

Lesson Plans for Literature
Misty of Chincoteague by Marguerite Henry

In addition to *Misty of Chincoteague*, Marguerite Henry has written a number of books about horses. *King of the Wind*, *Mustang - Wild Spirit of the West*, *Justin Morgan Had a Horse*, and *Born to Trot*, are just a few of her stories.

It is evident she likes to write about horses and probably not far off track to say she loves horses. Her stories usually involve children who love, nurture and respect their horses. These characters mature by way of the challenges and sacrifices they encounter caring for their ponies.

Discussion Questions:

1. What were some emotions you experienced as you read *Misty of Chincoteague*? Why?
2. Describe the character or personality traits of Maureen and Paul?
3. What character would you like to be in this story? Explain your answer.
4. What did you learn from reading this story?
5. What made you wonder in the book? Did anything confuse you?
6. Did Ms. Henry make you more interested in the places or breeds of horses? How did she do it?
7. What questions would you like to ask the author of this book?
8. Would you like to read more Marguerite Henry books?

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Breed Overview

Read overview, physical description, and origin of the Chincoteague pony. Example provided:

History of the Chincoteague Ponies

Two herds of wild horses make their home on Assateague Island, separated by a fence at the Maryland-Virginia line. These small but sturdy, shaggy horses have adapted to their environment over the years by eating dune and marsh grasses and drinking fresh water from ponds. While they appear tame, they are wild, and Park Rangers urge visitors not to feed or pet them. The Maryland herd is managed by the National Park Service. The Virginia herd is owned by the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company. Each year the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company purchases a grazing permit from the National Fish & Wildlife Service. This permit allows the Fire Company to maintain a herd of approximately 150 adult ponies on Assateague Island. The Fire Company controls the herd size with a pony auction on the last Thursday in July. Each year tens of thousands of spectators come to watch the Saltwater Cowboys swim the pony herd from Assateague Island to Chincoteague Island.

Wild ponies have inhabited Assateague Island for hundreds of years. Some have suggested that the wild ponies of Assateague trace their origin to horses released to forage on the Island by early settlers. However, the evidence strongly suggests that they are the descendants of the survivors of a Spanish galleon which wrecked off the coast of Assateague. This story, which has been passed from generation to generation on Chincoteague Island, is stronger than fiction.

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If you've ever seen a shipwreck map of the mid Atlantic coastline, then you know that there were a remarkable number of shipwrecks. Before modern navigation, ships used lighthouses and the stars to navigate at night. This worked well until a bad storm came up or heavy fog set in, which impaired visibility. This caused ships to get off course and hit sandbars along the coast. This would usually occur during a storm and the large waves would beat the wooden ship apart. The large number of shipwrecks, together with the fact that it was very common for ships to be transporting ponies to the Colonies or South America, makes it very likely that ponies originally got to Assateague from a shipwreck.

History of Pony Penning

Penning began as a way for livestock owners to claim, brand, break and harness their loose herds. By the 1700's it had become an annual event, complete with drinking, eating and plenty of revelry by the entire community. The earliest known description of Pony Penning was published in 1835. The practice was then already an "ancient" custom held in June on Assateague Island. Penning on Chincoteague Island is not mentioned until the mid-1800's, and it believed to have been begun by two islanders who owned large herds that grazed on Chincoteague.

The penning continued on both islands for years. By 1885 they were held on Assateague one day and Chincoteague the next. Assateague also had a Sheep Penning, which is believed to be a custom even older than the others. Word of the events began to spread, and hotels and boarding houses were booked for the festivities. In 1909, the last Wednesday and Thursday of July were set as the official dates for the yearly events. As Pony Penning increased in popularity, Assateague's Sheep Penning wound down and was discontinued by 1914.

**"Chincoteague Ponies." Official 2018 Chincoteague Island Pony Swim Guide,
www.chincoteague.com/ponies.html.**

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Activity: Bio-Poems

Write a bio-poem about Paul or Maureen using the following directions:

- Line 1: The character's first name
- Line 2: Four words which describe this character (not in a sentence)
- Line 3: Brother/Sister of ...
- Line 4: Lover of ... list three ideas or things they love
- Line 5: Who feels... list three things
- Line 6: Who needs... list three things
- Line 7: Who gives... list three things
- Line 8: Who fears... list three things
- Line 9: Who would like to see ...
- Line 10: Resident of ...
- Line 11: Last name (if you know it, otherwise repeat the first name)