

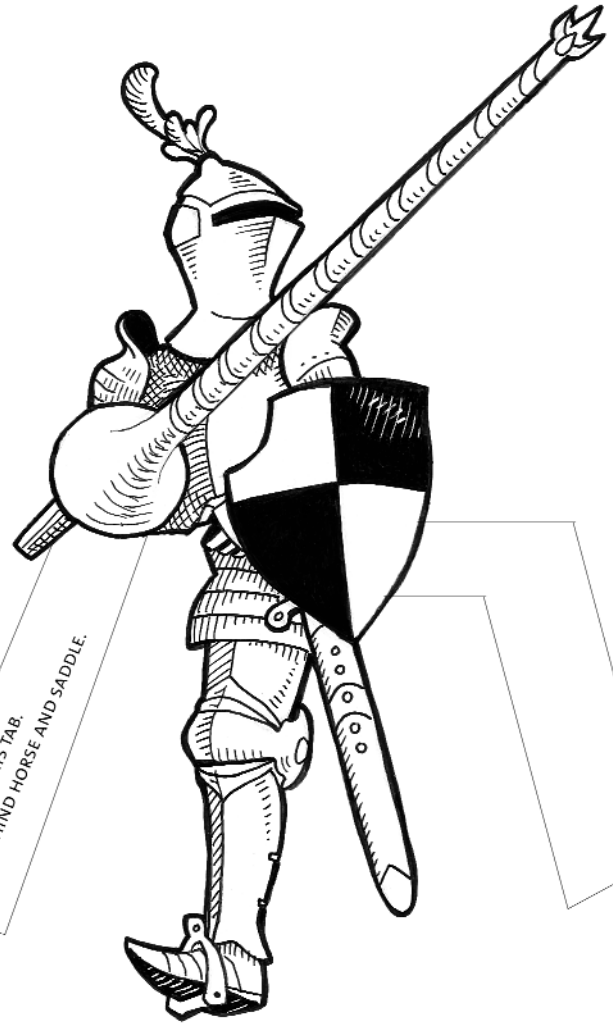
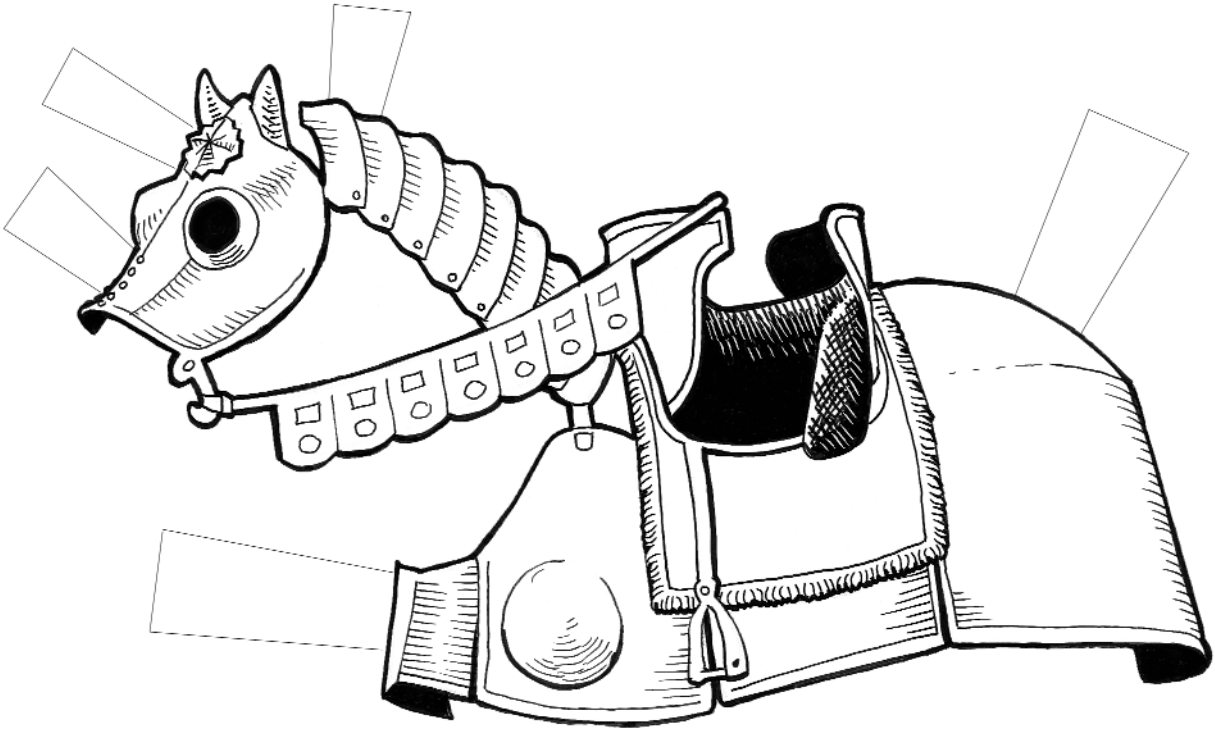
# Dress Up a Horse

Throughout time, people have dressed horses in different ways. Depending on the culture, this gear has been used for practical reasons, to reflect status or wealth, or both.

Check out these six riders and styles of horse gear from different world cultures.

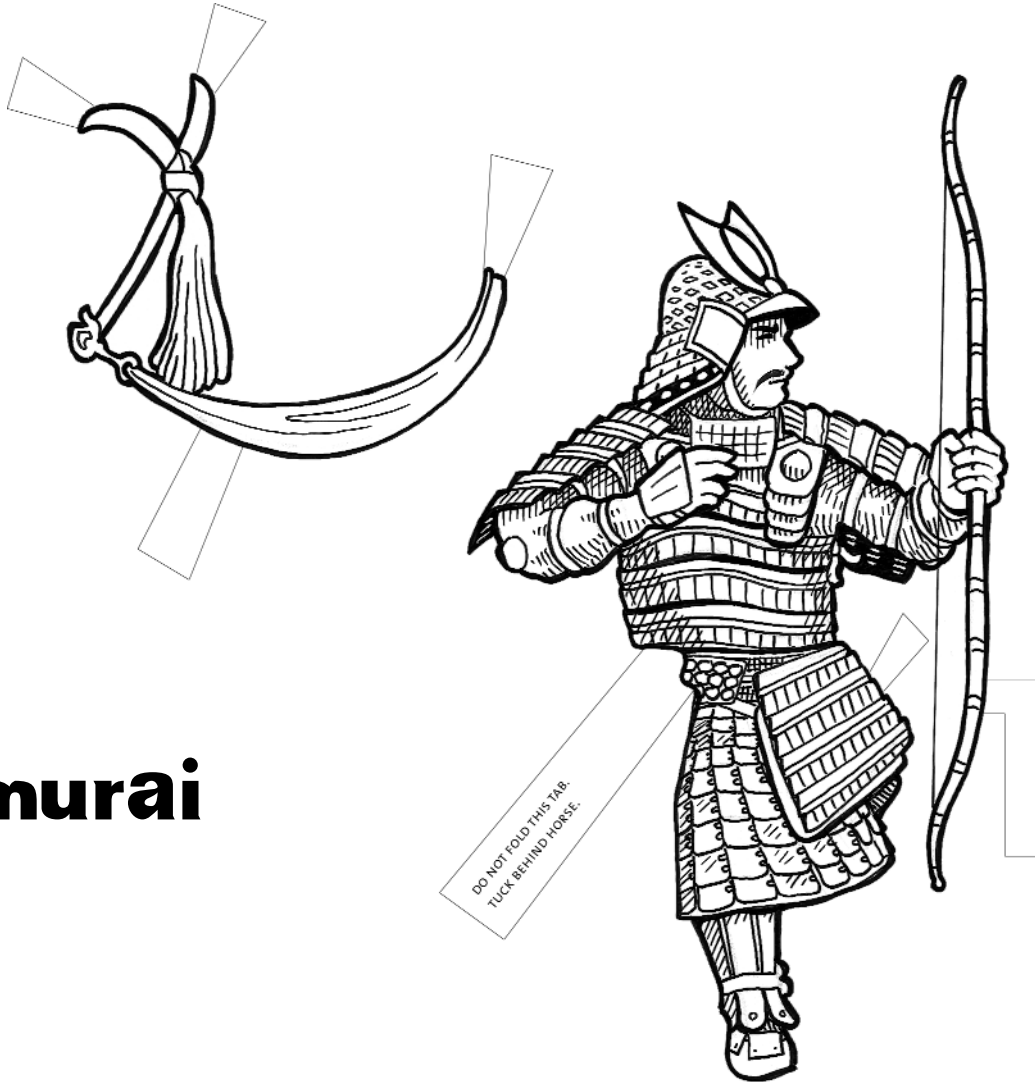
**Choose one to dress up your horse!**

**[amnh.org/ology](http://amnh.org/ology)**

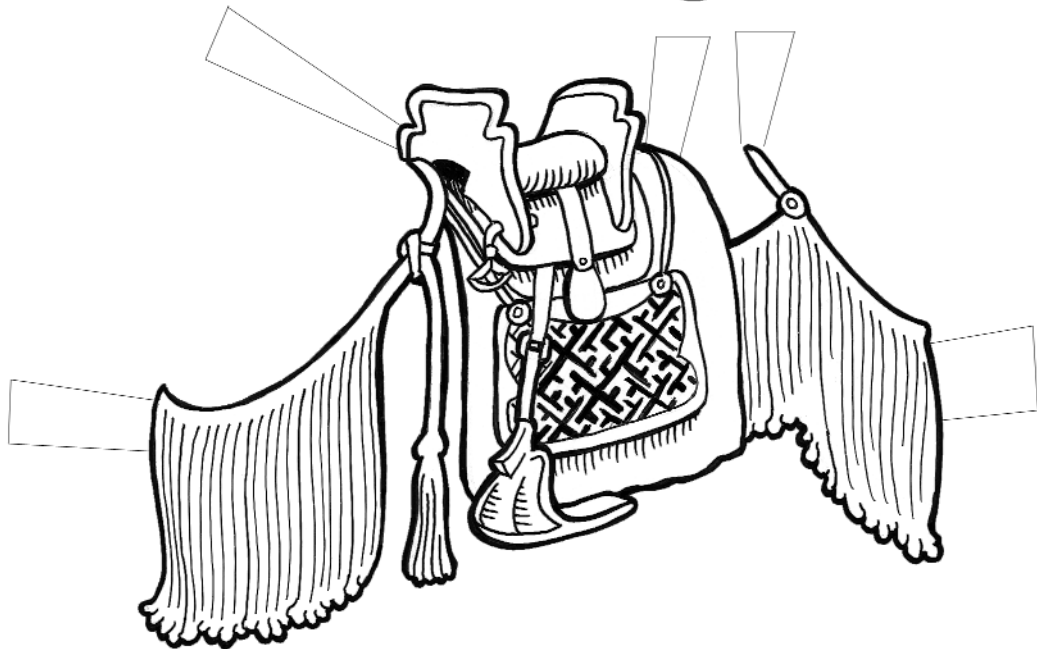


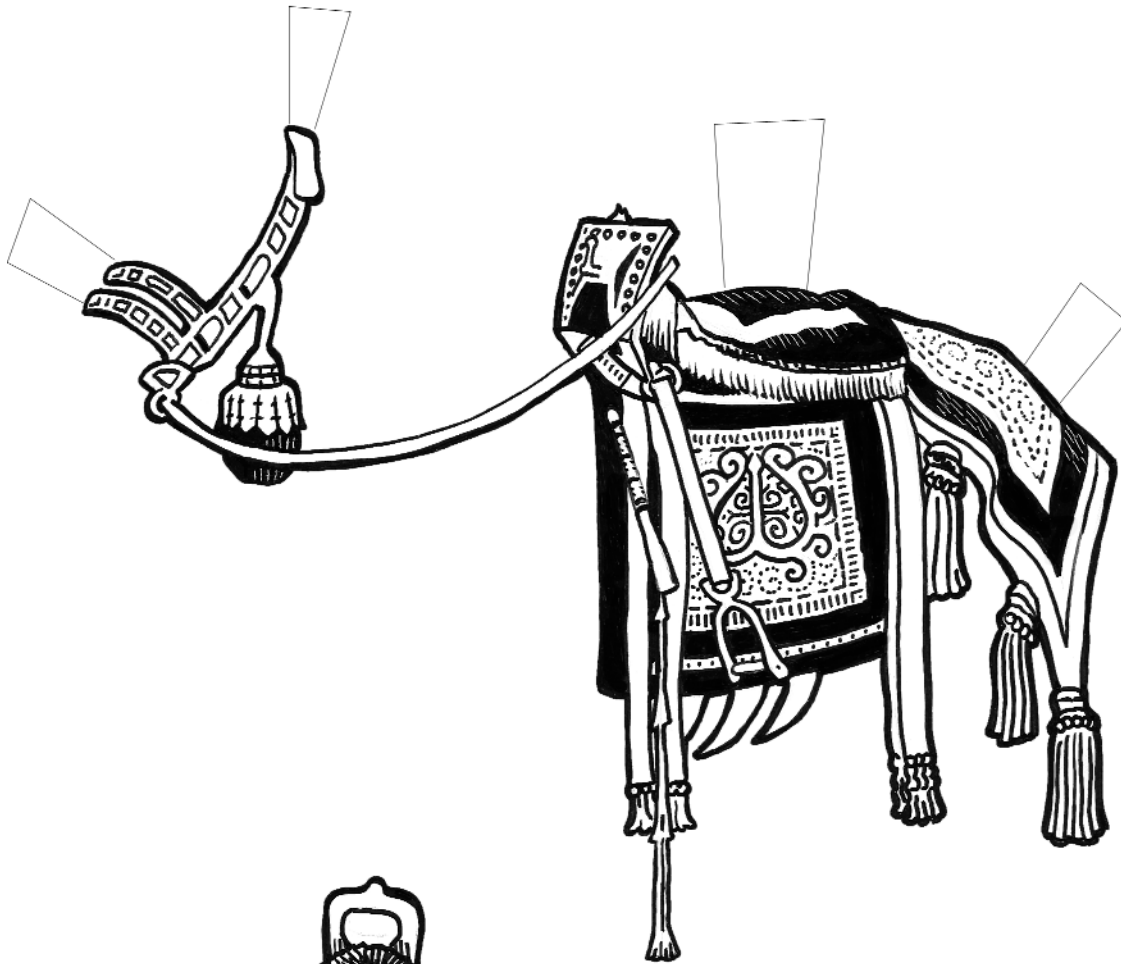
# Knight

DO NOT FOLD THIS TAB.  
TUCK BEHIND HORSE AND SADDLE.



# Samurai



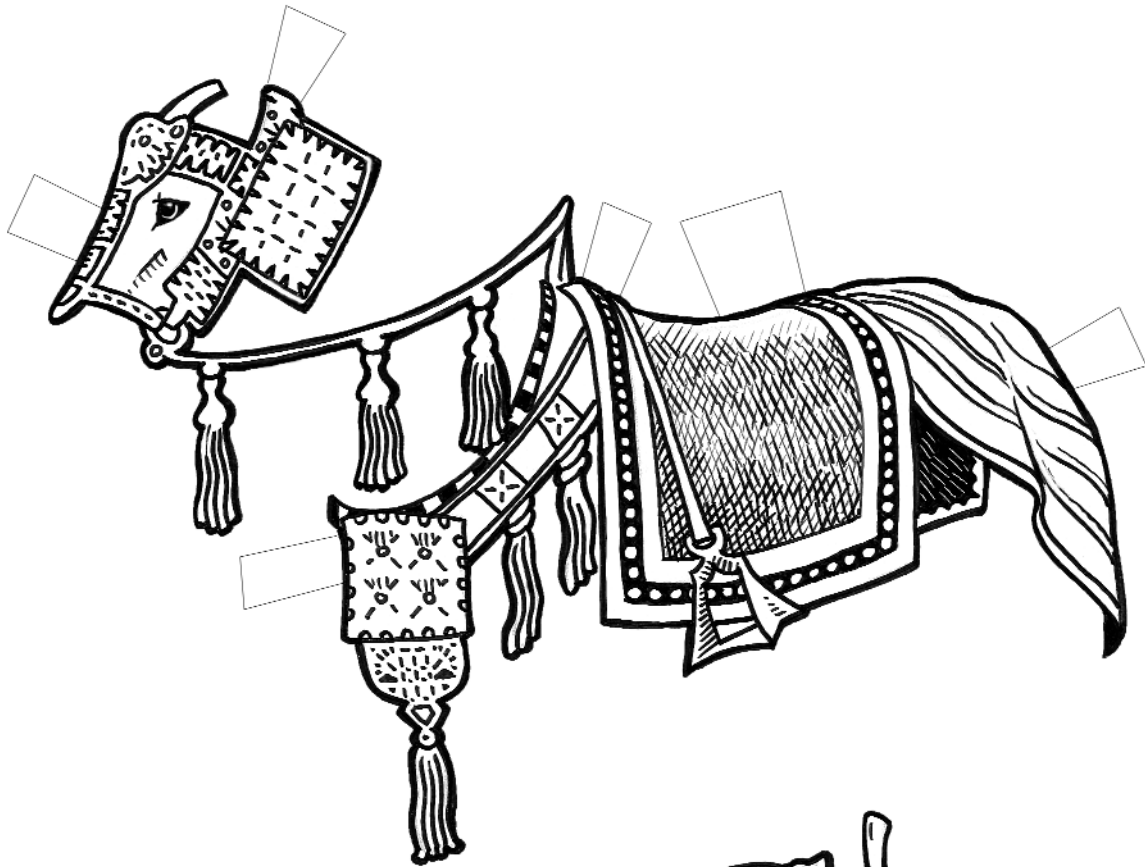


## Sakha Woman

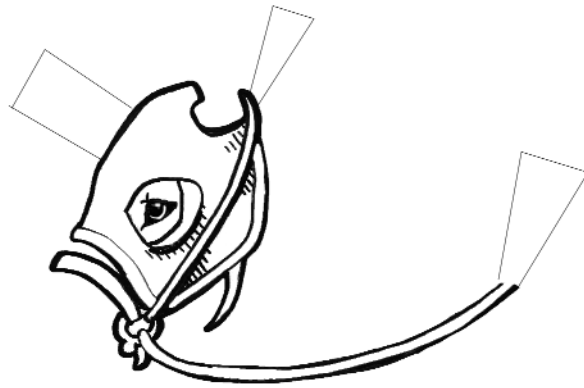


# Native American Woman of the Plains

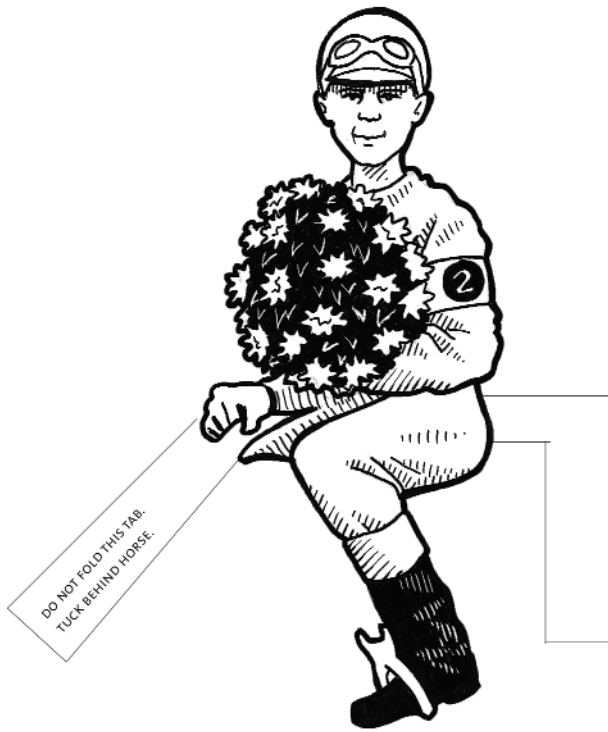




# West African Horseman



# Kentucky Derby Champion



DO NOT FOLD THIS TAB.  
TUCK BEHIND HORSE.





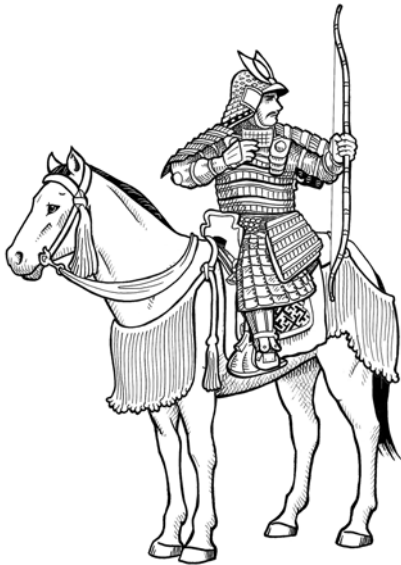
## **Knight**

**Place:** Europe

**Era:** 500 to 1500s

During the Middle Ages and beyond, lords were served by high-ranking soldiers called knights. Knights fought on horseback, making them faster, bigger, and stronger than foot soldiers. Both the knights and their horses wore elaborate heavy steel armor for protection.

To carry this heavy armor, European horses were bred to be larger and stronger than other horses of the region. The largest horses were reserved for battle and jousting. Sometimes knights chose to ride faster horses into battle, and smaller horses for everyday use.



## **Samurai**

**Place:** Japan

**Era:** Late 800s to late 1800s

For about a thousand years, an elite class of warriors known as the samurai fought for the warlords of Japan. Only the samurai were allowed to ride horses in battle. They were skilled at fighting on horseback, whether shooting bows and arrows or wielding their powerful swords. Samurai were trained to follow a strict moral code called Bushido, or “the way of the warrior.” Bushido emphasized honor, loyalty, bravery, discipline, and military training.

The samurai wore armor and helmets for protection. A samurai’s saddle was high in the front and back to keep him secure while riding or fighting. The stirrups were curved over to cover his toes.



## **Sakha Woman**

**Place:** Eastern Siberia

**Era:** 1200s to present

The Sakha were once called “the people of the horse.” They relied on horses to survive in the harsh and cold environment of the Arctic. They were horse herders, using horses for food, clothing, and transport. Even horsehair was used for making thread and fishnets. The Sakha also milked their mares (female horses) to make koumiss, a nutritious part of their diet. Horses play an important role in Sakha celebrations, too. At the summer solstice festival, they hold horse races. In the past, a wealthy Sakha woman might ride to the festival on a finely decorated saddle and carry a whip trimmed with silver. Even today, although many Sakha live in the city, the horse is still a powerful symbol found in music, stories, and spiritual life.



## **Native American Woman of the Plains**

**Place:** North American Plains

**Era:** Early 1700s to present



Horses had long been extinct in North America when the Spanish brought them back to the continent in the 1500s. By the 1700s, horses were an important part of life for tribes of the North American Plains. They depended on horses for travel, hunting, and warfare. And these tribes soon became known for their excellent horsemanship.

In many tribes, the horse became a symbol of power and success. A family's wealth was measured in horses. A man who wanted to marry might give a fine horse to the woman or her family. Horses were carefully dressed, too. Women often made their own saddles and bridles. A wealthy woman would adorn her horse head to tail with beautifully beaded buffalo or buckskin decoration.

## **West African Horseman**

**Place:** Burkina Faso, West African Grasslands

**Era:** 1500s to present



Around a thousand years ago, powerful empires arose in the grasslands of West Africa. Their rulers conquered new territories with cavalries. Cavalries are groups of soldiers fighting on horseback.

While these empires have faded, horses are still kept as symbols of status and power in many regions just south of the Sahara Desert. In many West African cultures, rulers still ride horses in celebrations. They would adorn their horses in extravagant dress to show their wealth. Necklaces are still used to decorate and protect their horses. These decorations often include Islamic designs or symbols.

## **Kentucky Derby Champion**

**Place:** United States

**Era:** 1700s to present



The horse is one of the worlds' fastest land animals. Some horses can reach speeds of over 40 miles an hour! The best-known breed of racehorses is the thoroughbred. They are strong, slender, long-legged animals known for its speed and beauty. Thoroughbreds were first bred 300 years ago in England, and are descended from three legendary Arabian stallions.

Thoroughbred racing spread from England to other regions, including North America and Australia. Today, the most celebrated horse races, like the Kentucky Derby in the United States, are open only to thoroughbreds. To excel in this sport, their jockeys, or riders, must perfect their horsemanship and work with the horse.