

## Kentucky Derby (May 5, 2026)

# TEACHING GUIDE

**What?** The Kentucky Derby, the most famous thoroughbred horse race in the United States, held annually since 1875.

**Who?** Three-year-old thoroughbreds, their jockeys, their trainers, and more than 150,000 spectators in their finest hats.

**Where?** At Churchill Downs, a racetrack located in Louisville, Kentucky, in the southeastern United States.

**When?** The first Saturday in May each year. In 2026, it was May 2nd.

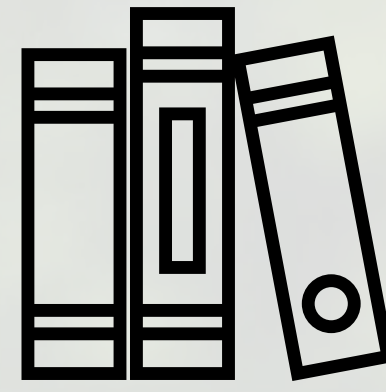
**Why is it important?** Because it's a great 150-year-old American cultural tradition that blends sport, elegance, music, and history in a spectacular two-minute race.

**For this activity, your goal will be to learn more about the Kentucky Derby.**



### OBJECTIVES

- Understand what the Kentucky Derby is and its history
- Discover the 2026 edition and the first victory by a female trainer
- Interpret probabilities presented as fractions
- Compare probabilities and understand that an unlikely outcome can still occur
- Convert units of time and compare durations



### SUBJECTS

- **Mathematics**
  - Probability and Fractions
  - Converting Fractions to Percentages
  - Units of Time and Decimals
  - Comparing Data
- **English**
  - Reading and Understanding Informative Texts
  - Written Answers and Justification
- **Social Studies/Culture**
  - Discovering an American Cultural and Sporting Event



### COMPETENCIES

- Read and interpret information in a text and a table
- Compare probabilities expressed as fractions
- Convert a fraction to a percentage
- Convert units of time and subtract decimal numbers
- Justify an answer using examples or explanations
- Produce short and precise answers



### DURATION

- Approximately 60 minutes



### GETTING STARTED

- Ask the students if they are familiar with the Kentucky Derby or horse racing.
- Ask them if they have ever seen a horse race on television or in person.
- Discuss the concept of probability: what does it mean to "have a chance of winning"?
- Ask the question: does a favorite always win?

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### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**STEP 1 — A Memorable Edition.** Discovery of the the Kentucky Derby and the 2026 edition through an informative text. Answers to four comprehension questions.

**Q1 — In 1875.**

**Q2 — About two minutes.**

**Q3 — Churchill Downs.**

**Q4 — Because it was the first time a female trainer won the race.**

**STEP 3 — The Champion of Champions.**

Mathematical comparison of the performances of Secretariat (1973) and Golden Tempo (2026). Conversion of time units and subtraction.

**Q9 — 1 min = 60 s. Therefore, 60 + 59.4 = 119.4 seconds (119.4 seconds).**

**Q10 — 2 min = 120 s. Therefore, 120 + 2.27 = 122.27 seconds (122.27 seconds).**

**Q11 —  $122.27 - 119.4 = 2.87$  seconds. Secretariat beat Golden Tempo's time by almost 3 seconds, 53 years earlier.**

**STEP 2 — An Unlikely Victory.** Analysis of a table showing four horses and their chances of winning expressed as fractions. Comparison, calculation, and justification.

**Q5 — Renegade. The number 9 indicates that it had a better chance than the others.**

**Q6 —  $3 \div 20 = 15/100 = 15\%$ . (The numerator and denominator are multiplied by 5.)**

**Q7 —  $6/20 + 3/20 = 9/20$ . This gives the same odds as Renegade.**

**Q8 — Yes, a horse with a  $2/20$  chance can still win, but its chances are very slim. It's not impossible.**




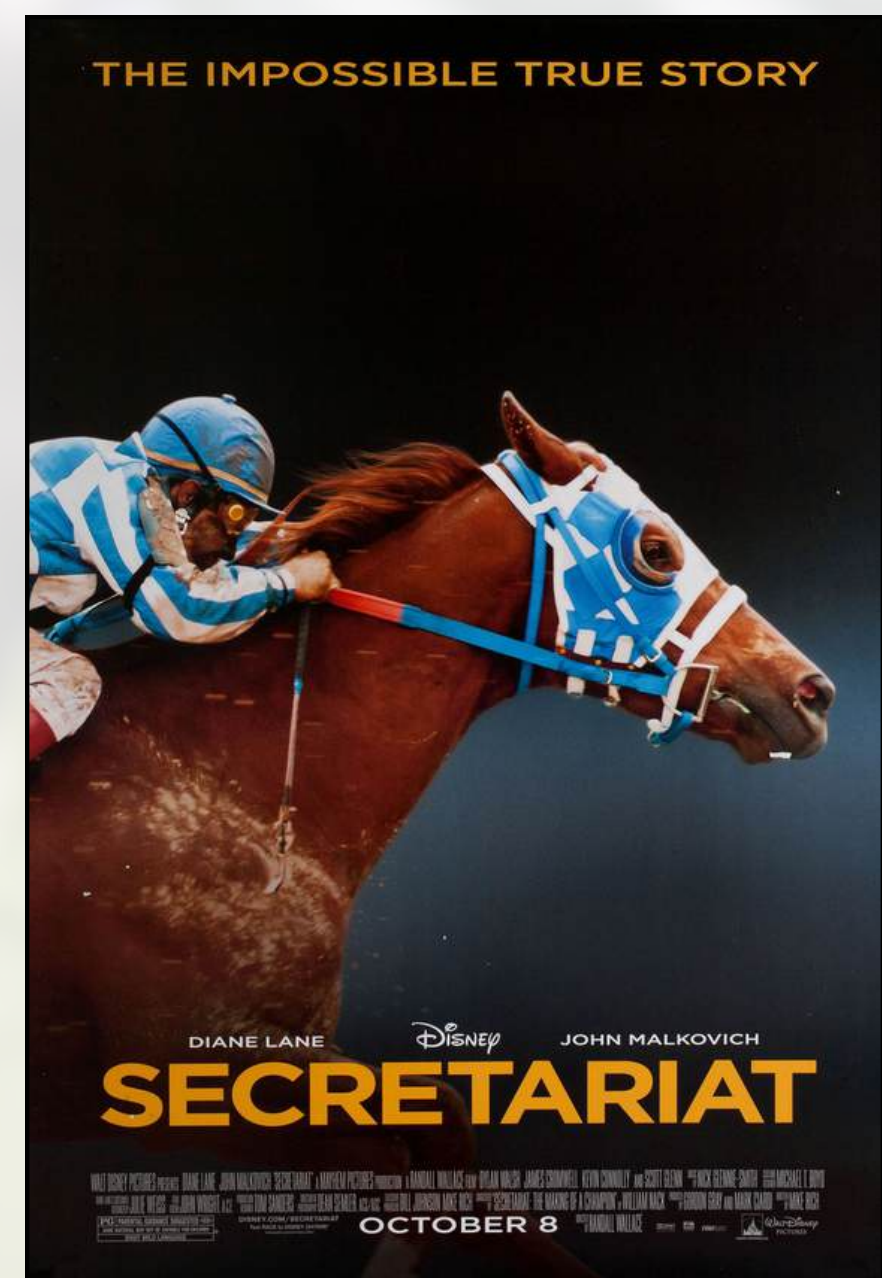
### WRAPPING UP

- Conduct a group discussion to reflect on what the students have learned.
- Discuss what surprised them (Golden Tempo's victory, the first female trainer, Secretariat's record).
- Ask: Why can a horse with little chance still win?
- Make connections to other situations where an "underdog" creates an upset (sports, competitions, everyday life).



### FURTHER EXPLORATION

 *Secretariat* (2010). Penny Chenery Tweedy and colleagues guide her long-shot but precocious stallion to three unbeatable Triple Crown speed records.



**Total distance:  $2.0 + 1.9 + 2.4 = 6.3$  km**

**Total time:  $1 \text{ min } 59.4 \text{ s} + 1 \text{ min } 53 \text{ s} + 2 \text{ min } 24 \text{ s} = 5 \text{ min } 76.4 \text{ s} = 6 \text{ min } 16.4 \text{ s}$  (or  $376.4$  seconds)**

**Average speed:  $6.3 \text{ km} \div 6 \text{ min } 16.4 \text{ s} \rightarrow 6300 \text{ m} \div 376.4 \text{ s} = 16.7 \text{ m/s} \times 3.6 =$  approximately  $60 \text{ km/h}$**



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In 1973, Secretariat not only won the Kentucky Derby, but also the other two major American races that same year: the Preakness Stakes and the Belmont Stakes. Winning all three races constitutes the Triple Crown—an extremely rare feat.

And the craziest part? Secretariat set a record in each of the three races. These three records still stand, more than 50 years later.



Race	Distance	Secretariat timing
Kentucky Derby	2.0 km	1 min 59.4 s
Preakness Stakes	1.9 km	1 min 53 s
Belmont Stakes	2.4 km	2 min 24 s

- What total distance did Secretariat cover during all three races of the Triple Crown?
- What total time did the horse take to win all three races?
- Can you calculate Secretariat's average speed for these three races? The answer is between 55 and 65 kilometers per hour! That's fast!

### Draw your racehorse

- Give it a name
- Choose its colors (the jockey's silks, the stable colors)
- Invent its motto or story: why is it special?
- Imagine: is it a favorite like Secretariat, or an outsider like Golden Tempo?

