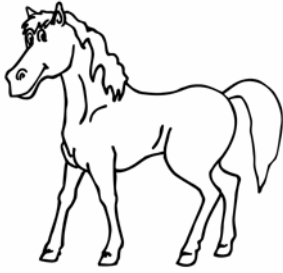


KENTUCKY DERBY



The Kentucky Derby is a horse race. It happens on the first Saturday in May. It is one of the most famous horse races in the world. It is part of the “Triple Crown of Thoroughbred Horse Races” in the United States. The Triple Crown also includes the Preakness Stakes and the Belmont Stakes.

The Kentucky Derby takes place on a one and a quarter mile (two kilometers) dirt track. The horses must run around the dirt track. The first horse to run around the dirt track is covered in a blanket of roses. For this reason, the Kentucky Derby is also called the “Run for the Roses”.

The track is not very long, and so the race is very short. The Kentucky Derby is “The Most Exciting Two Minutes in Sports” for many people. The record for the fastest horse is held by Secretariat, who ran in one minute, fifty-nine seconds in 1973.

The horses that race in the Kentucky Derby are three-year-old thoroughbreds. Colts and geldings (male horses) and fillies (female horses) can participate.

Horses and horse breeding have been part of Kentucky culture for over a century. The Kentucky Derby is a celebration of the horse breeding culture, and it is important in the culture of Kentucky and in the American South. Because of the race’s history, many traditions have developed to go with the Derby. People drink special drinks and eat special food at the Kentucky Derby. They drink mint juleps, which are made of sugar, mint, and bourbon. They eat burgoo, which is a stew made with beef, pork, chicken, and vegetables. They also eat Derby pie, which is made with walnuts and chocolate.

The Kentucky Derby is also important in Kentucky society. It is a time for women to put on their dressiest clothes. They wear very fancy hats. The men wear suits. Many wealthy people and famous celebrities go to the Kentucky Derby. It is a time to “see and be seen” for many people. It is also a chance to make (or lose) money, as people bet on their favorite horses.

The racetrack where the Kentucky Derby is held is called “Churchill Downs”. This racetrack seats fewer than 50,000 people. Getting tickets to sit in these seats is very complicated and can take years. About 155,000 people total attend the Kentucky Derby every year. The people who don’t get to sit in the seats sit in the “Infield”, an area inside the track. They can’t really watch the race from there, but they still get to have fun and be part of a great sports event.

Name _____ Date _____

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ABOUT *THE KENTUCKY DERBY*

1. When does the Kentucky Derby take place?
 - a. on a two mile track
 - b. in Kentucky
 - c. in the spring
 - d. none of the above

2. What kinds of horses run in the Kentucky Derby?
 - a. thoroughbred horses only
 - b. colts and geldings only
 - c. fillies only
 - d. any horse that can run the track in two minutes

3. Why is the Derby called the “Most Exciting Two Minutes in Sports”?
 - a. The last two minutes of the race are very exciting.
 - b. The race usually lasts about two minutes.
 - c. The record for the fastest horse was less than two minutes.
 - d. Basketball is more exciting.

4. Why is the Kentucky Derby important in Kentucky?
 - a. Horses are part of Kentucky culture.
 - b. The drinks are delicious.
 - c. It is the only time of year that people eat burgoo.
 - d. Roses are an important part of Kentucky history.

5. Which of the following groups goes to the Kentucky Derby?
 - a. It is very popular for children.
 - b. Only people who like wearing fancy clothes go to the Derby.
 - c. Rich and famous people go to the Kentucky Derby.
 - d. The article doesn’t mention who goes.

6. About how many people sit in the infield area at the Kentucky Derby?
 - a. A hundred thousand
 - b. A hundred and fifty thousand
 - c. Fifty thousand
 - d. It is not possible to answer this from the information in the article.

ANSWERS TO *THE KENTUCKY DERBY*

1. c
2. a
3. b
4. a
5. c
6. a