

Horse Identification

Equine Terminology

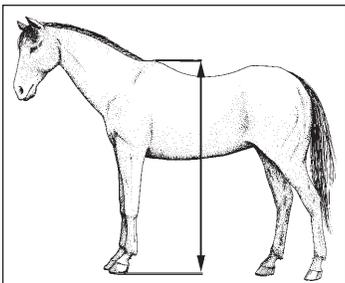
Some breeds of horses, regardless of their date of birth, change their age on January 1st. Terms that are used to describe the sex and age of a horse include:

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sex and Age | Foal: | the offspring of horses, either male or female, up to one year old, are called foals |
| | Colt: | male offspring, up to four years old, or until gelded |
| | Filly: | female offspring, up to four years old, or until the first breeding |
| | Mare: | mature female horse over four years of age, or younger if bred |
| | Yeld Mare: | mature female horse that has never given birth, barren |
| | Stallion: | male horse, that has not been castrated (gelded) |
| | Gelding: | male horse of any age that has been castrated |
| | Yearling: | one year old up to two years old |
| | Weanling: | a foal that has been weaned - no longer has access to its mother's milk (usually at about four to six months of age) - up to 1 year old. |
| | Aged: | any horse, any sex, over 9 or 10 years old |

Breeding Terms

| | |
|--------------|------------------------|
| Dam: | a foal's female parent |
| Sire: | a foal's male parent |

Horse Height



A horse's height is expressed in "*hands*". It is measured from the ground to the highest point of the withers. Hand measurements are broken down in inches, where one hand equals four inches (10cm).

1 Hand = 4 inches (10 cm)



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Therefore, to measure a horse, it will be necessary to convert any metric measurements into inches. To convert from centimetres to inches multiply by 0.394. For example, a horse that measures 152 cm or 60 inches tall at the withers will be 15 hands high.

$$152 \text{ cm} \times 0.394 = \frac{60 \text{ in.}}{4 \text{ inches/hand}} = 15 \text{ hands}$$

Incomplete hands are broken down using inches, so that if your horse is 148 cm tall it would be 14.2 hands (**14** hands + **2** inches).

Horse Weight

$$148 \text{ cm} \times 0.394 = \frac{58 \text{ in.}}{4 \text{ inches/hand}} = 14.2 \text{ hands}$$

Weight of Horse Formula:

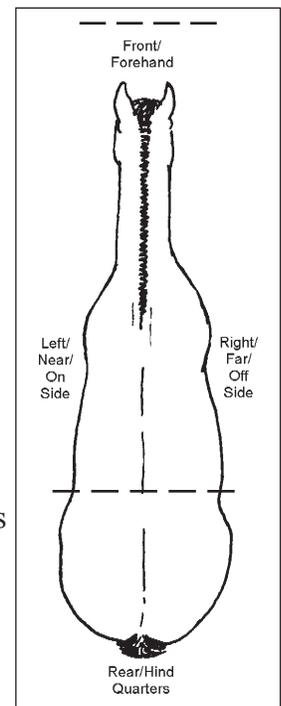
$$\frac{\text{Girth (in)} \times \text{Girth (in)} \times \text{Length (in)}}{330} = \frac{H_2 \times BL}{330}$$

Measure the length from point of shoulder to point of buttock. Weight is in pounds.

$$\frac{\text{Girth (cm)} \times \text{Girth (cm)} \times \text{Length (cm)}}{8700}$$

Measure the length from point of shoulder to point of buttock. Weight is in Kilograms.

Although a scale is the only precise measurement of weight, most people do not have a scale large enough to weigh a horse. There are also weight tapes for measuring the heartgirth which give an approximate weight OR you can approximate the weight of a horse by measuring the heartgirth and length of the horse from the chest to the rump, then applying these measurements to the formula:



Points of Reference

Heartgirth X Heartgirth X Body Length (Point of Shoulder to Point of Buttock) – Measured in inches /330 = Weight in Pounds

When working around horses, the right side of the horse is referred to as the far side or the off-side. The left side of the horse is referred to as the near side.

Most activities (catching, mounting, saddling, leading, etc.) are done from the near side (left side) of the horse.

The back of the horse is referred to as the hindquarters or the haunches. The hindquarters includes all parts behind and below the loin. The front of the horse is referred to as the forehand.

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Colours and Markings

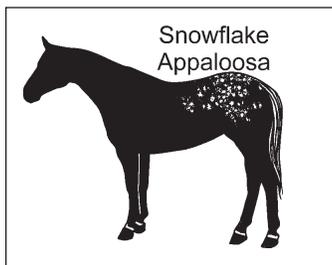
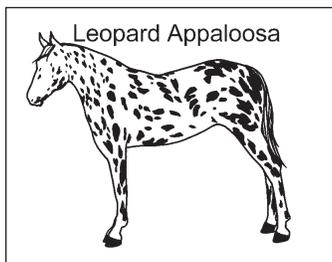
Horses come in many colours and with many different markings. Colours and markings are a useful way to tell horses apart, or to identify horses that are not known to you. They are also used on registration papers, the Alberta Livestock Manifest (for transporting horses) and health papers.

When identifying the colour of a horse, the colour of the *summer coat* is used. Different breeds associations describe coat colour differently. The colours of horses and their corresponding descriptions are as follows:

Albino - An animal that has no pigment in its eyes, skin, hooves or body hair. There are conflicting reports on albinism, some sources say there are no such things as true albinos – they are really white horses.

Appaloosa - is a stock horse with unique and unusual spotted coloring with very distinctive coat patterns. A basic and decisive characteristic of the Appaloosa horse is the presence of mottled skin, usually found around the muzzle, eyes and genitals. Additional characteristics include hooves with clearly defined vertical light and dark stripes, found on both dark or white legs, and white sclera around the eye.

There are eight basic Appaloosa Coat Patterns:



Blanket - A solid white area normally over the hip on a horse with a contrasting base color.

Blanket with spots – like the blanket, but with scattered spots of various sizes. The spots may be the same colour as the base coat.

Leopard – white base coat, with dark spots scattered over the body.

Roan – is a mixture of white and dark hairs

Roan Blanket - A mixture of white and dark hairs usually over the hip area.

Roan Blanket with Spots - A mixture of white and dark hairs over a portion of the body with white and/or dark spots within the roan area.

Spots - A horse with white or dark spots over a portion of its body or over the entire body.

Solid – “A horse that has a base color with no contrasting color.”

Some Appaloosas may be a combination of more than one pattern. Many Appaloosas may change from one pattern to another over their lifetime.

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Bay - Body colour ranges from tan, to red, to reddish-brown. Bays always have black points (legs, muzzle, mane and tail and the tips of their ears are black.) Many bays have black legs that are covered with white markings.

Black - Body colour is true black without any light areas. Mane and tail are black.

Brown - Body colour can be shades of brown or black with light areas at the muzzle, eyes, flank, and, or inside the upper legs. Mane and tail are black often the same colour as body and lower legs are black.

Colour registries are Pinto, Palomino and Buckskin.

Buckskin - Body coat some shade of tan, from very light (creme) to very dark (bronze). Points (mane, tail, legs and ear frames) are black or dark brown. Dorsal (stripe) not required.

Chestnut/Sorrel - Body colour ranges from light copper to reddish-brown. Mane and tail are usually the same colour as the body, but may be flaxen (straw yellow or dirty white colour caused by a mixture of dark hair in with the white).

Dun: Body coat some shade of tan, from very light (creme) to a dull or smutty brown (earth tone). Points, dorsal stripe and other dun factor markings are dirty black or smutty brown. There are many shades and variations in the dun color. Dorsal stripe required.

Grey - Mixture of white and coloured hairs. They are usually born solid coloured, or almost solid coloured, and become lighter with age. They always have dark skin underlying the patches of white hair. Grey includes dappled (variegated with round spots of white) and flea-bitten (small dark spots “*sprinkled*” over an animal’s coat).

Appaloosa and Paint are colour breeds.

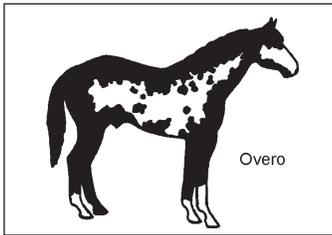
Grulla - (Grew-ya) A Grulla’s body coat is slate colored (bluish gray as the blue heron) from light blue-gray to a brownish shade. Points and dun factor markings are black. A dorsal stripe is required. The Grulla color is the rarest of all horse body coat colors. The word Grulla is Spanish and translates into English as “crane”.

Paint – Are of the stock horse body type and has a particular combination of white and any color of the equine spectrum: black, bay, brown, roan, buckskin, dun, gray, grullo, perlino, smoky cream, chestnut, cremello, palomino, red dun, sorrel, or champagne. Markings can be any shape or size, and located virtually anywhere on the Paint’s body.

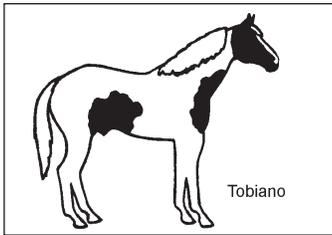


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Although Paints come in a variety of colors with different markings, there are only three specific coat patterns: overo, tobiano and tovero.



Overo – may be predominantly dark or white, with distinctive head markings. The white is irregular and is rather scattered or splashy. At least one and often all four legs are dark. The tail is usually one colour.



Tobiano – may be either predominately dark or white with spots that are regular and distinct as ovals or round patterns that extend down over the neck and chest, giving the appearance of a shield. Head markings include solid, or with a blaze, strip, star or snip. One or both flanks are usually dark coloured. All four legs are white, at least below the hocks and knees. The tail is often two colours.

Tovero – Has dark pigmentation around the ears, which may expand to cover the forehead and/or the eyes. Dark pigmentation around the mouth that may extend up the sides of the face and form spots. One or both eyes are blue. Chest and flank spots are variable in size. Varying spot sizes at the base of the tail.

Palomino - Body colour is cream to golden yellow. Mane and tail are white.

Pinto –must have 4 square inches of cumulative white in the qualifying zone and underlying pink skin. The requirement is modified with the size of the equine. Other Pinto characteristics include blue eyes, leg white above the knee or hock and white or multi-colored hooves.

There are two color patterns:

Tobiano - appears to be white with large flowing spots of color, often overlapping. Spots of color typically originate from the head, chest, flank and buttock, often including the tail.

Overo - appears to be a colored horse with white markings. Spots of white appear to be jagged and usually originate on the animal's side or belly spreading toward the neck, tail, legs and back. White almost never crosses the back.

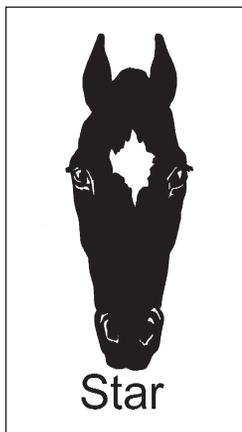
Roan - Any coat colour mixed with white hairs. Common roans include blue roan (black horse with roan gene), bay roan (black legs, mane and tail) and red roan (has red colored mane, tail and legs).

White - A true white horse is born white and remains white throughout its life. A white horse has snow white hair, pink skin and normally brown eyes.

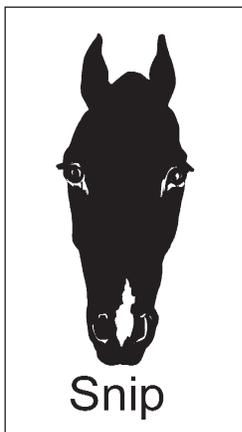
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Markings The following diagrams show the markings commonly found on the head and legs of the horse, and the terms which are used to describe them.

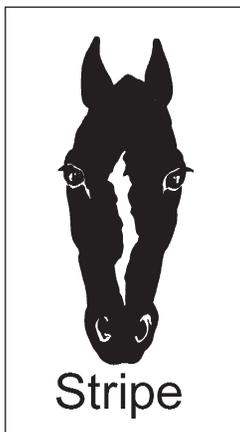
Markings of the Head:



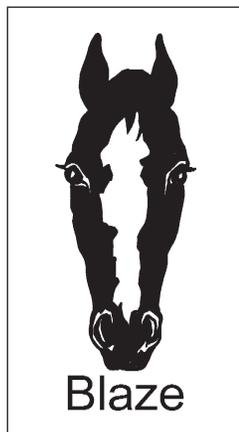
Star - a white mark on the forehead



Snip - a white spot on the nose.



Stripe - a narrow white mark down the face anywhere between eyes and nostrils.



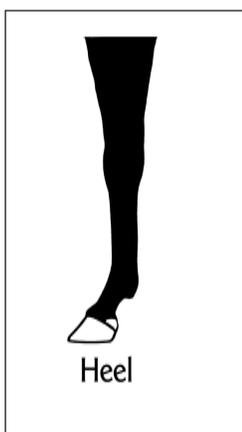
Blaze - a wide white mark down the face from the forehead down to the nostrils.



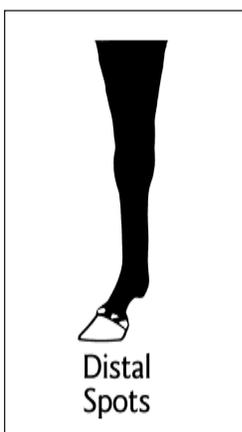
Bald Face - a very broad blaze - can extend out around the eyes and down to the upper lip and around the nostrils and, or past the eyes.

A horse may have any combination of the above five head markings.

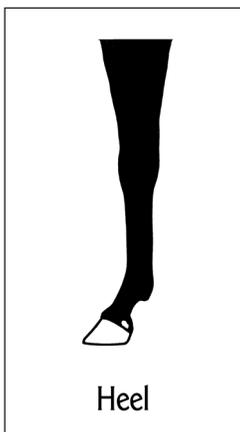
Markings of the Legs:



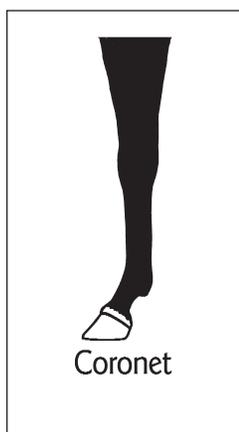
Heel - white spot on the bulb of the heel.



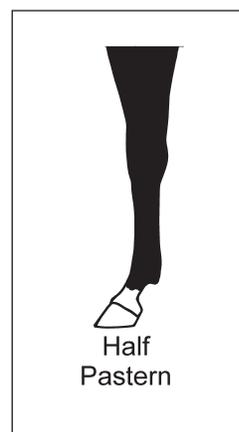
Distal Spots - white spots on the coronet band.



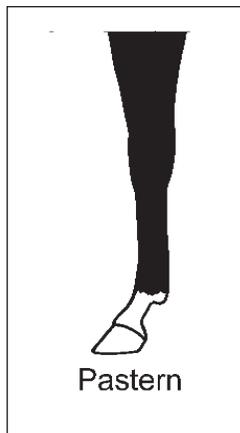
Heel or Partial Coronet - white spot or partial coronet.



Coronet - white strip covering the coronet band.

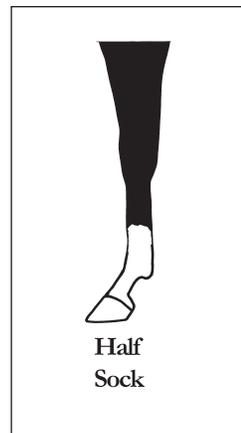


Half Pastern - white extends up halfway on the pastern.



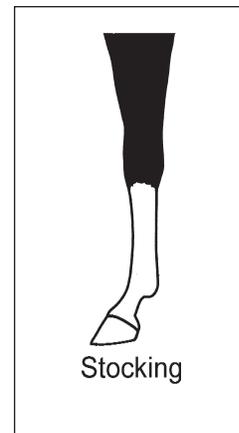
Pastern

Ankle/Pastern - white extends from coronet to and including the fetlock.



Half
Sock

Half Stocking/Sock - white to halfway up the cannon bone.



Stocking

Stocking - white up to the hock or knee

Ermine - black or brown spots within the coronet band.

Bird Catcher Spots - dime sized white spots on a horse's body.

Characteristics of the Main Horse Types

All horses fit into one of the five following body types. Each of these types has specific characteristics which separate it from the next body type. Muscling is one easily distinguishable feature. Well-defined muscling should be a characteristic of all horses. Volume, length and definition of muscling should be uniform from the front to the rear and from one side to the other side of the horse. The length and volume of muscling that the horse should possess is determined by the body type and the breed of the horse.

Draft Type

- U Clydesdale, Shire, Belgian, Percheron etc.
- U Heavily muscled, large framed, large boned.
- U Used primarily for pulling and driving

Draft type horses require a greater volume of muscling compared to horses with other body types because they are bred for strength and power. Thus, volume of muscling is of greater importance than length of muscling.

Stock Type

- U Quarter Horse, Paint, Appaloosa etc.
- U Well-muscled, deep bodied.
- U Used primarily for short-distance racing, ranch work, trail riding, roping, reining, cutting, pleasure and gymkhana events.

In the stock type horse, length and volume of muscling are of similar importance. Volume of muscle is required for power and quick starts, while length of muscling is required for speed and suppleness.

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Saddle Type

- U Tennessee Walker, American Saddlebred, Arabian, Morgan, Standardbred etc.
- U Longer muscled, longer neck and body, higher set arching neck, higher tail carriage, often more animated movement.
- U Used primarily for pleasure, driving, endurance and trail.
- U Some Breeds may be gaited.

This body type is among those with the least volume but the greatest length of muscling. Length is needed for speed, endurance and suppleness in these types of horses. Length of muscling is more important than volume of muscling.

Sport Horse Type

- U Thoroughbred, Warmbloods, Hanoverian and Trakhener etc.
- U Larger, longer bodies, deeper heart girth and longer muscled.
- U Used primarily for racing, jumping, cross-country, three day eventing, dressage, pleasure, and endurance.

This body type is another with the least volume but the greatest length of muscling. Length is needed for speed, endurance and suppleness in these types of horses. Length of muscling is more important than volume of muscling.

Pony Type

- U Welsh, Shetland Pony, etc.
- U 14.2 hands or less, usually resemble stock type or saddle type breeds.
- U Generally shorter neck and body.
- U Used primarily for children's mounts and driving.

These horses are primarily distinguished by their body height.

Breed Associations

There are approximately 20 pedigree breed associations in Canada that keep registries of pure and part bred horses. These associations keep a stud book of lineage (parentage) of individual animals of a breed. Their responsibility is to ensure that the registered animal is the animal it is said to be. They achieve this by issuing registration papers for individual animals whose lineage can be traced through their stud book and through verification of parentage by DNA samples.

Each breed registry uses breed specific information as to what they will accept as a registered horse within their breed. This requires that both parents can be traced through their stud book and certain criteria are met regarding breeding, colour and size.

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The registration papers require identification of the parents of the horse, sketches or pictures and a description of the horse plus the horse's colour and markings and perhaps measurements.

In Canada, breed associations are regulated by the "*Animal Pedigree Act*". According to this Act, there can only be one registry per breed of animal in Canada. The "*Animal Pedigree Act*" spells out the way that Canadian registries keep records and do business, to ensure that animals are correctly identified or registered. This differs from the U.S. and other countries where there is no such regulation. In the U.S., for example, there are no restrictions on the number of registries that can be established for each breed. There are also some registries that maintain records for horses in which only one parent can be traced through their stud book. Because they operate differently, it is important for horse owners to know that Canadian Law does not apply to foreign registries.

Colour registries are not regulated by the "*Animal Pedigree Act*". These include registries such as the Buckskin, Palomino and Pinto, where the animal is registered strictly for its colour, with no maintenance of parentage records.

Registering Your Horse

Each breed association has its own criteria for the registration of horses. Therefore, it is important that you check the criteria of any association you wish to register with, and ensure that you comply with their qualifications. Most associations require DNA parent verification, photographs and a registration fee.

Transfer of Ownership

It is the responsibility of the *seller* of a horse to complete the transfer of ownership for registered horses. Therefore, if you sell a registered horse to someone, you must complete the transfer forms and send them and the fee to the Registry. Similarly, if you have purchased a horse that is registered, the person you bought it from should fill out the forms and do the paperwork to have the ownership transferred to your name. These terms apply unless other arrangements have been made prior to, and stated in the bill of sale. As the new owner you will need to make sure that this has been done.

Tattoos

Individual horses can be marked and identified by a tattoo. A tattoo is made by puncturing the skin and rubbing dye into the wound. They are put on the inside of the horse's upper lip. These tattoos are permanent and cannot be removed. In general only horses that race are tattooed.



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Breeds of Horses

Horses are categorized in many ways. Some are segregated as a separate breed according to their lineage. Some are segregated according to their colour.

In Europe, a classification is used whereby horses are referred to as “*cold blooded*”, “*hot blooded*” and “*warm blooded*”. Cold blood refers to draft type horses. Hot blooded is used to indicate horses that are Arabians or Thoroughbreds. Warm blooded indicates a cross between a cold blood (draft type) and a hot blood (Arabian or Thoroughbred). These classifications are similar to Draft Horse, Light Horse and Sport Horse classifications that are used in North America. The web site <http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/horses/> has a great listing of breeds throughout the world. Below are descriptions of some common breeds.

Some popular breeds of horses are:

Appaloosa - The Appaloosa is descended from the Spanish horses bred by the Nez Perce Indians and is quickly recognized by its unique colour pattern. The Appaloosa may have the white sclera of the eye, the mottled skin and the striping on the hooves. There also may be Appaloosas with solid body colours.

Arabian - Bred by the Arabs to carry them swiftly over long distances with a minimum of feed and water, the Arabian horse has an unsurpassed reputation for soundness and stamina. The Arabian is a very attractive horse with its distinctive, dished face and proud carriage. It is usually solid bay, chestnut, black or grey in colour.

Belgian- Belgians range in height from 16 to 18 hands high and weigh 2000 to 2600 pounds. In North America they are predominately sorrel or blonde in colour with flaxen to white manes and tails. Roan is the other common colour. Originally developed in Belgium to meet agricultural draft needs, the massive and powerful Belgians are known for their patience and docility.

Canadian - A versatile horse exhibiting excellent conformation, working ability and durability combined with a kind and willing temperament. The Canadian measures between 14 hands high and 16 hands high and weighs 1000 – 1400 pounds. They are usually black but can be brown, bay or chestnut. Characteristics include a finely chiseled head, upright or arching back and abundant wavy mane and tail. They are used for riding and driving.



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Clydesdale - The lightest of the draft horse breeds is the Clydesdale. It has been bred for style, power and action. The breed originated in Scotland and averages 17 to 19 hands high and 1800 to 2200 pounds. The Clydesdale is usually bay or brown in colour with white markings on the legs, face and body. The breed is recognized by the long silky hair, or feathering, that covers its lower legs and down over its hooves. (The Shire breed also has feathering).

Connemara - The Connemara originated in Ireland. This performance pony is noted for its conformation, tremendous agility and jumping ability. It is an excellent riding pony, possessing great strength, free-going movement and superb balance. Spirited but sensible, courageous but kind, it is an ideal mount for children and adults alike. This pony is predominantly grey or dun in colour, but can be black, brown or bay and occasionally chestnut or roan.

Fjord - The Fjord horse, from Norway, has a dark cream body colour and a distinctive mane and tail which has black hairs down the middle and silver around the outside. They measure 13 – 15 hands high and weigh 1000 to 1400 pounds. Noted for its strength, soundness and quiet manner, it is used for riding and driving.

Irish Draught – The Irish Draught is a result of crossing Thoroughbreds with Irish Farm Horses. They are noted for their strength and substance, athletic ability, intelligence and kindness. Measuring 15 – 17 hands high They are suitable for light draft, riding and driving. They may be bay, brown, chestnut or gray.

Miniatures - Miniature horses are horses under 34 inches high (pure miniatures are 32 inches and under)

Morgan - The Morgan breed traces its beginnings back to a single stallion, Figure (This horse was later renamed after its owner - Justin Morgan). This stallion possessed extraordinary strength and speed. The breed's excellent disposition makes it the choice for mounted police and patrol work. The Morgan is compact and deep bodied, its legs are fine and strong and its head is carried high on a thick crested neck. The Morgan is usually dark brown, bay, chestnut or black in colour.

Paint - The Paint Horse is characterized by a two coloured coat consisting of clearly defined areas of white and either black, red brown, chestnut, grey, dun or roan. It is basically stock in type with Quarter Horse and/or Thoroughbred parentage. Colour patterns vary in percentage of white to coloured portions. They are a pedigree registry with colour specifics.



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Paso - The Paso is distinguished by its natural, high stepping, four-beat lateral gait. The gait, known as termino, gives the rider a very smooth ride. They are tough, hardy and easy to handle. Weighing 900 to 1100 pounds, they measure 14 – 15.2 hands high. They may be bay, chestnut, black, brown or gray. This horse is ridden in all parts of South America, with the most widely known type being the Peruvian Paso.

Percheron - The Percheron stands from 16 to 18 hands high, weighs between 2000 and 2400 pounds and is usually black or grey in colour. Imported from France, the Percheron is noted for its considerable knee and hock actions and its unique walking style.

Quarter Horse - The Quarter Horse combines speed, agility, intelligence, and excellent temperament and an inherent cow-sense, to earn a reputation as the most popular breed of pleasure horse in the world. Developed in North America, the Quarter Horse has a close-coupled and muscular conformation and an attractive head with prominent jowls. It may be of any solid colour, roan or gray.

Saddlebred - The Saddlebred was developed in Kentucky during the 19th century by plantation owners, who were looking for a horse that provided a comfortable ride for plantation work combined with a stylish eye-catching action in harness. With its high head-carriage and high stepping action it is extremely elegant. Although it is best known as a show horse, the Saddlebred also makes a good general riding and driving horse.

Shetland - The Shetland Pony comes from the Shetland Islands off Northern Scotland. It is thought to be descended from a “dwarf” Exmoor type. At a maximum height of 10.2 hands high it is the smallest of the native breeds yet relative to its size it is the strongest pony in the world. Its size makes it ideal for small children, though its headstrong and independent character demands firm, kind, handling to keep it under control.

Standardbred - Standardbred horses are used primarily for harness racing, either as pacers (moving the front and hind legs of the same side, together) or trotters (moving the front leg of one side at the same time as the hind leg of the opposite side). They also make good pleasure and driving horses.

Tennessee Walker - The Tennessee Walking Horse is a gaited horse. It is most distinguished by its running walk that is a four beat gait. This even gait is fast and comfortable to ride.



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Thoroughbred - The Thoroughbred horse has been bred for speed and stamina. Its long-bodied, deep-chested, angular conformation enables it to run long distances at a fast speed. All Thoroughbreds descended from **Arabian and Barb ancestors**.

Warmbloods (Such as the Hanovarian, Oldenburg, Holstein, Westphalian, Dutch Warmblood, Trakehner, etc.)

- Developed in various parts of Europe, warmbloods are noted more for their strength than their speed, hence the many successes in dressage and show jumping. They were originally developed as all-purpose work horses. Warmbloods of all breeds are known for their clean cut lines, strong well-muscled bodies and well-formed hard hooves.

Welsh - The Welsh Pony is a compact, sturdy pony. They have arched necks with short, but very strong, bodies. Strength, hardiness and agility combined with a gentle temperament make it suitable for harness or riding. They are categorized by these sections based on height:

Section A – Welsh Mountain Pony – less than 12 h.h. (smallest)

Section B - Welsh Pony – 13 h.h. and under

Section C – Welsh Pony of Cob type – 13.2 h.h. and under

Section D – Welsh Cob – Over 13.2 h.h. (largest)

Hybrid Crosses Hybrid crosses between horses and donkeys are popular for pack animals, trail and pleasure riding. Hybrid crosses are sterile.

Mule - The mule is a cross between a Jack (male donkey) and a mare (female horse).

Hinny - A hinny is a cross between a stallion (male horse) and a Jenny (female donkey).

