**Background:**
Every athlete needs a good pair of shoes. The type of shoe an athlete wears depends on the sport he or she plays. Basketball players wear rubber-soled sneakers to give them traction. Golfers wear shoes with spikes to give them traction on grass golf courses. Bowlers wear shoes with slick soles to reduce friction.

The same is true for equine athletes – horses. The type of shoe a horse needs depends on the sport in which it will be involved. Horseshoes are available in a wide variety of materials and styles, developed for different types of horses and the work they do. Common materials are steel, aluminum and plastic. There are specialized shoes made of magnesium, titanium or copper.

A horse needs new shoes every six to eight weeks. Trimming and shoeing is a regular and very important part of caring for a horse. A standard horseshoe is made of steel and has a groove in which the farrier inserts nails to hold the shoe to the hoof. A farrier is the person who puts shoes on a horse.

Horses in the wild do not have shoes, but most domestic horses need shoes for several reasons. The hoof is made of horn, much as the human fingernail and grows hard, tough and flexible. In nature, the horse walks and grazes continuously over a wide variety of surfaces, which keeps its feet worn smooth, even hard, like a callus. In domestication, the horse doesn't cover as much ground on a daily basis, so the hooves harden much less and are more vulnerable to injury. In addition, the added weight of a human, pack load or cart can cause horses' hooves to wear more quickly than those of wild horses.

**Directions:**
1. Each student should have a horseshoe replica. It may be made of construction paper, card stock, craft foam, etc.
2. Students should decorate their lucky horseshoe. A variety of decorative items may be used such as: paint, markers, rhinestones, glitter, etc.

**Materials**

- Horseshoe cutout (one per student – can be made of construction paper, craft foam or wood)
- Miscellaneous decorative items: stickers, markers, rhinestones, glitter, sequins, etc.
- Glue