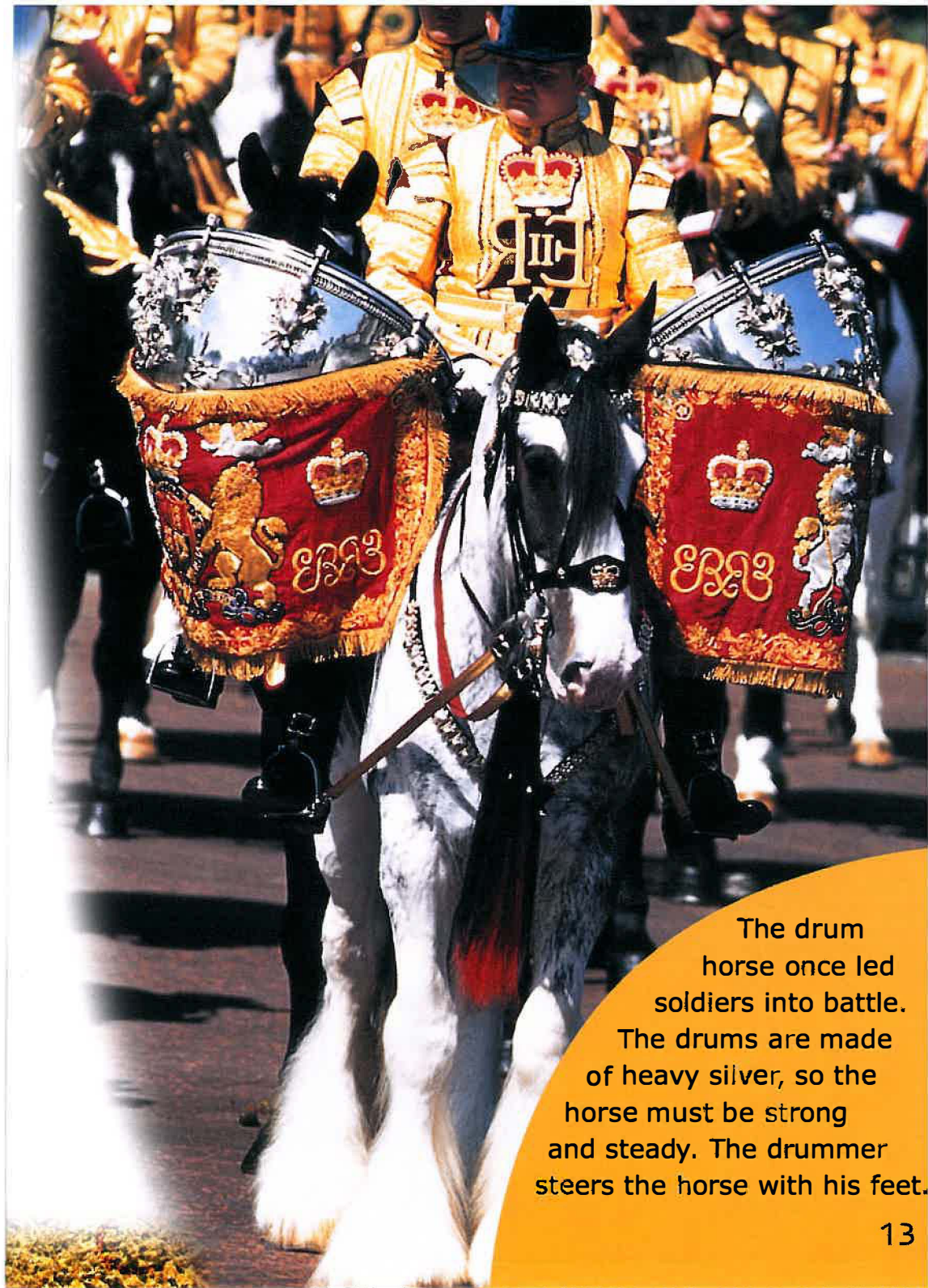
Many countries still keep **military** horses for ceremonies and special events.

The horses are matched in size and colour.

Teams of horses march in step on the parade ground. Strong horses pull carriages or carry heavy drums. Proud horses stand guard outside palace gates. The horses are brushed until they shine, and their riders wear fancy uniforms.



Trooping the Colour is a ceremony held each year in England to honour the Queen's birthday.



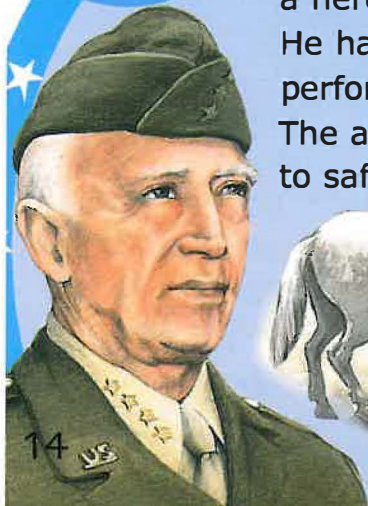
The drum horse once led soldiers into battle. The drums are made of heavy silver, so the horse must be strong and steady. The drummer steers the horse with his feet.

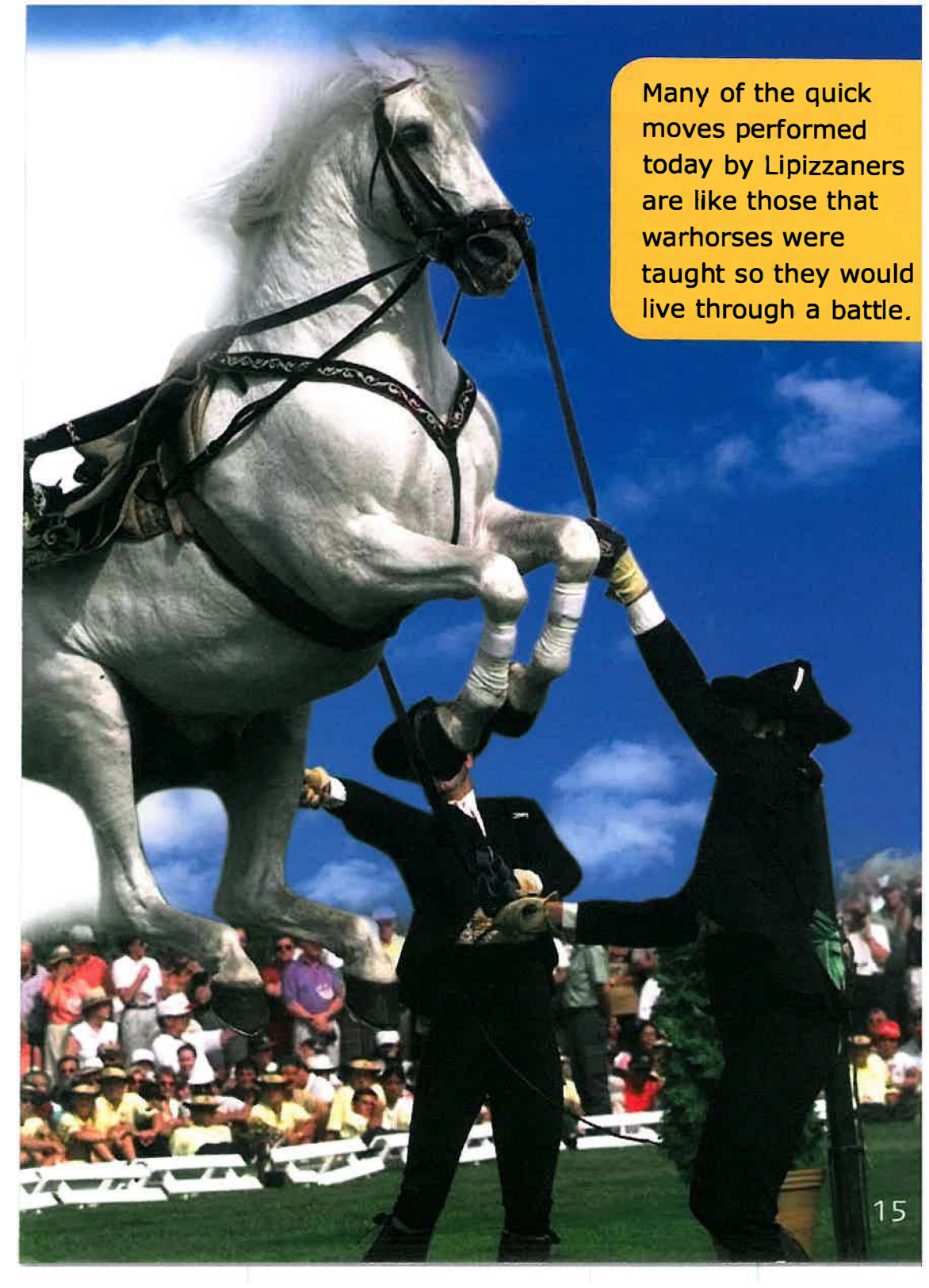
# The Performing Horse

Horses like to please their riders. Skilled riders can teach their horses to perform special movements called **dressage**. Beautiful white Lipizzaners are trained in the hardest kind of dressage. They trot and prance in time with music. They perform leaps and bounds called “airs above the ground”. Watching Lipizzaner horses perform is like watching horse ballet.



During World War II (1939–45) a US army officer named General Patton rescued a herd of 300 Lipizzaner horses. He had seen the beautiful horses perform and wanted to save them. The army herded the horses to safety.



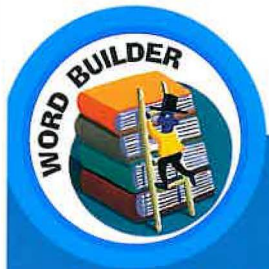


Many of the quick moves performed today by Lipizzaners are like those that warhorses were taught so they would live through a battle.

# The Workhorse

For centuries horses have worked hard for people. In some countries horses are still used to pull carts, carry packs and plough fields.

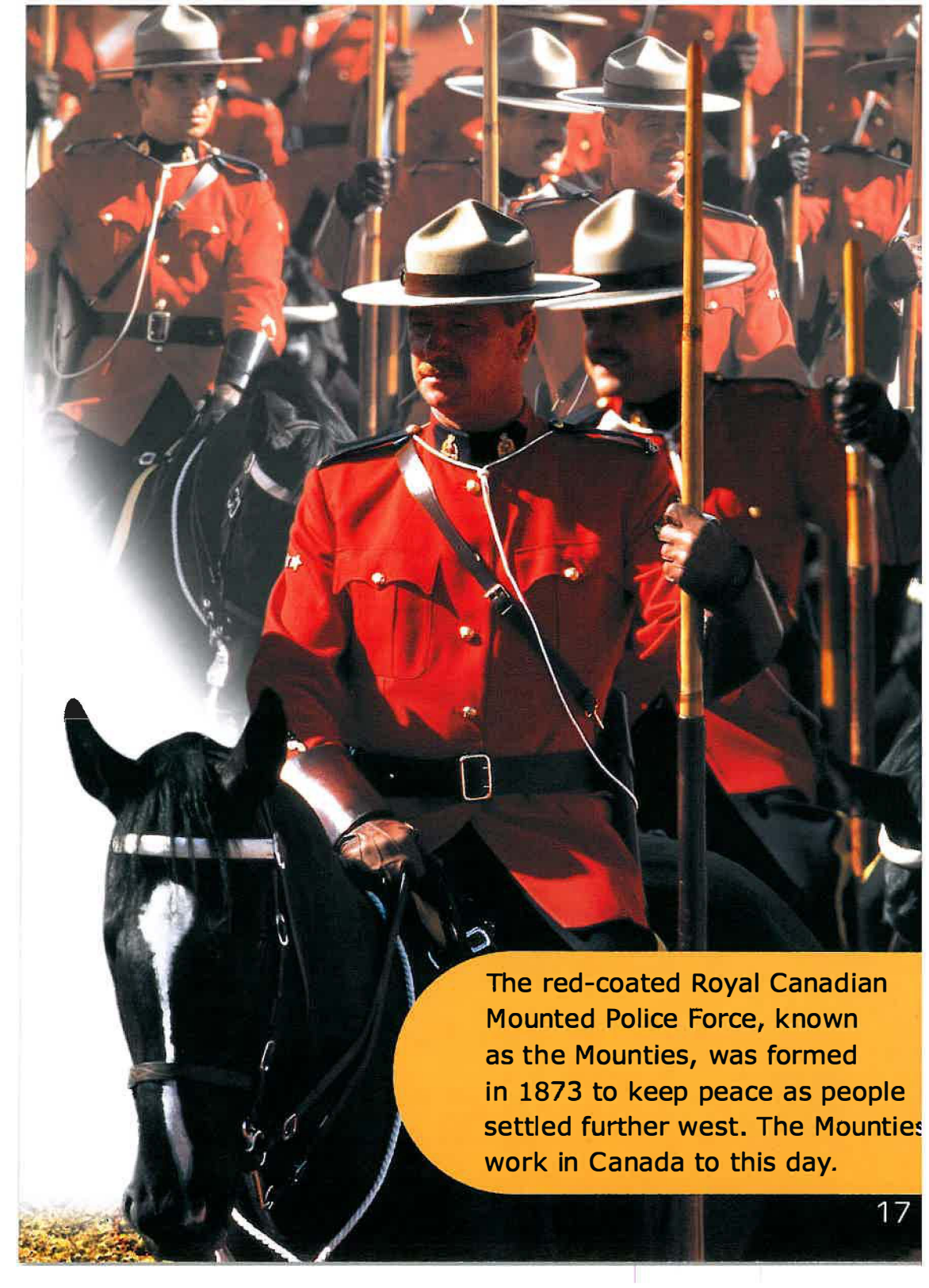
In many cities police ride horses. The mounted police can see further from their high position on the horse. They can control crowds, direct traffic and search for missing people. The horses must be very calm, stay quiet and obey their riders.



Horses have worked so hard for people over the years that the word *horsepower* is often used to measure the pulling power of an engine.







The red-coated Royal Canadian Mounted Police Force, known as the Mounties, was formed in 1873 to keep peace as people settled further west. The Mounties work in Canada to this day.

# The Horse in Stories

The horse has been the star of many stories and movies, and the companion of some famous characters.

Perhaps the most loved horse story of all is *Black Beauty*. It is the tale of a gentle black horse with one white star and one white sock. This book changed forever the way that many people treated horses.



In the 1800s many people travelled by horse and carriage. *Black Beauty* is the story of a London carriage horse. It tells of his adventures with both kind and cruel owners.



Anna Sewell was born in England in 1820. She grew up seeing mistreated carriage horses and cab horses on the city streets. She wrote *Black Beauty* so people would learn how to take better care of horses. The book was first published in 1877.



# The Horse in Art

The beauty of horses has always interested artists. Even in **prehistoric** times hunters painted cave walls with pictures of galloping horses.

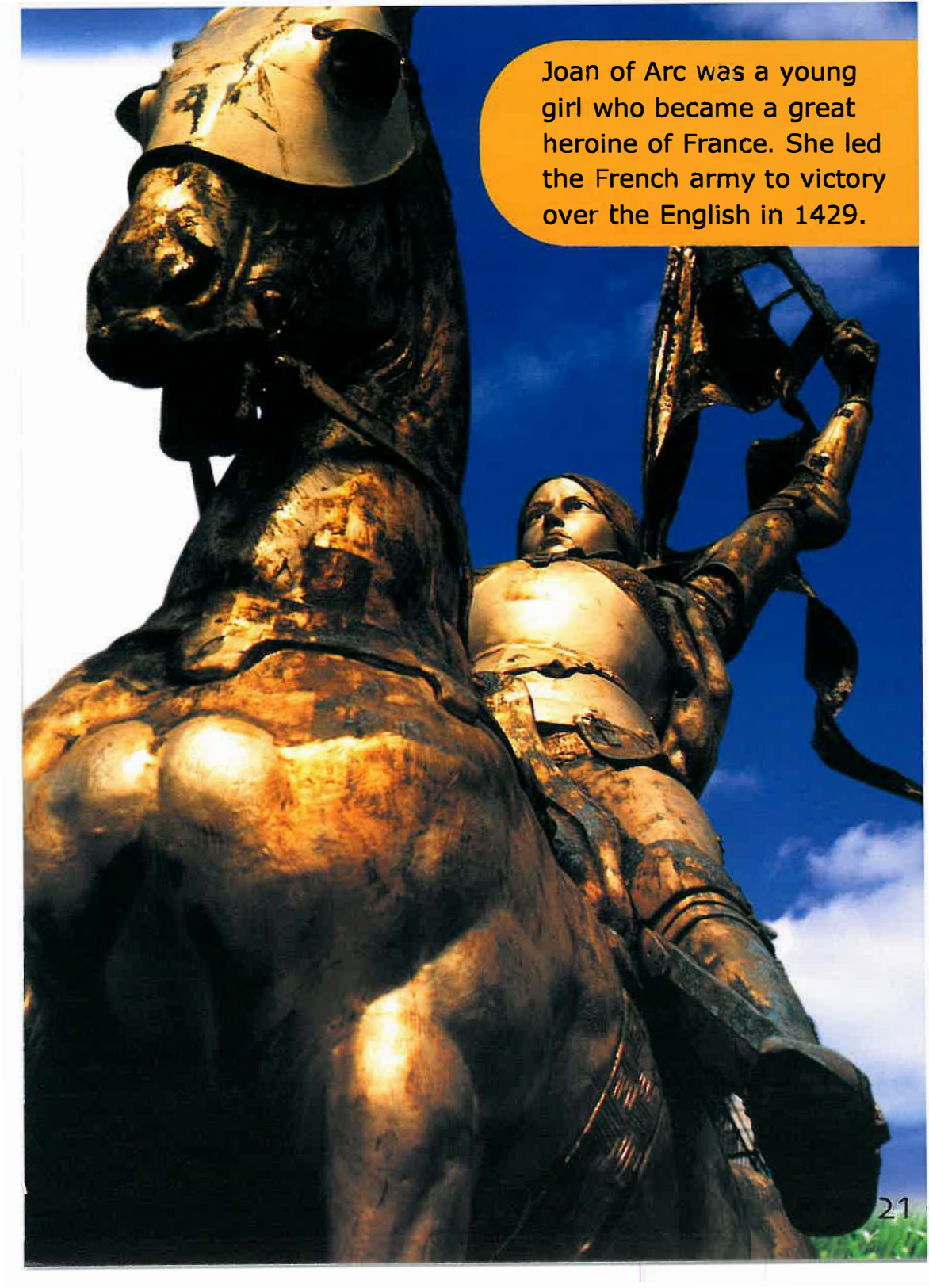
Ancient people often decorated their temples with colourful paintings of horses pulling chariots. They made graceful horses of marble and bronze. All around the world today there are statues showing great leaders of the past riding their fine horses.

FAST FACTS



One of the oldest and largest examples of horse art is the White Horse of Uffington in England. It was carved in a chalk hillside almost 3,000 years ago.



A large, detailed bronze statue of Joan of Arc mounted on a horse. The statue is shown from a low angle, looking up. Joan of Arc is depicted wearing a helmet and armor, holding a banner aloft in her right hand. The horse is also in full armor. The background is a bright blue sky with some white clouds. The statue has a weathered, patinated appearance.

Joan of Arc was a young girl who became a great heroine of France. She led the French army to victory over the English in 1429.

# Glossary

**charger** – a strong fast horse that is used in battle or in parade. Chargers and their riders used to wear armour as protection.

**chariot** – a horse-drawn vehicle with two wheels. Chariots were used in ancient times for battles and races.

**dressage** – the dance-like performance of a horse trained to obey special signals from its rider

**military** – a word that describes things to do with soldiers

**myth** – an old story which people told to help explain things that were hard to understand. Myths are not true.

**prehistoric** – a word that describes the time before people started to record events

**stallion** – an adult male horse. Female horses are called mares and very young horses are called foals.

**tournament** – a contest in which knights on horseback used poles to knock each other off their horses



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# Discussion Starters

- 1 Some horses spend their whole lives working for their owners. Do you think horses enjoy being with people, or do you think they should be allowed to run wild and free? Why?
- 2 Through time horses have had a special place in people's lives. Which kind of horse do you think was most important to people in the past? Which do you think is most important today? Why?
- 3 Of all the horses in this book, which do you find most interesting? Why?

