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# HORSEMANSHIP ASSESSMENT: INTRODUCTION

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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!

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## LEVEL THREE: **DISMOUNTED SKILLS**

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- Demonstrate where to stand when holding your horse when someone else is working with it (de-worming, hoof trim). Explain safety for yourself AND the other person (farrier, vet).
- Demonstrate how to trot out, square and pose for conformation analysis or vet inspection.
- Demonstrate how to pick up and clean all four feet of your horse (smaller members may have some assistance).
- Explain and demonstrate extra safety precautions you take while cleaning your horse's hind feet.
- Explain basic foot care and give three signs that your horse needs his hooves trimmed.
- Explain how to clip a bridle path on a quiet horse.
- Identify all the parts of the horse's body and feet.
- Identify three horses in your group by colour and markings.
- Explain and demonstrate how to take the horse's temperature, test for dehydration, and capillary refill and know what is normal.
- Explain what you do to prevent and control parasites in your horse.
- Describe three signs of a wormy horse.
- Name three things that determine what your horse needs to eat (feed by need).
- Describe three feeding problems that could make your horse sick.
- Identify and describe good quality hay and poor quality hay.

- How does a horse's body language show that he is herd bound, claustrophobic, or sour? Give two clues for each.
- Explain how horses work out the pecking order and how you can tell which one is the boss in the group.
- Name five things that would make your barn or pasture unsafe.
- If a pasture-kept horse must be stalled, name three things you could do to make it comfortable and safe.
- If a horse is kept in a stall, describe and demonstrate how to clean a stall. (not strip it).
- Demonstrate with your own hands and feet the footfall sequence of the walk, jog/trot, lope/canter, gallop and back.
- Identify all the parts of a saddle and bridle.
- Explain and demonstrate the proper cleaning and care of tack.
- Describe a snaffle bit and how it works and when to use it. Describe a leverage bit, how it works and when to use it.

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## LEVEL THREE: MOUNTED SKILLS

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**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) Explain how you know that your stirrups are correctly adjusted. b) At the walk or jog/trot demonstrate how you could **regain** your horse's attention by riding at least 3 tiny circles with an **open rein** and stopping your horse with his head at both 3 and 9 o'clock. Explain how you know when you've got his attention back. Remember to use correct **body position, balance, suppleness, focus** and **quiet hands**.
- Demonstrate your ability to follow markers and **ride a circle** and a straight **line** without stirrups at a walk and at a jog/trot. Demonstrate the two beat **rhythm** of the jog/trot with your hand or hips.
- Using one end of the arena, jog/sit trot a slower smaller **circle**, then rise trot a larger longer strided circle. Both circles start and end at the same spot (A or C). The rider should be on the **correct diagonal**. Go both ways.
- Explain the aids for upward and downward **transitions**. By using specific markers on the rail, move from a walk to a jog/trot, then to a lope/canter, back to a trot/jog, and then a walk. Go both ways.
- Review the **lope/canter** aids. At a specific marker on the rail or on the circle, pick up a lope/canter from the jog/sit trot. As soon as possible, tell the evaluator whether you are on the **correct lead**. Do 3 times in each direction.

- Explain and demonstrate:
- A **rising trot** showing **correct diagonals** in each direction. Jog/sit trot to a specific marker on the rail or circle and pick up and hold the diagonal for at least 3 strides. If incorrect, sit for at least 10 strides before trying again. Do 3 times in each direction.
  - How to **change diagonals** 3 times to the left and 3 times to the right. Emphasis should be on feeling the diagonal (accuracy), not speed in changing.
- Rein effects:**
- Explain and demonstrate one instance in which the **direct rein** cannot be effective unless we use a support rein.
  - Explain and demonstrate how we can move or block our horse's shoulders by using a **rein of opposition**. Include what both hands and both legs are doing in your explanation.
- Explain and demonstrate how to **bend** your horse at a walk and jog/trot on a circle. The evaluator will watch to see you use a **direct rein** and **support rein**, and correct **leg aids**. If you are having trouble, show how a rein of opposition will help.
- Define a **leg yield**. Explain the aids and demonstrate how to do a leg yield of at least 3 strides in each direction. The wall may be used as an aid. Include what both hands and both legs are doing in your explanation.
- Explain what a **figure 8** looks like. Explain and demonstrate what **aids** you will use to ride a figure 8 at a walk and a jog/trot. You may use at least 8 markers to help you ride the correct shape.
- Lope/canter** all the way around the arena in both directions. **Basic position, balance, suppleness, quiet hands, focus and rhythm** are necessary. If you are on the wrong lead, show the evaluator that you know by breaking back to a jog/trot and trying again.
- Ride at least 2 large **circles** demonstrating control and accuracy in keeping the circle round. Include all 3 gaits using only 2 markers (12 and 6 o'clock). Go both ways.

- Zigzag back and forth across the arena making at least 6 **turns** with an **indirect rein** (reins in 2 hands). What is the job of the hand not holding the indirect rein? Tell the evaluator if your horse's nose is correctly tipped toward each turn. Western riders will repeat using correct **neck reining** techniques (1 hand).
- Walk your horse forward 6 steps, **stop** using the 3 aids in the correct order, hesitate, try to flex your horse at the poll and jaw, then **back** your horse at least 6 steps in a straight line.
- Define a **turn on the forehand**. Explain the aids and demonstrate at least 2 hind crossovers in each direction. The wall may be used as an aid.
- Demonstrate how to **pass** another horse that you meet **head on**.
- Ride in a group at all three gaits showing **control** and **safe spacing**.
- Ride the **pattern** including a **tack check**, and a proper **mount** and **dismount**.

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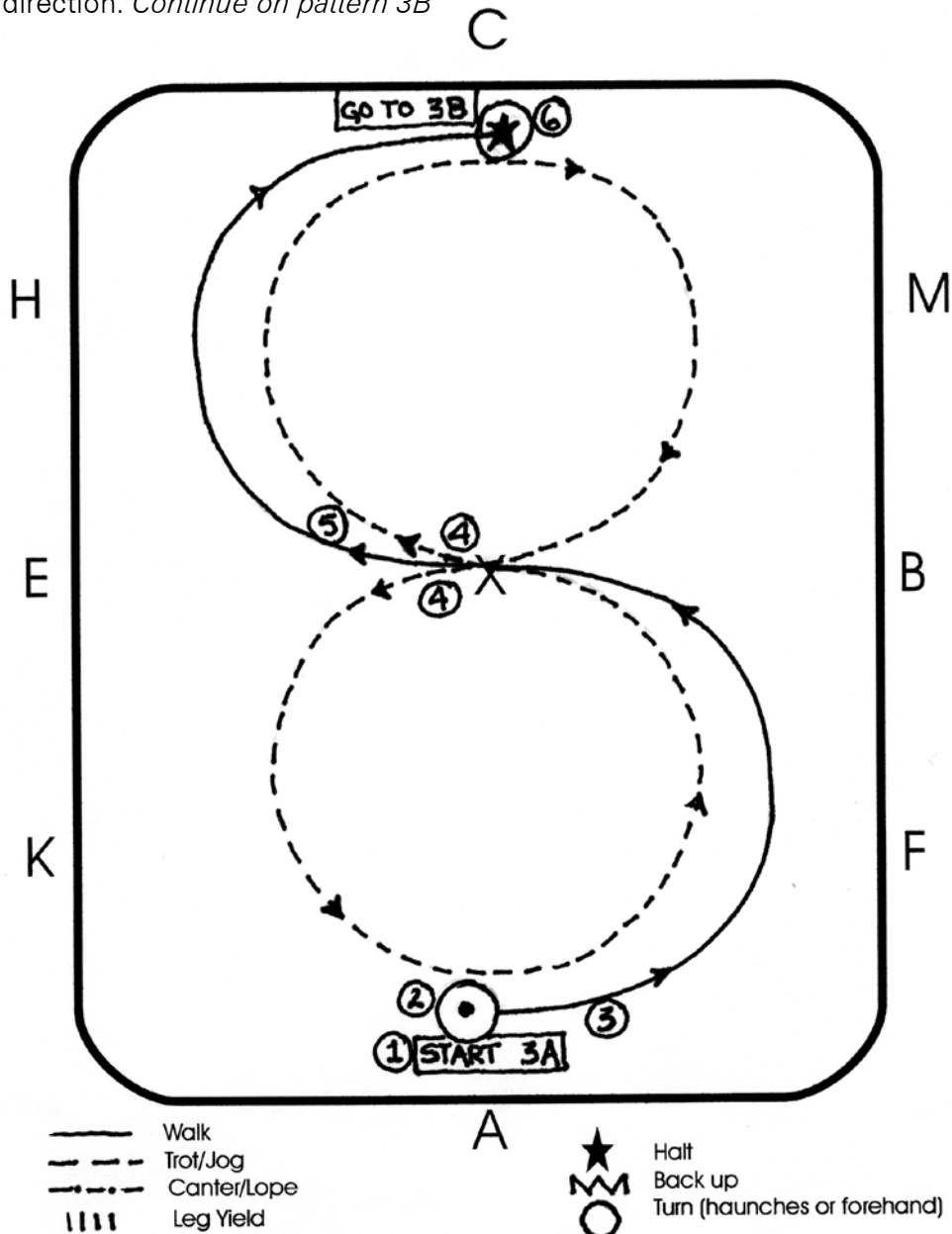
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## LEVEL THREE: PATTERN 3A

This pattern is broken down into three parts for easier reading, but is intended to be read as one pattern for evaluation. Rider may have a reader for all patterns. All long patterns are intended to be ridden with two hands regardless of bit type.

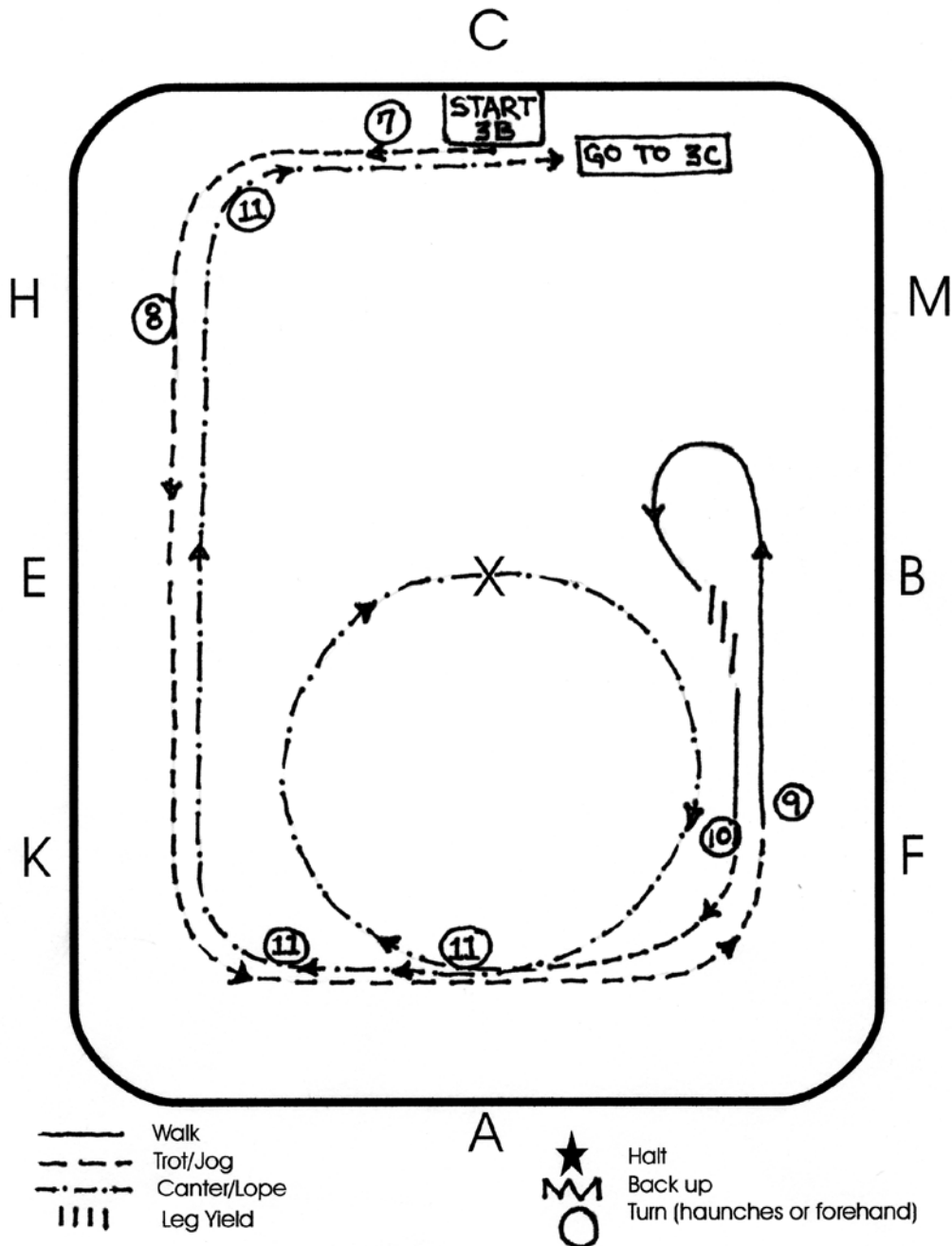
1. Mount correctly near A facing K.
2. 90° right turn on forehand (pivot on left front). Hesitate, repeat 90° turn in same direction.
3. Walk a large half circle to X.
4. At X, jog/trot a figure 8 starting on the right circle, keeping X in one spot and both circles equal size.
5. Walk a large half circle to C.
6. Halt. 90° turn on forehand left (right leg). Hesitate, repeat 90° turn in same direction. *Continue on pattern 3B*



# LEVEL THREE: **PATTERN 3B**

Rider may have a reader for all patterns. All long patterns are intended to be ridden with two hands regardless of bit type.

7. Walk no more than 4 steps, then job/sit trot C to H.
8. Rise trot H-E-K-A-F.
9. At F walk to B, start walking a reverse and leg yield back toward F (2-3 strides).
10. Jog/sit trot F-A.
11. At A lope/canter a large circle and continue lope/canter A-K-E-H-C.  
*Continue on pattern 3B.*



## LEVEL THREE: PATTERN 3C

Rider may have a reader for all patterns. All long patterns are intended to be ridden with two hands regardless of bit type.

12. At C, jog/trot to M.
13. At M, walk to B then walk a reverse leg and yield back toward M for two or three strides.
14. Jog/sit trot M to C.
15. At C, lope/canter a large circle and continue lope/canter C-H-E-K-A.
16. Jog/trot A to F. Walk F-B-X.
17. Halt at X. Back at least 6 steps. Dismount correctly, lead out. End of Pattern 3.

