



Activity One - Take in a Movie

At least two versions of *The Red Pony* have been released, one in 1949 and another in 1973. The 1949 version, starring Robert Mitchum and Myrna Loy, deals mainly with the first chapter of this novel, *The Gift*. The 1973 version stars Henry Fonda as Carl Tiflin, and Clint Howard (Ron Howard's brother) as Jody.

Choose either Task A or Task B

TASK A

Your task is to take in a viewing of one of the adaptations of *The Red Pony*. Write a brief report (approximately one page in length) comparing the actual novel with a movie adaptation. You might consider the following:

- How the film brought the novel to life (or failed to).
- How suited were the actors to their roles?
- Were any "liberties" taken with the novel's adaptation to the big screen?
- Do you think the media of film is superior to a novel?
- Are there any significant changes you would recommend to the producer of the film?

TASK B

There are a number of other classic movies featuring horses and young people. These include, *Misty, My Friend Flicka, National Velvet, Black Beauty, The Black Stallion, The White Pony, Danny, Ride a Wild Pony, and Thunderhead – Son of Flicka*. Take in the viewing of one of these movies (or another one featuring a horse and young person). Write a brief report (approximately one page in length) comparing this movie with the novel, *The Red Pony*. You might consider the following:

- What were some of the similarities / differences between the two? Consider the characters, the horses, the plot, the conclusions.
- Which did you think made the biggest and most lasting impression, and why?
- Do you think the media of film is superior to a novel?
- Are there any significant changes you would recommend to the producer of the film?

Consider this...

In the 1949 version of *The Red Pony*, Jody's name is changed to **Tom "Big Britches" Tiflin**. Also appearing in this adaptation is 8 year old **Beau Bridges**, who went on to stardom as an adult actor.



Activity Two

My Kingdom for a Horse

There is an ancient saying, *There are three kinds of horses: noble, good for battle and work; common, good for carrying burdens but not for riding; and hybrids, born from a mixture of two kinds.* In actual fact there are dozens of horse breeds, from the **Arabian** to the **Zaniskari Pony**; from the huge **Belgian Draft Horse** to the tiny **Shetland Pony**. Your task is to investigate a breed of your choice.

Your research might include facts about the origin of this breed, physical characteristics (i.e. size, coloring) temperament, where in the world it might be found today, and how it has been used by mankind. You may also wish to include a drawing of the breed.

If you wish to extend this activity, choose a second breed of horse and compare it to your original choice. This comparison might be done in the form of a Venn Diagram.

Consider this...

Lippizzanas were developed in Austria about 400 years ago. They are trained to do difficult exercises and dance moves to music. When they are born they are a very dark color, but as they grow older their coat gradually gets lighter in color until finally at about 10 years of age they are snow white.



Activity Three

Author! Author!

John Steinbeck (1902 – 1968) was one of the best-known and most widely read American writers of the 20th century. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature as well as the Pulitzer Prize (***The Grapes of Wrath***). He even had an American postage stamp issued in his honor. Steinbeck had a special knack for writing vividly about the working people of North America – especially those who struggled through the Great Depression of the 1930's.

Research the life of this great writer and write a one-page report highlighting his personal life and accomplishments. You might wish to consider:

- his birthplace, family, early life, close friends
- education and early training
- other interests
- inspirations (especially regarding ***The Red Pony***)
- struggles? critics?
- fame and how it affected him
- later life / death
- his service in World War II



Activity Six - Oh Farmer!

This activity can be done individually or in small groups.

Jody seemed to relish growing up on a farm. Although there didn't seem to be any other boys living close by, he had many activities to keep him more than busy. Especially exciting must have been the animals that populated the Tiflin farm: horses, cows, pigs, chickens, dogs, cats . . . Although Jody often had to work very hard to support his family's livelihood, it seemed to be a very rewarding life.

Imagine that **you** are the owner of a farm or ranch. Your assignment is to plan the kind of farm that you would like to run. From the box below you are to select the number of items indicated and then describe what role these items would play in your establishment. This will require some investigation. You must also add detail to each selection – for example if you choose cattle – what breed(s) of cattle would you raise – and how many? Would they be beef cattle or milk – or a mixture? If it is a crop: how many acres would you devote to this crop? You might even investigate how much each acre will yield, and how much money that would bring to you. It is important that you run a profitable enterprise!

Farm Animals (3)

Cattle
Horses
Chickens
Sheep
Pigs

Crops (2)

Corn
Wheat
Barley
Vegetables
Pumpkins

Finally. Think about what **buildings** you will need to run the farm – to store the crops and shelter your stock (i.e. silos, chicken coops). Make a list of the buildings needed. Note: Not including the farmhouse, you may not have more than **four** buildings.
