

Game
booklet
For 8-12
years-old



Horse in Majesty

At the Heart of
a Civilisation *Until 3 November 2024*

CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

The horse, a sovereign animal

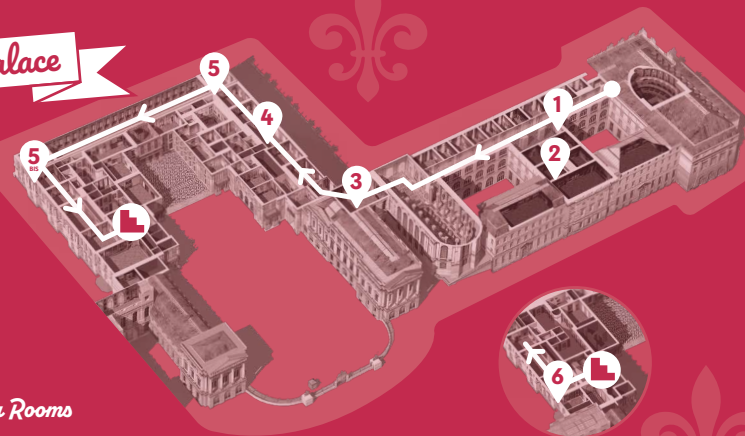
1 Upper Stone Gallery

Did you spot the equestrian statue of Louis XIV in front of the Palace? Considered humankind's "most noble conquest", the horse occupies a central place at Versailles. As the first knight of the kingdom, the king liked to be represented on horseback in the manner of all great heroes and conquerors. The message was clear: by showing he tamed his horse, he asserted his power and ability to govern his subjects. The horse was at the centre of court life: in the education of princes and princesses, war, celebrations and royal transport. This is what you will learn all about in the *Horse in Majesty* exhibition, the first one on the subject, which reflects the equestrian events of the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games taking place at the Palace of Versailles this summer.



Louis XIV, King of France (1638–1715), circa 1674 →

Map of the Palace



First floor

1 Upper Stone Gallery

2 Vestibule and Crimea Rooms

3 Hercules Salon

4 King's State Apartment

5 War Room

5 Peace Room

Ground level

6 The Dauphine's Apartment



Queen Victoria, 1865–1867

The horse, a royal figure

1 Upper Stone Gallery

From the 18th century, princes, kings and queens in courts across Europe discovered a genuine passion for all things equestrian, to do with horses. The number, strength and beauty of their horses, and the splendour of their stables and equipment reinforced the image of power. Mythic figures, horses were also companions in everyday life, as you can see in the equestrian portraits and the vast gallery of horse paintings, which also show sovereigns' attachment to their loyal steeds.

2 Some words in Queen Victoria's message have been erased. Can you put them back in the right place?

ponies Victoria
mourning princesses
dogs

1 Queen Victoria loved horse riding, and is sitting "side-saddle". Do you think this means:

- ☐ Riding without a saddle?
- ☐ Sitting with both legs on one side?
- ☐ Riding in trousers with one leg on each side?

Mounted on Flora, one of her favourite , Queen is in deep for her husband, in front of Osborne House. The two Louise and Helena and her Sharp and Skye are in the background.



↑ Persian rider and page in "Head and Ring Races", 1662.

Parade horses

2 Vestibule and Crimea Rooms

Faithful companions, horses attended every festivity. Jousts, carousels, races and parades were all occasions to display the magnificence of the court in full view of every guest. Sporting ceremonial harnesses, richly embroidered caparisons, tail decorations, feathers and bells, the horses on parade were as lavishly dressed as their rider. Nothing was too much for the king and his entourage, as the equestrian celebration objects on display in the exhibition show.

3 Look at this drawing showing riders and their mounts in dress worn at carousels, events in which they took part in a variety of sports. Can you spot which of these details does not belong to the image above?

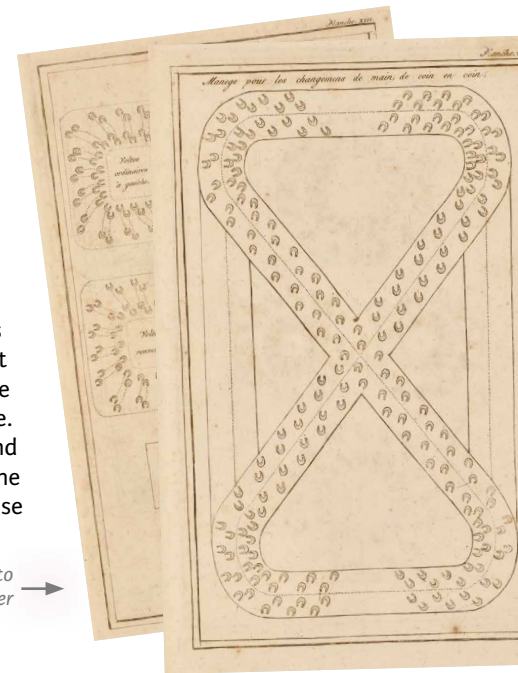


Equestrian art

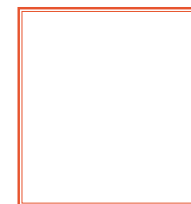
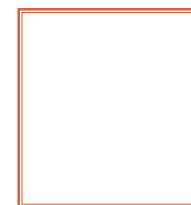
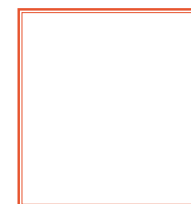
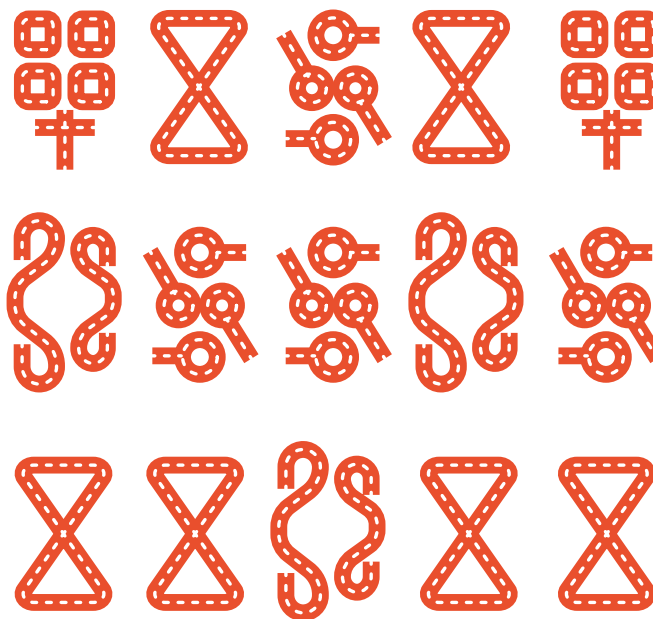
2 Vestibule and Crimea Rooms

Horse riding, as an art form, was an important discipline in the education of princes who were taught from an early age by the best riders. Perfected in Versailles, French equitation emphasises the harmonious relationship between rider and horse. Being a good rider means manoeuvring the horse with a gentle hand, without being forceful, to encourage the animal to move with grace and show respect according to nature. Demivolt, pirouettes, levade, balotade, courvet and croupade are some of the figures practised in the riding arena, a covered place where riders practise riding on their horses.

The art of cavalry, or The way to become a good rider →



4 These diagrams represent traditional riding figures. Look at the images, and draw the next logical step in the sequence:



Equestrian equipment and armour

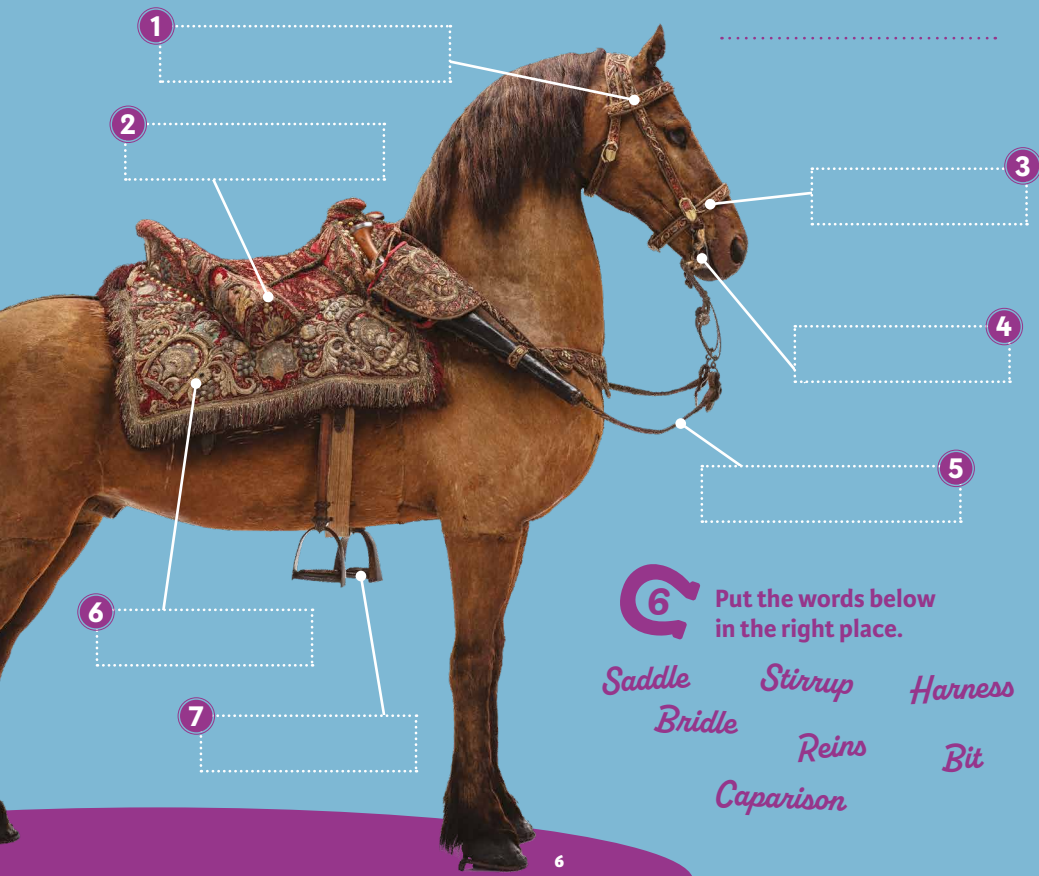
3 Hercules Salon

The equestrian armour on show in the exhibition features some of the most spectacular pieces presented. Some pieces were designed to protect the horse on the battlefield, while the more luxurious pieces had a ceremonial purpose. One of the most common items here, called a shaffron, shows the excellence of the master armourers, between the 15th and 17th centuries. This protective armour for a horse's head, which covered the most fragile part of the animal, could take mind-blowing forms, like this dragon-shaped mask shaffron you can see in this room.



Rearrange the letters to spell out this piece of armour.

HFNAOSFR



Put the words below in the right place.

Saddle Stirrup Harness
Bridle Reins Bit
Caparison

Palaces for horses

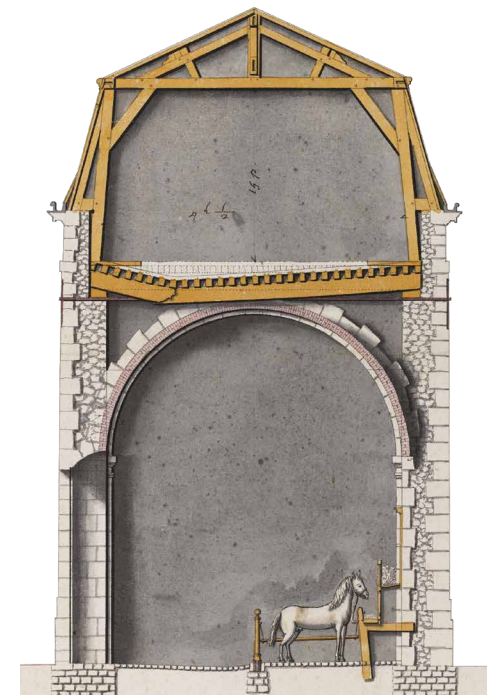
5 War & Peace Rooms

Almost as beautiful and spacious as the Palace, the royal stables are a testament to the consideration and care given to the horses. It was Jules Hardouin-Mansart, Louis XIV's first architect (to whom we also owe the Hall of Mirrors!), who designed them. The large stables housed the war horses, parade horses and dressage horses; the small stables housed the carriage horses. The Grand Equerry was in charge of looking after the Great Stables; the Premier Equerry looked after the Small Stables. Under Louis XV, a woman, the Countess of Brionne, held the post of Grand Equerry: a major first! About 700 horses lived there at the end of Louis XIV's reign, and more than 2,000 in Louis XVI's time.



Did you know?

The horses were named according to their personalities or physical characteristics, such as Fantastic, Coffee, Pleasant, Balloon, Bijou, Buffoon...



Lateral view of the King's Great Stables in Versailles, 1695



Almost 1,500 people worked in the stables! To find out who did what, link each job to its description.

Blacksmith 1

Page 2

Coachman 3

Equerry 4

Groom 5

a Trains the horses and teaches horse riding

b Shoes the horses

c Cleans the stalls and feeds the horses

d Drives the carriages

e Rider in the king's entourage

Remarkable horse

📍 Hall of Mirrors

This 17th-century equestrian portrait painted by Justus Sustermans depicts Prince Leopoldo de' Medici on his white horse, which strongly expresses the union of human and animal. The horse's remarkable mane gives it an air of majesty and wisdom: the horse appears to watch over the boy and lead him to maturity. This impression is reinforced by the difference in size between the child and his sturdy steed. Exhibited in the Hall of Mirrors, this masterpiece is being shown in France for the first time.

8 Spot the 7 differences between these two paintings.

?? Did you know?
Leopoldo de' Medici, who later became a cardinal, is around just seven years old in this portrait.

→
Equestrian portrait of Leopoldo de' Medici, circa 1624–1625



The horse as model

6 The Dauphine's Apartment

Following on from equestrian portraits, where kings were painted on horses to raise their prestige, the animal itself became a subject to paint. Painters and sculptors were particularly inspired by its nobility and strength. Many paintings depict horses alone in a landscape, but we can also find true portraits. For example, the famous piebald horse (by painter Paulus Potter), which seems to be meditating looking out to the landscape, or the beautiful head painted by Théodore Géricault that you can see in this room.

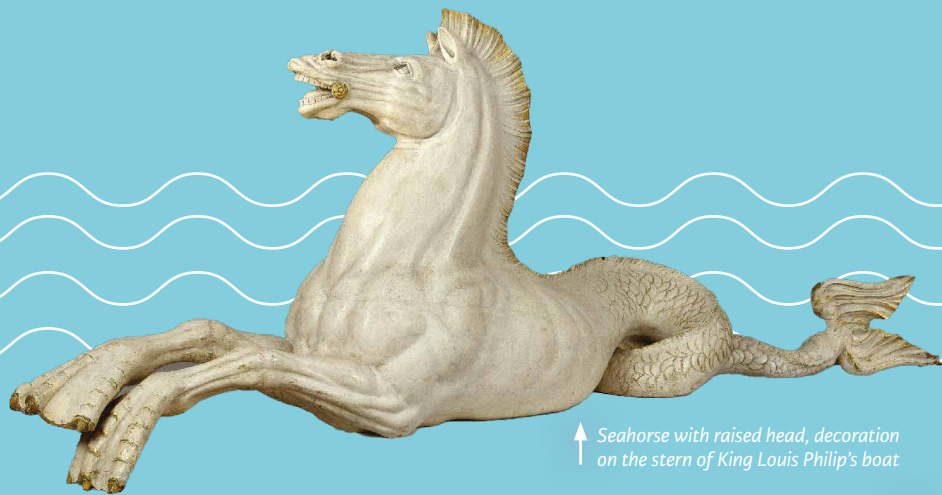
9 It was also the diversity that made the royal stables so prestigious: there are many different breeds of horse. Look carefully at this word search puzzle and see how many you can find.

P	E	R	C	H	E	R	O	N	N
A	R	A	B	I	A	N	P	A	M
M	E	R	E	N	S	M	Z	I	U
R	A	O	D	F	M	Z	N	N	S
S	Z	T	T	K	I	A	O	A	T
I	Z	E	A	P	N	W	E	T	A
L	U	S	I	T	A	N	O	E	N
A	L	L	E	B	A	L	A	F	G
I	I	F	R	I	E	S	I	A	N
A	P	P	A	L	O	O	S	A	S



↑
The Piebald Horse Pie, circa 1650–1654

APPALOOSA
ARABIAN
ARDENNAIS
FALABELLA
FRIESIAN
LIPIZZAN
LUSITANO
MERENS
MUSTANG
PERCHERON



↑ Seahorse with raised head, decoration on the stern of King Louis Philip's boat

Mythical horse

6 The Dauphine's Apartment

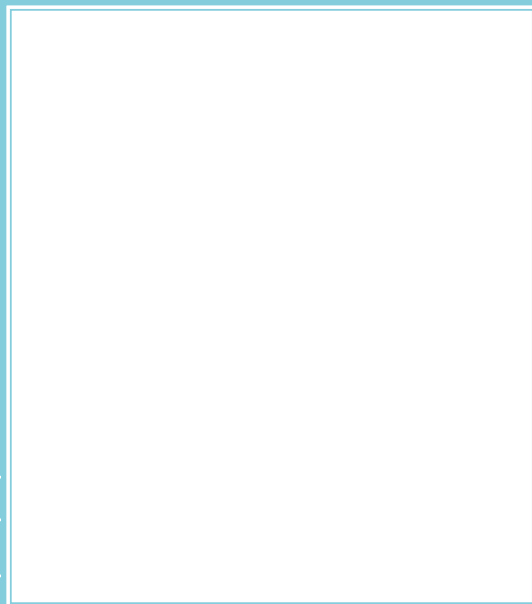
Unicorns, centaurs, winged horses... as you can see in this last part of the exhibition, fascination with the horse's body gave rise to all kinds of hybrid, fantastical creatures that populate the pages of mythology. Have a look!

Perseus ↓



10

If you were asked to imagine a mythical horse, how would you draw it?



Horses all over Versailles

Palace Gardens

Now that you've been through all the exhibition rooms, if you still have some energy, go for a walk around the Estate and have a look around the gardens. You'll see that horses are everywhere at Versailles, and that there are lots of sculptures of them. On the Place d'Armes in front of the Palace, with the equestrian statue of Louis XIV; on the front of the stables opposite the Palace where the Equestrian Academy is now located; in the Coach Gallery (inside the Great Stables); in the Palace Gardens, with the sculptures in the Grove of Apollo's Bath, or in the Apollo Fountain, in the centre of the Grande Perspective...

11

Horses can lead you on a merry steeplechase at Versailles! Link each of these details to where they were photographed.



1



2



3



4

a

Coach Gallery
(Great Stables)

b

Equestrian
statue of
Louis XIV
(In front of the Palace)

c

Pediment on the
front of the Equestrian
Academy
(Great Stables)

d

Apollo Fountain
(Palace Gardens)

Stone horses

📍 Palace Gardens



1



2



3



4



12

Horses also feature in the Grove of Apollo's Bath, in the Palace gardens. Only one of these outlines matches the sculpture. Which one?



The equestrian events of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games will take place at the Palace of Versailles: dressage, jumping and eventing (a sort of triathlon that combines the first two with cross country) are on the programme.

Family visits

The Palace of Versailles invites you to explore the Estate during **family visits** and **fun activity workshops** on Wednesdays, weekends and during school holidays. Find full information on en.chateauversailles.fr/family



To make sure you don't miss out on any news and updates, sign up for the Palace of Versailles family newsletter.

ANSWERS: Puzzle 1 Both legs on the same side **Puzzle 2** "Mounted on Flora, one of her favourite ponies, Queen Victoria is in deep mourning for her husband, in front of Osborne House. The two princesses Louise and Helena and her dogs Sharp and Skye are in the background." **Puzzle 3** Detail 2 **Puzzle 4**



Puzzle 5 SHAFFRON
Puzzle 6 1: Harness
2: Saddle
3: Bridle
4: Bit
5: Reins
6: Caparason
7: Stirrup
Puzzle 7 1b - 2e - 3d - 4a - 5c



Puzzle 8

Puzzle 9



Puzzle 11 1d - 2a - 3c - 4b
Puzzle 12 Outline 1