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## HORSE HANDLING: LEADING YOUR HORSE SAFELY

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In this exercise the members will work in pairs. The “horse” is blindfolded and holds his/her hands together just above waist level, elbows bent at waist level. The “horse” will hold the snap end of the lead rope between their hands pressed flat against each other. (If the handler pulls too hard the snap should just slip right out from between their hands.) The other end will be held by the handler, who is in charge of leading the horse asking it to move off, making it stop and stand, and working through a course of 3 pylons by using the lead rope for signals.

The handler should be on the left side of their horse with the lead rope neatly folded up in their left hand. Make sure there aren't any sagging loops that hang as low as their knees. Their right hand should be about 6-8" from their horse's imaginary halter (their partner's hands). Explain to the members when they lead their real horse they would always stay between it's head and shoulder, keeping the horse's eye in front of them. With their partner they should be right beside them (assuming their hands out in front of them is the head/halter).

Encourage members to “ask” as softly as they can to communicate to their “horse”.

Change positions. Ask the horses to tell their partners how they did. Did they ask gently? Were they patient and did they give you time to respond before asking again?

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# HORSE HANDLING: GOOD HANDS GAME

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Bridles are required for this game. Members should bring their own. Members play this game in pairs. One person is the “horse” and the other is the “rider”. The horse is blindfolded, has their bridle around their neck and holds the bit in their hands. The rider stays about 3’ behind the horse and uses the reins, not the voice, to ask the horse to stop and turn. The rider can cluck to the horse to initially ask for forward motion. The horse is encouraged to say what they are feeling – whether a rein action is too subtle (not likely) or unnecessarily strong or sudden (all the time!). Cushions or pylons can be set up to mark a course for the rider to follow.

Tell the members there are several ways we use our bodies to communicate with our horses while we ride. Ask what are some of the parts they use. (voice, hands, legs, seat, upper body)

### **Explain the game as follows:**

Good hands are soft hands. Soft hands “ask” instead of hard hands that “demand”.

- partner up and decide who will start off being the horse and who will be the rider
- Riders – try to have quiet hands / use as little pressure as you can to communicate to your horse / try not to use your voice except to ask them to move forward
- Horses – you will feel what your horses feel (but in your hands). Keep your hands up in front of your chin so the reins go over your shoulders. Does your rider have soft hands or hard hands?

Blindfold the horses and they will wear their own bridles. After one time through the course ask the horses to tell their riders how they did. Could they have been lighter? (Definitely!) Try again and be even lighter. Then switch positions and bridles.

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# GROOMING & HOOF CARE: **GROOMING**

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## **Introduction**

In this session members will review the grooming tools found on page 133 and how to use them. Members should have brought their own grooming supplies or they can share with another member.

Have the members turn to page 132 in their manuals. Use the next few pages as your guide and progress through each tool. Each member can find the matching tool in their own supplies. This is a good opportunity for new members to discover some tools they don't have but should have. Encourage members to name the tool and describe how to use it. You can "add" to their descriptions if necessary.

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## MOVEMENT: LEADS

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In this game the members will actually lope around the room like a horse. They will lope on the correct lead then on the wrong lead to see how each feels. Allow for a generous space between “horses” and tell them it is their responsibility to keep a safe distance between each other by slowing down or carefully passing on the ‘inside” only. This exercise demonstrates how much easier it is to lope on the correct lead.

Explain to the members when a horse lopes he moves one foreleg and one hind leg, both on the same side of the body, ahead of the other two legs. This is called leading. When your horse is traveling on a circle or around the arena, it is easier for him if he leads with his inside set of legs. It is a smoother ride for them too. Tell them they will try loping on their inside lead and the wrong lead to see how it feels.

- ask a willing member to demonstrate how to “lope” like a horse.
- have the group lope to the right on their right lead
- then ask them to change leads but continue going to the right (talk about how uncomfortable that is)
- if the group is still relatively under control, change direction and do it all again!

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## MOVEMENT: DEVIATIONS OF TRAVEL

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The ideal way a horse travels is straight on, each leg moves on a straight line. Turn to page 188 in the reference manual or demonstrate for the group. Try one at a time and only at a walk. Only do the most common ones: Paddling, Winging and Plaiting. Explain what interfering is but don't let them try it.

The next time your club is at the arena have your group watch each other's horse trot toward them and see if they can spot a paddler, winger or plaiter. (Paddlers are the most common!)

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# MOVEMENT: FOOTFALLS

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## Introduction

This is a fun activity the members can do with a partner or alone. They will mimic the footfall sequence of each gait. If done with a partner one person will be the back legs and the other will be the front. The person behind can hang on to their partner's waist or a lead shank wrapped around their waist (so they can stand further back). If done alone, the member will demonstrate using their own hands and feet.

As a brief intro to the group you should review the following:

What is a Gait? The order in which the horse's feet touch the ground.

Walk – 4 beat gait. Each foot is picked up and set down separate from the others.

Trot / Jog – 2 beat gait. Diagonal pairs.

Diagonals – opposite front and hind feet move at the same time.

Right diagonal – right front and left hind are moving together

Left diagonal – left front and right hind are moving together

Canter / Lope – 3 beat gait. One hind, diagonal pair then one front.

Gallop – 4 beat gait. Each foot is picked up and set down separately.

Pace – 2 beat gait. Pairs on same side move together. Standardbreds pace.

Stride – distance between two steps of the same foot.

Lengthen the stride – reach further with each leg.

Back up – 2 beats. Diagonal pairs.

## Preparation

Hang the six posters provided up on a wall at various points around the room. Divide your group up so you have a few at each poster. An intermediate or senior member should be assigned to each gait to help supervise and teach as the groups are rotated around the room. Meet with these older members prior to the start and explain the activity and your expectations.

Following the initial rotation of the groups and depending on the confidence of your members you could "raise the bar" by removing all of the posters and asking the members to demonstrate a gait for the entire group. Their choice of gait or yours.

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# WALK

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4 BEATS



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# TROT / JOG

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2 BEATS



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## CANTER / LOPE

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### RIGHT LEAD

3 BEATS



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## CANTER / LOPE

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### LEFT LEAD

3 BEATS



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# GALLOP

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4 BEATS



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# BACK UP

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2 BEATS



# HORSE IDENTIFICATION

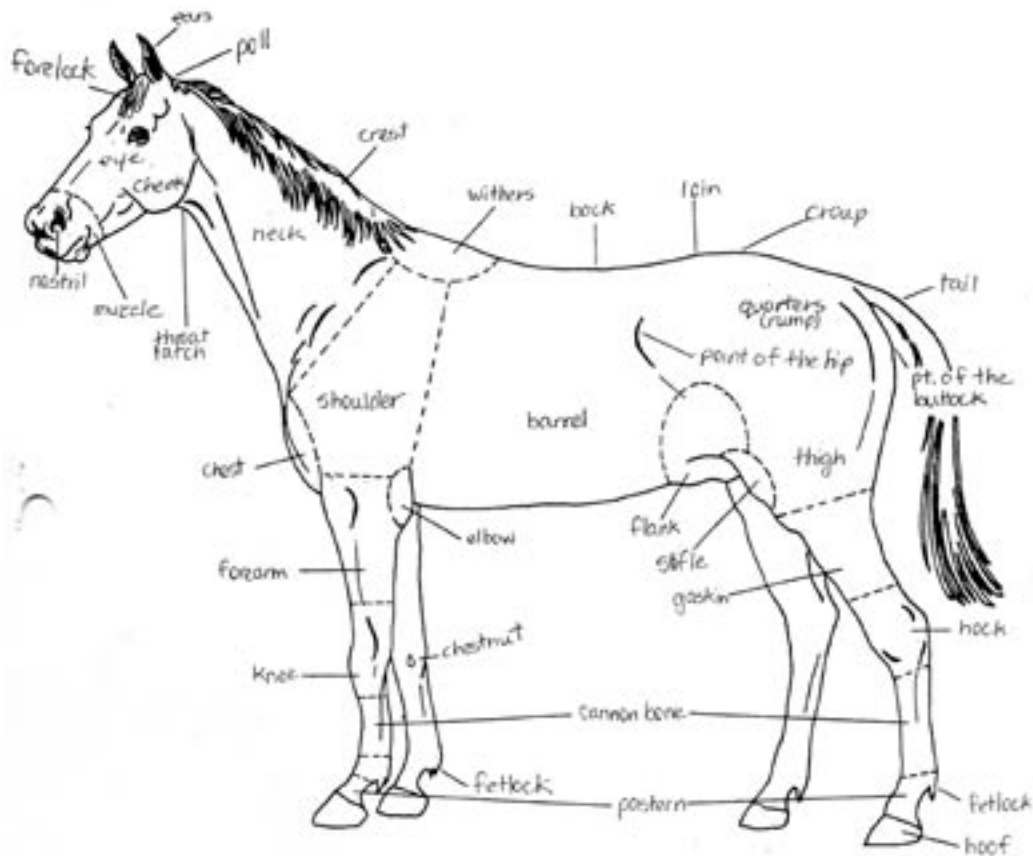
## Body Bingo

Prior to the session, copy enough bingo sheets for your group and highlight 15 lines on each Bingo sheet. Vary them from sheet to sheet and include some "easy" and some "challenging" on each. Cut out the words and place them in a small container to be drawn and called out during the game.

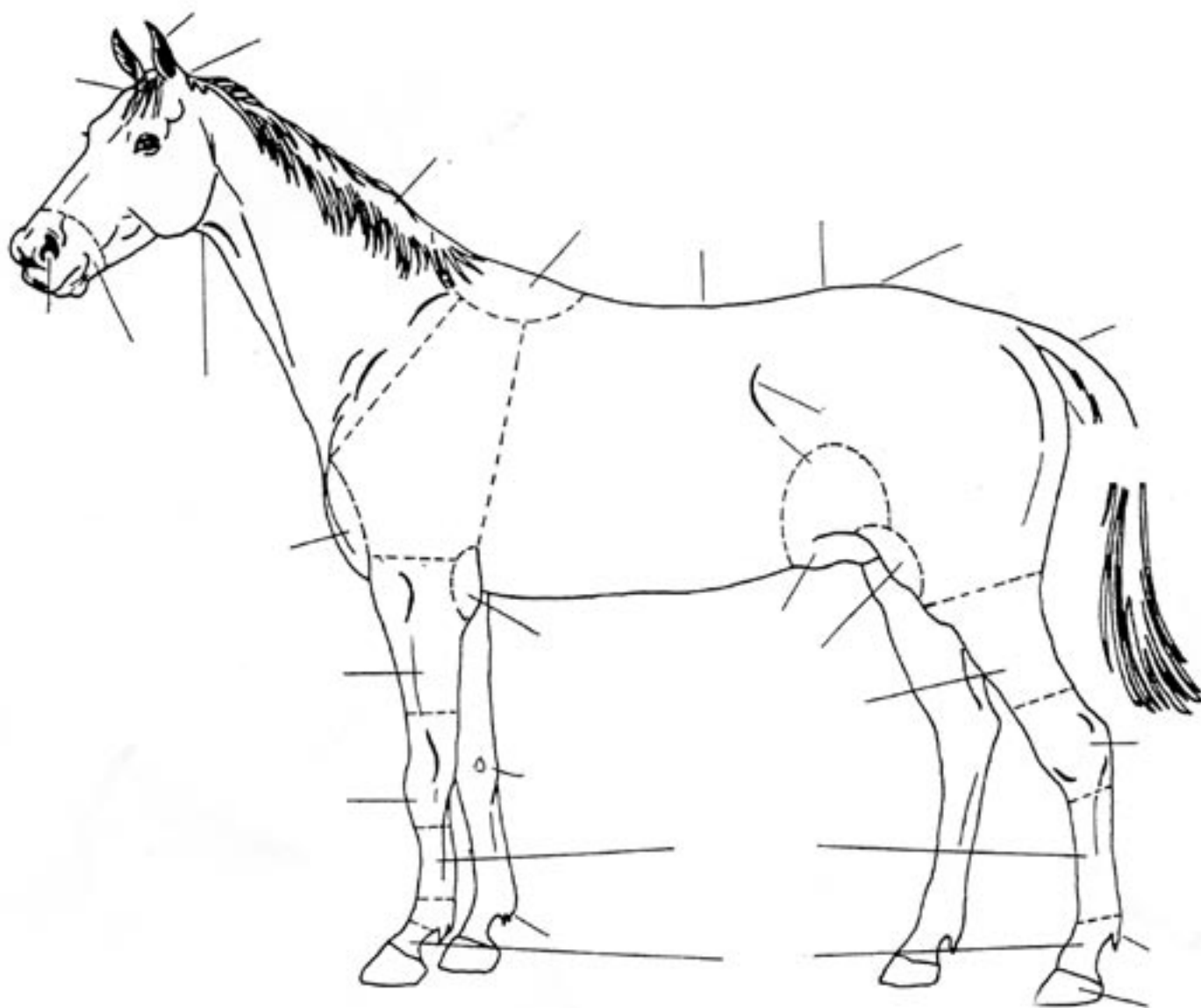
Hand out bingo sheets to each member. Using the diagram on page 15, the members complete the highlighted parts only on their individual sheets. If they complete all of the parts it really slows the game down and young children get frustrated trying to find the words.

When everyone is finished filling in their lines, start the game.

As a word / body part is called out, the members cross out the matching word on their sheet. When they have crossed out all 15 parts they call out "Body Bingo!" Hand out a small prize or treat to each child as they finish and continue until each child has finished (all parts have been called).



# PARTS OF A HORSE





- Partner up
- Using their horse tape measure have the members measure each other in hands. Invite them to come and record their name and their height on the board. When all of the measurements are on the board, explain the height cut-off point for a pony Vs. a horse. (14.2) Give a treat to all of the ponies in the room! (the “ponies” love this!) Then give one to the tallest “horse”. Then give one to all of the other “horses” or the rest of the “herd”.

## Stations

Members will learn some basic terminology in these sessions that are used to describe horses. They can work in groups and rotate around to each station. There are two ways you can do this. You can use old magazines and have the kids find, cut, paste and label or you can prepare the cut-outs and labels ahead of time, toss them onto a table and the kids have to match the pictures with the correct label. The second method is much cleaner, quicker and can be used over and over. Older members could have a project meeting and do the actual preparation of these units.

## Colours Station

Use the colours indicated in the Level 1 Project book:

Black/Bay/Grey/Sorrel/Chestnut/Buckskin/Palomino/Brown

## Markings Station

Face markings: star/stripes/blaze/snip/bald face

Leg markings: stocking/half stocking/pastern/half pastern/coronet

## Breeds Station

Quarterhorse/Arabian/Paint/Morgan/Appaloosa/Percheron/

Thoroughbred

## Age/Sex

Foal/Colt/Filly/Mare/Yeld Mare/Stallion/Gelding/

Yearling/Weanling/Aged/Dam/Sire

This session has been prepared for you – see attached.

Refer to page 60 in the Horse Manual for the answers.

<b>FOAL</b>	<b>GELDING</b>	<b>COLT</b>	<b>MARE</b>
<b>WEANLING</b>	<b>STALLION</b>	<b>FILLY</b>	<b>YELD MARE</b>
<b>YEARLING</b>	<b>SIRE</b>	<b>AGED</b>	<b>DAM</b>

<b>The offspring of horses, either male or female, up to one year old</b>	<b>Male offspring, up to 4 years old or until gelded.</b>	<b>Female offspring, up to 4 years old, or until the first breeding.</b>
<b>Mature female horse over 4 years old or younger if bred.</b>	<b>Mature female horse that has never given birth, barren.</b>	<b>Male horse, that has not been castrated (gelded).</b>
<b>Male horse of any age that has been castrated.</b>	<b>One year old up to 2 years old.</b>	<b>A foal that no longer has access to its mother's milk. Up to one year old.</b>
<b>Any horse, any sex, over 9 or 10 years old.</b>	<b>A foal's female parent.</b>	<b>A foal's male parent.</b>

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# TACK

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## TACKY GAMES

### Introduction

In this session the members will “show and tell” the misc. tack items they brought. They will learn the difference between a snaffle bit and a leverage bit and the styles of riding that would use each. Then they will review the parts of the Western and English saddles and bridles and play a team game to increase their knowledge.

### Show and Tell

Have members who brought misc. pieces of tack show them to the group and tell us about them. (We have seen some real antiques and family treasures!)

### Bits

This is a very basic introduction to the difference between the two main categories of bits, non-leverage and leverage. At this level the members just need to know that there are two categories, how they work and what style of riding uses each type. Have a couple of snaffles (non-leverage) and leverage bits that you can pass around as you talk about them.

#### Non-leverage or Snaffle bit

A snaffle is a mild bit. It puts pressure on the lips first then the bars and tongue. Snaffles can be seen in English and Western. In English riding we use a direct rein (explain) and ride with light contact and no slack in the reins.

#### Leverage bit

Pressure is applied to the bars, tongue, lips, chin and poll. Bits with a very high port can also put pressure on the roof of the horse’s mouth. This type of bit is considered more severe than a snaffle because it puts pressure on the horse in more areas. A leverage bit has a shank. This increases the amount of pressure applied by your hands. In Western riding we “neck rein” or ride with one hand. Western riding can also demand a more responsive horse with lots of fast turns and stops. With a leverage bit the horse learns to move quickly with very little pressure.

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## TACK: TACK RACE

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Review the parts of the Western and English saddles and bridles. Have members refer to their manuals page 144 for bridle parts and pages 152 & 153 for saddle parts. You can point to the part and have each member take turns to say what that part is.

- Divide the group into 2 teams. An English team and a Western team.
- Post the labeled sticky notes on a vertical surface (wall or flip chart)
- This is a relay race. The first member runs up to the board and chooses a sticky note and places it where it belongs then runs back to their team and tags the next person in line.
- There are 5 bridle parts and 15 saddle parts on each set of tack.
- Once a winner is declared switch places and repeat.
- It is a good idea to enlist 2 parents or senior members to help out by being a “judge” at each station to ensure the label is placed in the correct place.

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# TACK: TACK RACE

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Write the following 40 tack parts on small sticky notes:

## **Western**

### **HEADSTALL**

crownpiece  
throatlatch  
cheekpiece  
chin strap  
browband

### **SADDLE**

cantle  
seat  
pommel  
gullet  
horn  
fender  
skirt  
rear billet  
latigo  
seat jockey  
rear jockey  
swell  
concho & strings  
latigo keeper  
stirrup hobble

## **English**

### **BRIDLE**

crownpiece  
throatlatch  
cheekpiece  
noseband  
browband

### **SADDLE**

cantle  
seat  
pommel  
gullet  
skirt  
dee ring  
buckle guard  
rear panel  
front panel  
sweat flap  
saddle flap  
stirrup iron  
stirrup leather  
stirrup bar  
billets

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# TACK: BIT LAB

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## Bit Severity Lab

### Introduction:

In this activity the members will review the difference between a leverage and a non-leverage bit. They will learn the parts of the bit and the factors that determine bit severity. Then they will work with a partner and rate the severity of several bits using the bit severity worksheets attached. As part of your introduction of this activity review pages 145 – 150 in the manual in conjunction with the notes found below on Non-Leverage and Leverage bits.

### Preparation:

The members should read pages 145 – 150 in the Manual.

### Corrections:

- Page 145 – bottom photo labeled as “Eggbutt Snaffle” should be “Full Cheek Snaffle”
- Page 147 – top photo labeled as “Egg Butt Mullen Mouth Snaffle” should be “Medium Ported Curb”

In preparation for this Lab you will need to collect several different types of bits, both leverage and non-leverage. Vary the shape, size and type of mouthpieces as much as possible. In the pilot for this activity we had over 12 different snaffles and over 24 leverage bits. We raided our own tack rooms, found some old, long (and I mean long!) shanked bits that “grandpa used to use”, and borrowed several Gag bits from a Barrel racer. Once you collect all of the bits it’s time to label them. We used small paper tags with a small string attached (available at office supply stores) that we looped through the bridle ring. If you are not sure what type of bit it is you could always take it into a tack store and see if they can help you or try doing some research on the Web. We found some great resources using “Google” as our search engine.

The participants will also need a fabric tape measure (in inches). To make things easier we took a soft tape measure and cut it into several 5” strips. Each group was given a 5” strip to use during the Lab.

Lay the bits out on a table separating the leverage from the non-leverage. Group all of the same bits together. For example, if you have several D-ring Snaffles with different types of mouthpieces, lay them next to each other so it is easier to see the subtle differences.

You will also need to make several copies of the worksheets. Allow enough so each group could evaluate most of the bits.

### Non- Leverage Bits

- Also called Snaffles
- Reins attach above the mouthpiece
- Direct rein pressure applies lb. for lb. pressure
- applies pressure to the tongue, bars and lips (full cheek also applies pressure to the cheeks)
- A broken mouthpiece is NOT a “snaffle-mouth” it is a “jointed” mouthpiece. Snaffle refers to the rings on each side and the fact that there is no leverage.
- Types: O-ring or Loose ring / Egg Butt / D-ring / full cheek / half cheek / Fulmer  
(A Fulmer is similar to, but milder than a Full cheek – see photo below.)



### Leverage Bits

- reins attach below the mouthpiece
- applies pressure to tongue, bars, lips, chin, poll and sometimes the palate

#### 6 factors to determine severity:

- **Mouthpiece** – rubber, copper, sweet iron, steel, chain, twisted wire, etc.
- **port** – low/medium/high wide/narrow The higher and narrower the more severe / can contact the highly sensitive palate / a low wide port will give plenty of room for the tongue – great for horses with a thick tongue
- **Weight** – A heavy bit makes any cue stronger.
- **Hands** – A severe bit can be used in a mild way in educated hands. Even the mildest bit can become severe in uneducated hands.
- **Purchase** – distance between mouthpiece and the bridle ring (pt where headstall attaches) the longer the purchase, the more leverage it can apply. However, a longer purchase can also lessen the leverage ratio depending on the length of the shanks.
- **Shanks** – Severity increases with length and straightness. Shanks that curve back toward horse reduce pressure. S-shaped shanks provide for quicker release when you drop the reins but also quicker contact when you pick up. Pressure is triggered as soon as slack is removed. mouthpiece rotates down / chin strap up / lower jaw is squeezed in vice-like action

## Feel the Vice!

Hold the bridle up by the crownpiece with one hand. With your other hand, spread your fingers so your thumb is behind the mouthpiece and your fingers holding the curb strap away. Have someone pull on the reins. Your fingers and thumb will be pulled towards each other by “inches”. Unfortunately for the horse, his lower jaw doesn’t give like your fingers do. At the same time the purchase rotates forward, it pulls down on the crownpiece applying poll pressure

## Leverage ratio: length of purchase X length of shank

*Example: 2” purchase with 6” shanks has a ratio of 1:3. This means for every pound of pull there is 3 lbs of pressure applied to the horse’s mouth (plus chin and poll pressure)*

## Bit Severity Activity

You have collected a variety of bits, labeled them and laid them out in a somewhat organized fashion and are now ready for the members to evaluate them using the

Bit Severity Worksheet. The members should work with a partner. Each pair will need a soft tape measure and a pencil. They will start with the Non-Leverage bits.

1. Hand out one Non-Leverage Worksheet to each group. As an introduction to the activity and to reduce the number of questions you will get later, complete the worksheet together using one of the non-leverage bits from your display.
2. Review the parts of the bit. The cannons (long tubular sections of the mouthpiece), bridle rings, butt (where the mouthpiece meets the sleeve), players, keys and crickets are small moving pieces in the centre of the mouthpiece. Identify a copper, sweet iron, steel and rubber mouthpiece.
3. The first two questions are straight forward. The more severe a characteristic is the higher the score will be. You may need to point out a triangular or edged mouthpiece so it is not mistaken for a smooth mouthpiece.

Question 3 is multiplied by question 4 and the total is carried over to the right hand side. To answer question 4, measure 1” in from the bridle ring, then use your tape measure to wrap around the mouthpiece to measure it’s thickness.

Questions 5, 6 and 7 are all subtracted from the running total as they deal with characteristics that make the bit milder, thereby reducing the total score.

4. Place the Non-Leverage Worksheets in a central spot and let the groups begin!

Initially, you will find you are answering a lot of questions but once they get the hang of it they will be able to help each other. Once they are all finished, review some of the bits together as a group. See where groups

differed on scores and dig deeper to find out why. This is when the learning really begins!

Repeat the steps for the Leverage bits. First hand out worksheets to each pair, then choose a bit and review the parts. In addition to the above parts, a leverage bit will also have a shank, purchase (the part of the lever above the mouthpiece), rein loop or ring, it may have a port (high, medium, and low).

Question 7 is added to question 8 then the total is multiplied by question 9.