

Sayings About Horses (Part 2)

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You may have heard people say, “She has blinders on.” Blinders are used to narrow a horse’s sight to just what is in front of him. Without blinders on, horses can be distracted or scared by seeing other horses or other things around them. Blinders allowed people to use horses to pull them in coaches even on a town’s crowded streets.

The oldest blinders were found in Egypt and date from over three thousand years ago. While blinders allow horses to focus and keep going, people do not think it is good for people to be so focused on their goals that they are blind to everything else around them. Thus, if we say, “Frank has blinders on,” we mean that he may be ignoring other important things.

When you think of a horse pulling a cart, you think of a horse in front pulling the cart. If you put the cart first with the horse behind it, it would seem comical. Thus, the

saying, “That’s putting the cart before the horse,” means that someone is putting things in the wrong order.

Riders steer their horses with reins. The reins connect to a metal bit which is in the horse’s mouth. When a horse is motivated to get moving, the horse may champ or chomp at his bit. Thus, people say, “She is chomping at the bit,” to describe someone who is keen to get started on something.

Crossing a stream on horseback can be difficult. A horse can get distracted or confused by the water. If you were stuck in mid-stream you might be tempted to jump off your horse and get on someone else’s. Doing this, however, may lead to more problems. When people say, “Do not switch horses in mid-stream,” they are expressing the idea that during a crisis it is best to stay with your old partners, teammates, and supports.