

Name _____



How Horses Move

Horses are known for their powerful and graceful movement. They are land animals and cannot fly, but they are excellent runners.

Horses move by walking, trotting, cantering, and galloping. Each of these gaits, or ways of moving, serves a different purpose and speed.

Walking is the slowest gait. When a horse walks, it moves one foot at a time in a steady rhythm. Trotting is faster than walking. In a trot, a horse lifts two diagonal legs together, creating a bouncy movement.

The canter is a smooth and faster gait than the trot. It has a three-beat rhythm where one leg leads while the others follow. Galloping is the fastest gait a horse can perform. When galloping, all four hooves leave the ground for a brief moment, allowing the horse to cover great distances quickly.

Horses can reach impressive speeds. Some horses, like the Thoroughbred breed, can run as fast as 55 miles per hour in short bursts. Their long legs, strong muscles, and balanced body help them run efficiently.

Horses also have a special way of moving called pacing, where both legs on one side move together. This movement is often seen in some racing horses.

A horse's ability to move quickly and gracefully helps it escape predators in the wild. Their strong legs and excellent balance make them one of the fastest land animals.

