
HORSEMANSHIP ASSESSMENT: INTRODUCTION

The assessment tools you are about to work through with your leader will give you a better idea of where you are needing to work with your horse for the project year. Regardless of your age and experience, you should work through these tools from the start. New members and experienced riders alike should make certain that all the skills listed have been mastered.

The levels have been set up to ensure safety for the horse and rider and to build a strong foundation for your future in riding, wherever it may take you. One of the project goals is to ensure riders are safe and effective in groundwork and riding skills as well as knowledge of their horse and equipment used. Your love for horses and the skills you gain through your project work will be of great benefit to you for your whole life.

How to use your Assessment Checklists

Keep your checklists up-to-date. Review each level with your leader to determine which skills you have already mastered and highlight the ones you are working on. Keep going back and reviewing the lists. This will be a useful tool to move you to the next level of Horsemanship. Happy riding!

LEVEL ONE: **DISMOUNTED SKILLS**

Levels 1 – 3 of the horse program are mandatory for all horse members before they can branch out to any of the other projects offered.

- Catch and halter your horse safely. Explain how a halter should fit and why.

- Lead your horse safely at a walk, turn right, stop and back up.

- Lead around in a large circle (20 m) using at least 4 markers.

- Lead your horse across 2 diagonal lines of the riding area.

- Demonstrate and explain how and where to tie your horse using a quick release knot.

- Demonstrate how your horse moves sideways away from pressure by cueing with your hand while the horse is tied.

- Identify five grooming tools and explain their use.

- Demonstrate how to use a hoof pick correctly by cleaning one of your horse's feet (someone else may hold the foot).

- Give three safety rules to remember while riding your horse, three safety rules to remember when working with your horse on the ground and two dress rules.

- What is your horse's first reaction when he is frightened? If he is tied, what is he likely to do? If this happens what should you do?

- Describe three signs that your horse might show if he is going to bite or kick.

- Describe three signs that a horse might show if he was going to bolt or buck.
- Explain what you would do if your horse ran away while you were riding.
- Explain what you would do if someone else's horse ran away while you were riding.
- Describe where you keep your horse.
- What does your horse eat?
- Describe three signs that show a horse is healthy.
- What breed and colour is your horse? What markings does he have?
- Demonstrate with your own hands and feet the footfall sequence of a horse at the walk and jog/trot.
- Unsaddle and Unbridle your horse. (Smaller members should be able to explain correct methods even if they are not able to do it entirely.)
- Demonstrate how to correctly put your tack away after riding.

Evaluators signature

Date

LEVEL ONE: MOUNTED SKILLS

To assess the rider levels: Before you can assess, we must make sure that we are using a progressive format in lesson planning. That means the riding instructor should include a warm-up with each lesson and a review of previously taught skills so both rider and horse can progress. At every skill taught, we need to reinforce basic position, balance, suppleness, focus, timing and appropriate aids. We suggest that the individual skills be assessed first and only those who are successful at these skills be invited to ride the pattern. At all rider levels, the skills may be performed with two hands on the reins unless there is a reference to neck reining. Our preference would be that snaffle bits be used, but because safety is our number one concern, any humane bit may be used or refer to the standard set by your regional committee. To help the riders with pattern accuracy, please place $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ markers down the sides of the riding area and one at the middle of each end.

Warm-up:

- a) Before mounting, with your hand either on the cheek piece of the bridle, or using the rein, quietly **flex** your horse's neck by bringing his nose to 3 o'clock and then to 9 o'clock.
- b) Demonstrate a **tack check**.
- c) **Mount** correctly while explaining what each hand must do (the horse may be held and a mounting block may be used).

While sitting in the saddle, demonstrate how and where to hold the **reins** with two hands.

Explain and demonstrate correct **basic position**, correct **balance** and **focus**.

Do 3 arm and 3 leg **exercises** while your horse is standing still and then while moving.

At a halt, demonstrate:

- a) How to establish correct **contact** on horse's mouth.
- b) Hand and leg aids used to **turn** your horse with an **open rein**.
- c) Use that **open rein** to **flex** his neck and turn his head to 3 and 9 o'clock.

At a walk, ride to at least 4 markers zig-zagging back and forth across the arena **turning** first one way and then the other. An **open rein** must be used at each turn and both of the rider's legs will be doing their job.

- Demonstrate how to do an **emergency stop** using an **open rein** to pull the horse's nose towards his ribs and circling until the horse stops.
- Ride a **circle** around at least 4 markers, demonstrating **basic position, balance, correct focus** and that you are not over-gripping with your hands or legs.
- Demonstrate at least 10 steps of **jog/trot** without breaking stride, bolting or over-gripping with your hands and legs. Western riders may jog sitting or do a rising trot - English riders should post trot. Explain how many **beats** there are in this gait and what you can do to keep from bouncing.
- Ride all the way around the arena at a walk in both directions.
- Explain the 3 aids (weight, voice and hands – 2 direct reins) that are used to stop your horse. Demonstrate a **stop** using all 3 aids. Explain and demonstrate what you would do if your horse did not stop.
- Explain and demonstrate how to use the correct aids (position, hands and legs) to **back** your horse 2 steps.
- While riding in a small group (4 or less) demonstrate and explain how to **keep a safe distance** from other horses and how to **pass** safely.
- Ride the **pattern**. Start the pattern with a **tack check** and correct **mount**. You may use a mounting block and a helper to hold your horse.
- Safely **dismount** your horse. You must not use a mounting block but a helper may hold your horse. What is the left foot safety feature that you must remember? What is your left hand doing? Your right? On which side of the horse should your head be?

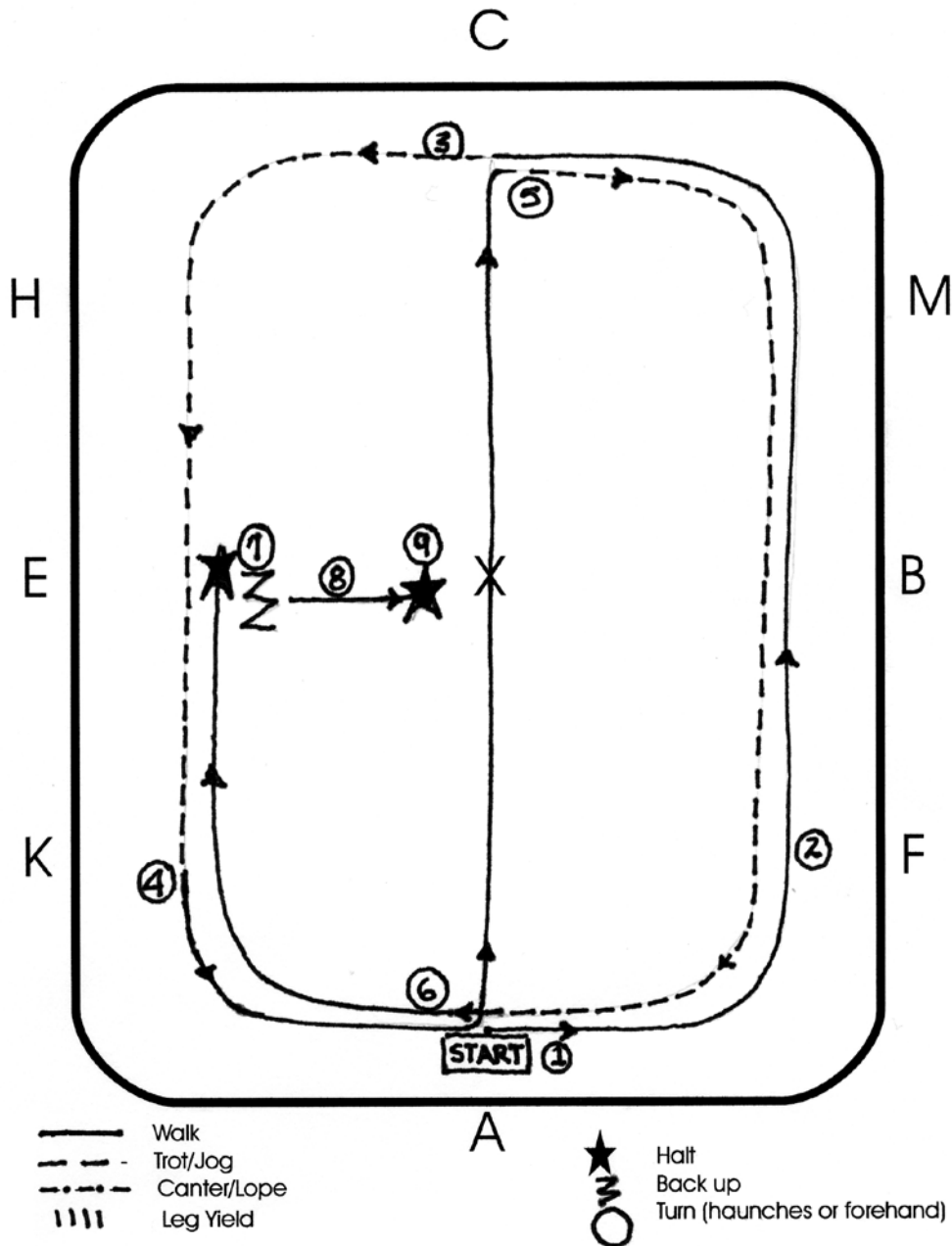
Evaluators signature

Date

LEVEL ONE: PATTERN 1

Rider may have a reader for all patterns.

1. Mount near A (block and help optional).
2. Walk A-F-B-M-C.
3. Jog/trot C-H-E-K.
4. Walk K-A-X-C.
5. Jog/trot C-M-B-F-A.
6. Walk A-K-E.
7. Halt at E, back at least 2 steps.
8. Turn and walk toward X.
9. Halt, dismount and lead out.



Level - One: It is not necessary to use the whole arena. Modify the size of the riding area to maximize safety!