



# HorseSense Learning Levels



## HORSEMANSHIP LESSON PLANS

RED LEVEL

SET #2: Ready to Trot

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# LESSON # 1 1

BASIC SKILLS

RED LEVEL

## UPS AND DOWNS

**OBJECTIVE:** *Students will develop strength, balance and rhythm by practicing a standing position and posting at the halt and walk, in preparation for learning to trot.*

### EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- TWO TO FOUR CONES



<b>PREP</b>	Set cones along rail to create one or two “no sit” zones. The distance between the cones may vary depending on the fitness of your students and the size of your arena, but it should be just long enough for a moderate challenge.	
<b>INTRO</b>	“Up until now, we have done most of our riding in what we call a <b>full seat</b> or <b>three-point</b> , sitting fully in the saddle. But there are times where it is better to ride with our <b>weight off the horse’s back</b> : when we are jumping or galloping, when we post to the trot, and when we simply want to test our balance and strength!”	5 MIN
<b>LESSON AND EXERCISES</b>	 <b>Review:</b> Safety seat, one-rein stop, and pulley rein at the halt and walk. (Remember, minimal pressure!) <b>ASK: When would we use a pulley rein instead of a one-rein stop?</b>	10 MIN
	 <b>Review:</b> Safety seat is important in emergencies, but does not allow us to ride the horse in balance the way we can with our head, shoulders, hips and heel lined up. Standing in the stirrups allows us to test this alignment. <b>ASK: What happens if our lower leg is too far forward? If our knees grip?</b>	
	 <b>PRACTICE:</b> Stirrup stand at the halt and walk. Begin with the group at a standstill where you can safely ask students to drop reins—use Ground Buddies as necessary! Build length of time spent in the stirrup stand, and practice standing up and lowering seat before repeating on the rail at the walk. Every time students pass a “no sit zone” they must stand at the first cone and hold until the second cone, with or without assistance from hands.	10 MIN
	 <b>Discuss:</b> If students have experienced a short trot on the longe line or leadline before, they know just how bumpy it is! <b>Posting</b> takes the bounce out of the trot and <b>makes it comfortable for both horse and rider.</b>	10 MIN
	<b>Emphasize:</b> Many riders find posting difficult to learn, since it requires good balance and rhythm. Students should not be frustrated if they struggle initially!	
 <b>PRACTICE:</b> Posting at the halt, <b>with arms outstretched</b> , starting slow and increasing pace until rhythm matches that of the horse’s trot. Repeat at the walk, using cones to mark mandatory posting zones. If students are not fatigued, finish with two short <b>leadline trots</b> along rail. Count off rhythm and allow students to attempt posting if able.	20 MIN	
<b>REVIEW</b>	? Why is it important to be able to balance above the horse’s back as well as in the saddle? ? What exercise can we practice off the horse to improve leg strength and alignment?	5 MIN

# LESSON # 1 1

## UPS AND DOWNS

## RED LEVEL

### FUN AND GAMES

- 🐾 If you teach beginners regularly, you have probably chanted enough “Up, down, up, down” or “One, two, one, two,” that you do it in your sleep. Don’t be afraid to find a **fresh way of coaching the posting rhythm**, especially with younger children. At HorseSense, we sometimes ask students to think of their favorite foods and choose one with two syllables. (Usually ice cream or pizza!) “**Ice**” means **stand**, “**cream**” means **sit**. This works particularly well during summer camps where you can **award actual ice cream** to each student once they achieve the rhythm.
- 🐾 If students are able to balance in their stirrups without relying on their hands, and can move between the stirrup stand and full seat easily, you may be able to move quickly through the exercises presented in the lesson and finish up with a game. A good choice is a variation on the mounted game **Hi-Lo**, in which riders must drop a tennis ball into a basketball-style net and then retrieve one from the top of a traffic cone, passing it off to the next rider to play. Riders can stand up in their stirrups to dunk the ball into the net and must keep weight anchored in heels to bend down. Regulation-size equipment is not necessary here—the average beginner on a cob-sized horse has little chance of reaching an 18” cone anyway!



### GROUP VS PRIVATE LESSONS

- 🐾 **Group** lessons must **maintain spacing** both in the standing practice (no nose-sniffing, squealing horses, please) and when working on the rail. If you have the assistance of Ground Buddies (recommended for this lesson, unless you are full of energy and eager to provide all the leadline trots!), you can place them in charge of maintaining spacing so that riders can concentrate entirely on their posting efforts. If not, you may wish to teach this after **#10 Ring Rules**, or have students go around one at a time.
- 🐾 **Private** students can practice most of this lesson on the longe line, and finish by walking independently through the no-sit and/or posting zones along the rail.



**Rainy day?** Devote an unmounted session to developing your student’s alignment, strength and rhythm with a series of **off-horse exercises**, such as squats and chair pose (aka two-point). Posting can be physically demanding for new riders, so this is a good opportunity to introduce the idea that **riding is an athletic activity, and that students will see the most improvement when they exercise out of the saddle.**

### FINAL NOTES

- 🐾 **Encourage your students to be considerate of the horse’s back** at all times. Most of the time, students fall heavily back into the saddle because of an accidental loss of strength and balance, but every once in a while you will encounter someone who thoughtlessly does this by default. Use the opportunity to promote empathy and awareness; after all, **correct posting benefits the horse as much as the rider.**
- 🐾 By now, your students are probably VERY EAGER to trot. It really is worth spending time building the strong foundation in the walk, but you may need to explain this several times, particularly if your students are very young or very impatient. **Remind them that there is more to riding than going fast or jumping high**, and that even Olympic riders spend many hours practicing at the walk!

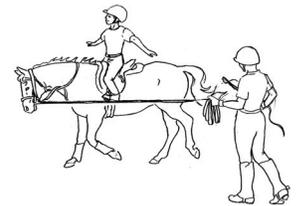
# LESSON # 1 2

LONGE LESSONS

RED LEVEL

## POSTING PRACTICE

**OBJECTIVE:** *Students will apply the posting skills practiced in the previous lesson to the trot, developing a steady rhythm in harmony with the horse's gait.*



### EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

☐ LONGE LINE & WHIP

☐ OPTIONAL POLES TO DIVIDE ARENA WORKSPACE

### PREP

Ensure arena has a clear workspace 20m or more in diameter, free of jump standards, extra poles or any other hazards. If teaching a group with assistance, you can use ground poles to divide arena into zones. Longe line and whip should be neatly folded and easily accessible.

### INTRO

"Although it can sometimes be tricky to learn, once you achieve a posting rhythm at the trot, you will find it **much easier to ride** than the sitting trot. A good posting trot also makes your horse happier—horses don't like it when we bounce on their backs!"

5  
MIN

### LESSON AND EXERCISES

 **Review:** Stirrup stand and posting at the halt and walk, both with and without assistance from hands on the mane.

10  
MIN

 **Review:** If you have Ground Buddies or an assistant, allow a leadline sitting trot for each rider along the long sides of the arena. Encourage students to listen and feel for the rhythm of the horse's trot, and to count along with you if possible. **ASK: How many beats do you feel? How is the horse moving his legs?**

 **Discuss:** As we trot, we move up and down—but the horse's head remains relatively steady. This means we must learn to keep our hands at the withers as we post. The first step is to develop a **balanced, smooth posting rhythm** on the longe line (or leadline).

10  
MIN

 **PRACTICE:** One at a time, longe riders for 5-10 minutes at the trot, on both the left and right rein, working toward consistent posting rhythm. If students have a tendency to fall back heavily in saddle or lose depth in heels, they should **begin by holding stirrup stand for several strides** in the trot.

**Emphasize:** In a balanced posting trot, **it's the hips that swing forward**, not shoulders. Many students lean forward when they begin to post, making their position unstable.

30  
MIN

 **Students waiting their turn to be longed** should be stationed with an assistant at the halt, practicing exercises such Around the World, poll/crop/toe touches/twists without stirrups, safety seat, and emergency stops/dismounts. This can also be a good time to cover simple Red Level skills such as lengthening and shortening the reins with correct technique and retrieving dropped stirrups. **Simon Says** is a simple and effective way to keep students engaged throughout these drills.

### REVIEW

- ? What happens if we try to post with our leg too far forward? If we grip with our knee?
- ? Can you describe how it feels to post in sync with the horse's trot?

5  
MIN

# LESSON #12

## POSTING PRACTICE

RED LEVEL

### GROUP VS PRIVATE LESSONS

- 🐾 The larger the **group**, the more **efficient** you'll have to be with each of your longeing sessions. Make sure to allow each student several short trots in each direction, as they will likely find it easier to remain balanced and in sync with the horse as they travel in their stronger direction. **Your assistant will need to be able to hear you clearly** and remain aware of the pace of the rotation. He/she should be comfortable working students in and out of their group, reviewing exercises and information as necessary.
- 🐾 This lesson is easily taught to **private** students, who benefit from the additional time on the longe line. **Don't skip the warmup exercises** in the walk, however; they also give the horse time to loosen up and reduce the amount of time he must spend working on a circle.

### TIPS FOR TEACHING THE POSTING TROT

Learning to post is a rite of passage for students of English riding. It can also be the first real challenge for many riders, as it requires balance, timing, and a bit of stamina.

**Every student will face their own unique challenges in learning to post.** Some riders are competent within five minutes, some need weeks of practice. Some will gravitate towards position flaws: perching and gripping with the knee will cause instability, while students with a chair seat, poor posture or a weak core are likely to collapse into the saddle. Some students struggle with rhythm, posting out of sync with the horse's tempo. Others may be nervous about the increased movement of the trot, causing tension and stiffness.

If you have taught beginners for any length of time, you have probably devised a number of tricks beyond chanting "UP, down," to help your riders succeed. Here are **a few additional tips for helping your students develop a perfect posting trot:**



- 🐾 **A good longeing horse and/or assistance from experienced Ground Buddies** really are invaluable here. If you are teaching a group lesson solo and cannot longe, you will need school horses who can reliably maintain a **slow, steady trot** along the rail with minimal assistance. (Even if your horses are that good—and many veterans are!—this is not always the safest or kindest way to teach a new gait.)
- 🐾 Placement of the hands is key, especially in early trots when your riders may still need some help with their balance. Holding onto the pommel **makes the rider feel safe but can block the forward swing of the hips**, causing some riders to fall behind the motion. A carefully-fitted neckstrap or grabstrap is an option. Holding **mane at the withers can be a good choice** as it trains the hands to stay close to the correct position; if riders reach too far forward for mane, however, they may tip forward onto their knees.
- 🐾 As discussed in **#11 Ups and Downs**, you can **use some creativity in your vocal rhythm** coaching. Frequently ask students to count out the two beats of the trot along with you. This has the added benefit of encouraging them to breathe and release tension.
- 🐾 Students who land heavily or bounce should spend plenty of time in **stirrup stand at the trot**, holding onto mane. Tell them the saddle is a hot seat that they can only touch briefly!
- 🐾 **Don't worry too much about posting diagonals** at this stage. While you can generally explain the mechanics of the trot, diagonals can be information overload, and won't be useful until the posting is consistent, anyway.

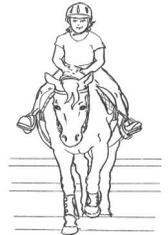
# LESSON # 13

## JUMPING SKILLS

RED LEVEL

### TWO-POINT TIME

**OBJECTIVE:** For students to learn to ride in a balanced two-point position at the halt and walk, navigating a course of “invisible” jumps and ground poles.



#### EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

☐ THREE TO SIX JUMP STANDARDS

☐ TWO TO FOUR POLES

#### PREP

Set a simple course made up of inside and outside lines, with generous turns. Place ground poles between a few of the standards, leaving the others empty. (Safely store your jump cups!) Optionally, you may wish to place a few cones along the track to help students make the correct approach.

#### INTRO

“Now that you are all getting comfortable standing up in your stirrups, we can begin practicing our **two-point position**, or **half seat**. Two-point, like stirrup stand, is good for improving strength and balance... but is also used in galloping and jumping.” **ASK: Who wants to try jumping their horse someday?**

5  
MIN

#### LESSON AND EXERCISES

 **Review:** Stirrup stand and posting rhythm at walk. Once solid, ask students to alternate between stirrup stand and poll touches for a lap in each direction at the walk, to test depth of heels and ability to open and close hip angle. If feasible, allow each rider a short leadline trot along each long side, with the goal of finding consistent posting rhythm.

15  
MIN

 **Discuss:** In stirrup stand, the rider’s **hips remain open**. In two-point, **the hip angle closes, and the hands move forward**, allowing the rider to remain centered over the horse. **ASK: Why do you think we use this position when galloping or jumping?**

10  
MIN

 **PRACTICE:** At the halt, ask all students to transition from full seat to two-point, making corrections as necessary. Perform the airplane test with arms outstretched before repeating at the walk, on the rail.

**Emphasize:** Students should bend forward at the hips, not at the waist!

 **Discuss:** A secure two-point makes it easy for the horse to lift his back and lower his head and neck for balance—both important when stepping over obstacles. Although students are not ready for serious jumping, they can put their two-point to use and build jumping skills by riding over ground poles.

5  
MIN

 **PRACTICE:** Single file, with plenty of space, lead students through the course. Demonstrate **wide turns** and discuss importance of **focal points** and a **straight approach**. As students approach a pole, help them find a visual target and count down “Three, two, one, two-point!” If time allows, have each student ride the course a second time independently.

20  
MIN

#### REVIEW

- ? What is the main difference between stirrup stand and two-point position?
- ? Why is it important to move your hands forward in two-point, especially over poles?

5  
MIN

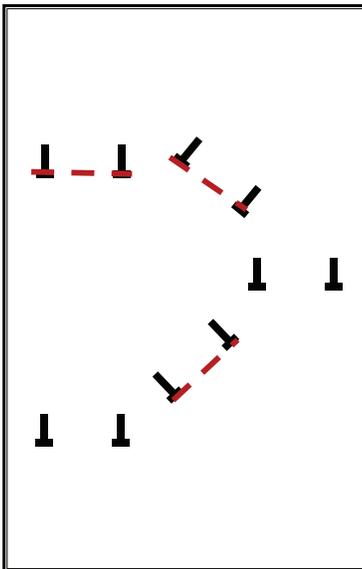
# LESSON #13

## TWO-POINT TIME

RED LEVEL

### FUN AND GAMES

- Offer a **prize for all “clear” rounds**: courses with reasonably straight approaches and two-point over all the poles. If students are able to ride their final course independently, treat it with the excitement of the jump-off at the World Equestrian Games, even as horses plod stoically over the poles!
- As students practice holding two-point along the rail, **call out commands** such as “Jump!” and “Sit!” to signal changes between positions, varying the length of time spent in each seat.



### GROUP VS PRIVATE LESSONS

- As in **#8 Mountain Trail**, you'll need to space out **group** lessons carefully to avoid the strong magnetic pull of the herd. Look for pockets of space between jumps on your course and **assign students individual stations** to wait. Instruct each *incoming* rider to take the *outgoing* rider's place upon finishing the course. Discuss **order of go** ahead of time, and make sure students know how to respond to a horse that resists standing still.
- At this stage, you'll probably want to call out the course as riders go around individually, as memorization is a bit much to ask for on top of all the other new skills! If **private** students progress quickly and have time for additional round, they may be able to ride the last from memory.
- Private** students can practice the initial position work on the longe line.

### FINAL NOTES

- This lesson covers a lot of territory**, as there are many separate skills a beginner must remember to successfully “jump” over poles, even at the walk. Keep in mind that this is an **introduction**, and that the courses ridden at lesson's end will probably not be pretty, polished rounds. You may wish to split this into two lessons if teaching a shorter time slot, or if students need extra time to work on the correct two-point position.
- Tendencies towards **position faults**—such as chair seat, perching, diver toes or looking down—will **make the two-point unstable or extremely difficult** to achieve. Be particularly watchful for **excess grip in the knees**, which gives students a false sense of security until something goes wrong and the knees become a pivot point.
- School horses must be able to walk calmly over poles** without tension or changes in rhythm. If students are learning on their own horse, it is a good idea to find out how the horse responds to ground poles before sending the beginner rider over one for the first time!

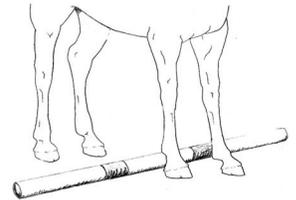
# LESSON # 14

BASIC SKILLS

RED LEVEL

## WHOA AND GO POLES

**OBJECTIVE:** For students to improve both halting technique and course riding skills, with an emphasis on clear communication and preparation for transitions.



### EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- ❑ SIX TO EIGHT GROUND POLES, SET BETWEEN STANDARDS (PREFERABLE) OR SECURED SO THEY CANNOT ROLL

### PREP

Set a simple ground pole course made up of inside and outside lines, with generous turns. (If teaching consecutively with #13 **Two-Point Time**, you may be able to recycle the same obstacles.) Make sure all standards are free of empty jump cups.

### INTRO

"Last week, we made it easy for our horses to step over poles by getting off their backs, releasing with our hands, and looking up to the other side. Today, we're going to change things up. Some of your poles are meant to be 'jumped,' while the others will test your ability to ride a very accurate halt!"

5  
MIN

### LESSON AND EXERCISES

 **Review:** Two-point position in the halt and walk. If riders are secure, you can liven things up by alternating between two-point and stirrup stand, or by asking students to ride in the position with one arm outstretched or behind back.

15  
MIN

 **Review:** If feasible, allow each rider a short leadline trot along the long sides. Depending on each student's security and progress in trot, they may be able to ride one side in posting trot and the other in two-point position.

5  
MIN

 **Discuss:** Jumping requires **accuracy**, which requires **clear communication**. This can be practiced by riding transitions between halt and walk. **ASK: How can we let our horses know the halt is coming?**

 **PRACTICE:** Instruct each student to ride up to a different jump and halt their horse close enough to a standard that they can reach down and **"tag" the jump**. Practice until they can successfully tag at least two different jumps.

10  
MIN

**Emphasize:** Students should aim to stop with their boot close to the standard, not the horse's head. They must ask for the halt transition before this point to succeed!

 **PRACTICE:** One at a time, ask students to walk to a designated ground pole and halt with the horse's front feet on one side of the pole and the back feet on the other side. (This may take several tries.) If successful, progress to a course of ground poles, with approximately two-thirds being **"Whoa" poles** and one-third remaining **"Go" poles** to be ridden in the walk, with two-point position. (This helps prevent horses from anticipating the exercise.) Award points for each pole ridden correctly.

20  
MIN

### REVIEW

- ? How do we tell the horse whether to expect a "Whoa" pole or a "Go" pole?
- ? How far before the pole do you need to start preparing for the transition?

5  
MIN

# LESSON #14

## WHOA AND GO POLES

RED LEVEL

### FUN AND GAMES

- 🐾 **Keep track of how many points riders accumulate.** If your students are a competitive bunch, you can award a grand prize to the rider with the highest total. Be sure to think of a tiebreaker or have multiple prizes in the event of a draw! Younger or easily discouraged children may do better trying to achieve a preset goal. You can award a prize to anyone who achieves five points, and allow second tries as time allows.
- 🐾 **Both the jump tagging and the “Whoa” poles can be ridden competitively.** Assign each rider a jump, with instructions that their horse must remain stationary in the halted position until a whistle blows. (Usually the hardest part of the game.) On the signal, two riders exchange places, and the first to successfully achieve their halt—either with their hand on the jump or the horse’s feet straddling the pole—wins a point. This can be played for some time in a large group as you rotate pairings, and makes a great camp game for all ages and ability levels.



### GROUP VS PRIVATE LESSONS

- 🐾 The usual considerations for spacing out **large groups** apply here, with an added degree of importance as it can be difficult for a beginner to halt if their horse is determined to catch up with their herd!
- 🐾 If you are short on time, you may wish to **stagger starts** instead of asking students to ride through the final course one at a time. If so, make sure you allow plenty of room between each horse to avoid handicapping the rider in the rear, especially if horses are competitive or herd bound.
- 🐾 As **private** students often have a few additional minutes, you may wish to take a guided walk around the course with all “Go” poles before introducing the halts, to more thoroughly review the previous work.



**Are you teaching half-halts?** At a rudimentary level, yes—students should prepare for halts by slowing and rebalancing the walk, using seat and soft resistance on the reins, with their leg remaining under their body. **Lay the groundwork for correct half-halts, but remember that multitasking is hard for beginners, and avoid overloading students with technical terminology.**

### FINAL NOTES

- 🐾 **Transition tournaments of any kind can incite rough riding**, particularly with young or impatient students. Make it very clear that **you will not award points to anyone who hauls on their horse’s mouth** in a last-ditch effort to save a halt. You may also choose to discard the competitive element of the game entirely, instead working the halts into the goal of a “clean round.”
- 🐾 At your discretion, you may also choose to **withhold points for poor approaches** to each pole. As students have only just been introduced to coursework, you’ll have to use your best judgment here. Finding the correct line to a jump is a concept that can require many lessons. Optionally, you can set a few well-placed cones between each jump to encourage your students to ride out to the track and make wide turns.

# LESSON # 15

LONGE LESSONS

RED LEVEL

## NO STIRRUPS, NO PROBLEM

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will gain confidence and balance riding without stirrups, performing exercises at the walk and slow trot with the horse on the longe line.



### EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

LONGE LINE & WHIP

OPTIONAL POLES TO DIVIDE ARENA WORKSPACE

### PREP

Ensure arena has a clear workspace 20m or more in diameter, free of jump standards, extra poles or any other hazards. If teaching a group with assistance, you can use ground poles to divide arena into zones. Longe line and whip should be neatly folded and easily accessible.

### INTRO

"When a rider is balanced and secure, able to follow the horse's movement without relying on their hands, we say they have a **good seat**. A good seat keeps us safe and makes our horses much happier! **One of the best ways to develop a good seat is to ride without stirrups.**"

5  
MIN

### LESSON AND EXERCISES

 **Review:** two-point position in the walk. If riders are able to maintain spacing and keep horses walking on the rail, follow this with a series of balancing stretches, including reaching for the poll, croup, toes, and opposite toes.

15  
MIN

 **PRACTICE:** As a group, have riders drop and pick up their stirrups at the halt three times. **ASK: Is one side easier than the other? Can you do this with eyes closed?**

5  
MIN

 **Discuss:** Accidentally losing a stirrup is something that happens to riders of all levels, at any time. For this reason, **students should be equally comfortable retrieving dropped stirrups and riding without**. Riding without stirrups can be strenuous, but will improve students' strength, balance and safety.

10  
MIN

**Emphasize:** Students are less likely to fall off if they learn how to ride securely without stirrups. **HorseSense students are not allowed to learn to canter until they can ride the posting and sitting trot stirrupless!**

 **PRACTICE:** One at a time, cross stirrups and longe students for 5-10 minutes, practicing exercises such as toe touches, airplanes, twists, dance moves, etc. If students are ready, finish with a short, slow sitting trot, holding onto pommel as necessary.

 **Review:** If time permits, uncross stirrups and allow each student a posting trot on the longe before switching out. (Aka, a stirrup appreciation trot!)

20  
MIN

 **Students waiting their turn to be longed** should be stationed with an assistant at the opposite end of the arena. This time may be spent reviewing survival skills; by walking through steering exercises without stirrups; or a combination of the two as needed.

### REVIEW

- ? Can you think of three important reasons to practice riding without stirrups?
- ? Which muscles get tired first? How can we make our no-stirrup muscles stronger?

5  
MIN

# LESSON #15

NO STIRRUPS, NO PROBLEM

RED LEVEL

**If you have plenty of experienced helpers, but have concerns about time constraints or the suitability of longeing horses, this lesson can also be taught on the leadline.** After the initial exercises, students can cross stirrups and practice all of the no-stirrup work with a Ground Buddy walking alongside, ensuring that the horse remains straight and quiet throughout.

When it is time to trot, students can be led in the trot down long sides. Walk before corners to allow them time to rebalance and to give your hard-working leaders a breather. Teaching the class in this way does give students a few extra minutes of no-stirrup work, so **evaluate fatigue levels of both riders and Ground Buddies before deciding whether to include the final posting trot.**



## GROUP VS PRIVATE LESSONS

- As in previous longe lessons, this lesson requires **good time management and clear communication** when working with a **large group**. Limit longe sessions to 2-3 minutes on each rein, and **ensure that your assistant has a clear plan** for working students in and out of their exercises smoothly.
- When teaching this lesson **privately**, students can spend plenty of time working through a slow progression of exercises on the longe line, and finish by walking through a simple no-stirrup steering exercise off the line. However, **watch closely for signs of fatigue!** More is not always better when working without stirrups.

**Ready to trot, or not? Not all students will have the confidence and security to ride the sitting trot the first time out. Here are a few signs to look for when deciding how quickly to progress. Remember, especially when practicing no-stirrup work: if in doubt, it is always better to take things slow.**



- ? **Is the student able to maintain a basic balanced position at the walk**, with legs correctly placed, shoulders over hips, and toes higher than heels?
- ? **Are they comfortable riding with hands off the saddle and/or arms outstretched**, or do they continually grab for balance?
- ? **Are they mentally relaxed and confident?** Tension will inhibit their ability to follow the horse's gait, causing bouncing and a loss of stability as well as confidence.

## FINAL NOTES

- Not all trots are created equal.** Some horses are so smooth that riders will find sitting work easy, while others bounce enough that riders struggle just to remain balanced through the upward transition. If you are teaching a group lesson and have one student facing this challenge, it can be good to have a discussion about how horses move differently and everyone learns to sit at their own pace. Emphasize that students riding horses with less-than-ideal trots will need more time to build balance and stamina, but they will be stronger riders in the long run!
- If you haven't already had the fitness talk with your students, this is another great opportunity for it.** Even if you limit your no-stirrup work to the walk, they will likely get tired, and may be sore the next day. Keep a watchful eye for signs of fatigue, and stop *before* they get too weak to ride safely.

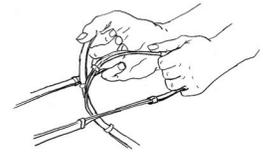
# LESSON # 16

LONGE LESSONS

RED LEVEL

## IN GOOD HANDS

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will learn to maintain a consistent hand position in the posting trot and through transitions on the longe line, in preparation for trotting independently.



### EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

☐ LONGE LINE & WHIP

☐ PAPER PARTY STREAMER, TORN INTO 18" LENGTHS  
(TWICE AS MANY PIECES AS STUDENTS)

### PREP

Ensure arena has a clear workspace 20m or more in diameter, free of jump standards, poles or any other hazards, with arena clearly divided into two separate zones. Longe line and whip should be neatly folded and easily accessible, as well as several lengths of party ribbon. (Keep dry!)

### INTRO

"You have already learned how important it is to handle the reins with respect—after all, you are **really holding onto the horse's mouth!** At the trot, although your body goes up and down, the horse's head remains relatively still. This means that before you trot on your own, you must **teach your hands to help, not hinder.**"

5  
MIN

### LESSON AND EXERCISES

 **Review:** Balance exercises at the walk, with and without feet in stirrups. Two-point position in the walk. **ASK: Where do we place our hands in two-point position? How does this help the horse? How does it help you?**

10  
MIN

 **PRACTICE:** As a group, practice posting at the halt with hands holding "invisible reins."

**Emphasize:** Elbows should open and close as riders rise and sit, allowing the hands to remain just above the withers, with thumbs on top. Students may also use the "pinkie test," extending the pinky finger to just touch the top of the withers. This is used to test placement only—otherwise fingers should remain closed! **ASK: Do you find it easy to post this way? Or do you want to balance by lifting or leaning on your hands?**

10  
MIN

 **PRACTICE:** One at a time, longe students for 5-10 minutes, practicing the posting trot first with invisible reins, then with reins untwisted and placed in the student's hands—keep them long for now. Once students are successful, challenge them to the **Ribbon Test**. Tie each end of the party streamer to the D-rings on the pommel of the saddle, creating a very **fragile grab strap**. Instruct students to hold the streamer along with their reins, leaving slack in the ribbon between saddle and hands. **Can they transition to the trot, post a full circle, and return to walk without breaking the ribbon?**

25  
MIN

 **Students waiting their turn to be longed** can practice simple steering games at the walk (weaving through cones, poles etc.), while occasionally dropping stirrups, riding a short distance without, and then retrieving.

 **PRACTICE:** If students are confidently prepared and horses relaxed, finish by allowing each rider a solo trot along one long side, with assistance only if necessary.

5  
MIN

### REVIEW

- ? Why is important to keep hands steady at the withers when trotting?
- ? How do you think your horse will react if you hang on the reins?

5  
MIN

# LESSON # 16

IN GOOD HANDS

RED LEVEL

## FUN AND GAMES

- 🐾 Offer a prize to any rider who passes the Ribbon Test on the first try, or to the rider who can post the longest without the ribbon breaking. (Of course, if making this a competitive event, it is essential that **all ribbons are the same length after tying**, so no one can be accused of an unfair advantage!)
- 🐾 Add an additional challenge to your initial practice at the halt by giving each rider **two paper cups full of water**. Can they post without spilling the water all over their horse's neck? Offer a prize to the student who has the most water left in their cups after a round of posting at the halt and/or walk. (Avoid this game, however, if it is very cold—no one wants wet and frozen fingers or gloves!)

Ribbons must be tied at just the right length for the game to properly test the stability of the hands. Too short, and the student will have to keep constant tension on the paper, dooming the game to fail at the first misstep. Too long, and their hands can jump around without consequence. Tie the ends on carefully, ensuring that the paper does not partially tear in the process. **Keep a spare length or two at the ready in case your rider needs a replacement.**



## GROUP VS PRIVATE LESSONS

- 🐾 If teaching a large **group**, you may not have enough time to spend with each rider on the longe line. In this case the Ribbon Test can be presented to the whole group, giving each student a ribbon and practicing together at the halt before trotting (with assistance) down the long sides instead of around a circle.
- 🐾 As **private** students can spend a full 20-30 minutes on the longe line, you can build very gradually, allowing your student plenty of time to practice at each stage. A suggested progression on the longe line: **trot with invisible reins; while holding reins at the buckle; with long reins; with reins at correct length for control; ribbon test at halt and walk**; and finally **the ribbon test at the trot**. You can also practice cues for the trot and walk, encouraging the student to communicate with the horse and reducing their dependence on the longe line.



**Rainy day?** This concept can be taught **on the ground** as well, by positioning students in a gentle "horse stance" squat and testing their ability to raise and lower their center without moving their hands. You can pair up students, or hold the end of the reins and pretend to be the horse yourself. **The Cup Game can also be played unmounted.**

## FINAL NOTES

- 🐾 **A sensitive horse may react** to the sound of the ribbon tearing or the sensation of water falling on their neck. If in doubt, test this and/or the water cups before sending student off to practice!

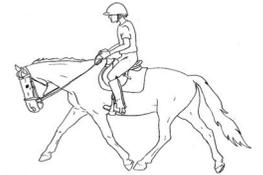
# LESSON # 17

LONGE LESSONS

RED LEVEL

## DRESS REHEARSAL

**OBJECTIVE:** *Students will ride transitions between the walk and the trot on the longe line, in control of the reins, earning the opportunity to trot a short distance independently.*



### EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

☐ LONGE LINE & WHIP

☐ CONES OR POLES TO MARK ACCURATE TRANSITIONS

### PREP

Ensure arena has a clear workspace 20m or more in diameter, free of jump standards, extra poles or any other hazards. Use ground poles to divide arena into zones, if possible, leaving a few poles and/or cones at one end. Longe line and whip should be neatly folded and easily accessible.

### INTRO

"When you first began riding the trot, it probably took all of your concentration just to remain balanced. This is why you've had some help steering your horse! But now that you are able to post to the trot **without relying on the reins for balance**, you are ready to become a **pilot instead of a passenger.**"

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MIN

### LESSON AND EXERCISES

🐾 **Review:** Balance exercises at the walk, with and without feet in stirrups. Posting at the walk with hands positioned over the withers.

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MIN

🐾 **Review:** Walk/halt transitions along rail, as in **#7 Stoplight**. **ASK: How many steps does it take for you to bring your horse from a marching walk to a halt? Are you preparing for the transition before asking for it?**

🐾 **Discuss:** At the trot, we use the same cues (in other words, the same system of pressure and release) to ask the horse to speed up, slow down, and turn that we do at the walk. **It is important to be balanced and organized before asking for faster gaits**, because long or uneven reins, misplaced stirrups, or position faults can cause a loss of control.

5  
MIN

🐾 **PRACTICE:** One at a time, longe students for 5-10 minutes, practicing transitions between walk and posting trot. Once students move smoothly between gaits, ask them to enlarge the circle, using **inside leg** and **outside rein** enough that you have to let out some line.

25  
MIN

**Emphasize:** Although you are holding the longe line, you should feel like your presence is unnecessary, with students performing transitions and steering on their own.

🐾 **Students waiting their turn to be longed** can continue practicing **walk/halt transitions** at the other end of the arena, using "whoa" poles and cones to test accuracy. This should include some **emergency stops!**

🐾 **PRACTICE:** If students are confidently prepared and horses relaxed, finish by allowing each rider a **solo trot** along the rail, no more than one lap around.

10  
MIN

### REVIEW

? What should you do if you ask your horse to walk and he continues trotting?

? Should you sit or keep posting during the transition? What if the trot is very fast?

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MIN

# LESSON # 17

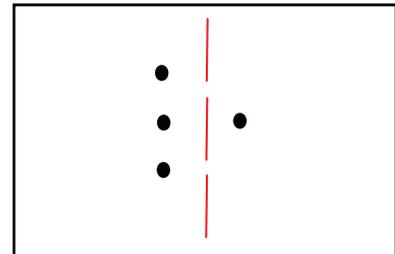
## DRESS REHEARSAL

RED LEVEL

### GROUP VS PRIVATE LESSONS

- When setting up the solo trots at the end of **group** lessons, keep in mind the **equine dynamics**. Some horses will speed up as they approach the herd, which means you need to designate a stopping place well before riders face the rest of the group. More stoic horses may be reluctant to trot for their unproven pilots without the motivation of a horse in front of them. **Try to set up each rider for an easy transition** up to the trot and back to the walk, and discuss protocol should their brakes fail and their horses turn back towards the group.
- Private** students can spend a few additional minutes practicing transitions at the walk before moving onto the longe line. If time allows, they may also be able to do several short trots off the line at the end of the lesson; you can start with trotting just a single side of the arena and gradually extend from there.

**Not able to longe?** By dividing large arenas, you can still use this lesson format to gradually wean students off assistance in the trot. Create a physical boundary using a line of poles or cones, and take students individually into one half to practice walk/trot transitions. This allows the rider to focus on steering and communicating independently with the horse without having to worry about maintaining space or steering around arena obstacles. It also keeps you close to the horse, so you can exert some influence with your body language if necessary.



### READY OR NOT?

**In a perfect world, all students would be taught on the longe line with help from a steady, rhythmic schoolmaster,** preferably without stirrups and reins. They would learn to sit the gaits and all transitions, developing balance in the posting trot and the half-seat as well as a full-seated position, before touching the horse's mouth.

**In the real world... there are compromises.** As discussed previously, longe lessons are only safe and valuable if the horse, equipment and environment are appropriate. You could find yourself faced with the task of teaching the trot to a large group without any assistance at all, except that offered by your steady and patient horses! If you are teaching a large summer camp program, or a block of introductory lessons, your participants will likely expect to be able to hold the reins and ride on their own fairly early on. You may also teach students, particularly adults, who want to acquire a basic riding education in preparation for trail riding or an upcoming vacation—and steering the horse independently must be part of that.

If you *are* able to introduce the trot on the longe line and/or leadline, you'll have to make the call as to when the student is ready to leave their training wheels behind. **It might take a single lesson, or it might take weeks.** Repeat and add sessions as necessary, but if possible, wait to turn them loose until you see the following signs:

- The student can maintain a consistent posting rhythm,** without bouncing or skipping beats, with hands in correct position and with arms outstretched.
- The student remains balanced through transitions** between the walk and the trot, sitting fully in the saddle.
- The student can cue the horse for transitions and move the horse left and right** without losing their balance or rhythm.
- Student and horse are relaxed, confident and ready to trot** on their own!



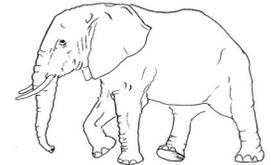
# LESSON # 18

FLATWORK SKILLS

RED LEVEL

## ELEPHANT BUMBLEBEES

**OBJECTIVE:** Students should gain familiarity with arena terminology, dressage letters and basic ring figures while steering their horses through simple changes of direction at the walk.



### EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- SET OF DRESSAGE ARENA LETTERS (AKEHCMBF; PAINTED CONES WORK JUST FINE)
- OPTIONAL STUFFED ANIMALS

### PREP

Set out dressage letters at correct points along rail. For this lesson, the dimensions of the arena do not matter, only the location of the letters. Decorate with stuffed animals as you wish.

### INTRO

As students warm up at the walk, discuss what is meant by riding **on the rail** and through **ring figures**. Explain that the purpose of the letters is to help them ride accurate lines and turns.

5  
MIN

**ASK: What do you think are the benefits of riding accurate ring figures? What do we learn about our horse and our riding by practicing them?**

### LESSON AND EXERCISES

 **Review:** Tracking along the rail to the left and the right, without cutting corners or drifting to center. As students progress, poll the class and come up with an animal name to assign to each letter. For example, you might end up with an arena containing an **alligator, kangaroo, elephant, hippopotamus, camel, monkey, bumblebee** and **flamingo**.

10  
MIN

 **Review:** Allow each student a short trot along the rail, using letters to designate upward and downward transitions. (For example, all riders trot from K to C.)

5  
MIN

 **Discuss:** Methods of changing direction, including a **half-circle reverse, long and short diagonals, half turns** through the middle, and **turning up centerline**. What animals would be involved in each turn? **ASK: why is it important to know how to change direction in multiple ways?**

10  
MIN

**Emphasize:** It might not seem like a big deal to allow the horse to drift or cut corners when walking through simple turns, but those same mistakes can create huge problems at fast gaits or over fences. Practicing accuracy at the walk improves leadership and communication skills and develops good habits for both horse and rider!

 **PRACTICE:** Line students up single file at A. Have them track along the rail and call out animals for them to connect, for example, "Monkeys to kangaroos!" and "Bumblebees to Elephants!" Evaluate accuracy of corners and lines. **ASK: what do we call the turn we just rode?** If students are capable and confident, conclude by choosing one turn or a sequence of letters to ride at the trot. (For example, trot at C, change direction M to E, walk at A.)

25  
MIN

**Emphasize:** Steering should be a higher priority than maintaining the trot!

### REVIEW

- ? What animals would you have in your menagerie if you rode a half-circle reverse? Across the diagonal? Up the centerline?
- ? What landmarks could you use if you didn't have the letters to test your accuracy?

5  
MIN

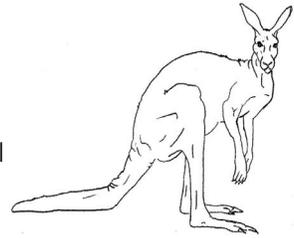
# LESSON #18

## ELEPHANT BUMBLEBEES

RED LEVEL

### FUN AND GAMES

🐾 Young children may enjoy making “animal sounds” as they pass each letter, which can be hilarious and require a stretch of the imagination. **(What noise would YOU make as a kangaroo?)** You can also ask them to picture composite animals made up of all the letters they have used. For example, a half-circle from F to B would make an animal that was half flamingo, half bumblebee. **(Is the bee pink and long-legged? Does the flamingo have fuzzy black-and-yellow stripes?)**



🐾 You can also play “**Cat in the Bag**” by placing a stuffed animal (of any variety) inside a pillowcase and closing it. The animal’s identity remains a mystery throughout the game, and it can only be freed once the students have successfully navigated three turns off the leadline, from memory. The pillowcase can also contain small prizes such as candy, animal crackers, and/or stickers.

🐾 For an inventive twist on **Follow the Leader**, ask each leader during their turn to take the ride through one of your established changes of direction and through one pattern with letters of their own choosing. Students may accidentally “discover” ring figures such as figure-eights or serpentines; they may also feel the consequence of tight turns (such as riding from B to F to X) as their horses slow down, fall in or drift out on the turn.

### GROUP VS PRIVATE LESSONS

🐾 It can be a good idea to **pretend to be the leading horse** when you first send riders through each change of direction, as they may not be able to visualize how the letters connect. This is particularly important with **private** students who don’t have the benefit of another horse to follow.

🐾 Maintaining spacing is key whenever working **groups** single file. Review ring rules, particularly protocol for passing and circling to adjust space. Be ready to step in and direct traffic as necessary.

🐾 Although you may have some horses and riders that are more confident leaders than others, it is important to **regularly rotate positions**; riders who spend the whole lesson in back may tune out and let their horses go on autopilot as they simply follow the crowd.



**Rainy day?** Teach this unmounted in a barn aisle or clear floor space. Set out small cones or pieces of cardstock marked with letters and direct your “riders,” aboard hobbyhorses or imaginary steeds, through each figure. For an extra challenge, they can navigate the turns as a human train or at the “trot” and “canter!”

### FINAL NOTES

🐾 **There is a lot of terminology involved in working a horse within the arena.** Try not to burden your students with too many new terms or explanations of theory. Their minds will stay busy trying to remember all of the different turns, and there will be plenty of time to expand upon this lesson later.

🐾 This may be the first exposure your new riders have to arena flatwork—an environment we want them to learn to appreciate. **Keep it logical and keep it FUN!**

# LESSON # 19

## FLATWORK SKILLS

RED LEVEL

### MERRY GO ROUND

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will further refine their turning aids by learning how to ride a large circle at the walk.



#### EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- 8 CONES, SET IN PAIRS TO MARK QUARTERS OF CIRCLE 20M (OR MORE) IN DIAMETER

#### PREP

Set cones to mark a large, round circle that begins and ends on the rail (preferably at E, B, A or C, but marked letters are not required). A space approximately 3' wide should be left between each pair of cones, large enough for a horse to pass through.

#### INTRO

"One of the most important ring figures we learn to ride is the **circle**. It can also be one of the trickiest skills you practice in this level. Horses aren't naturally good at geometry, so you will have to plan ahead and use all your aids to communicate." **ASK: Why do you think circles are beneficial to practice? Can you think of a situation where you might need to ride a circle?**

5  
MIN

#### LESSON AND EXERCISES

**Review:** Changing direction across diagonal, up centerline, and through half turns and half-circles, at the walk. **ASK: Can you smoothly turn across the diagonal from any corner? Why or why not?**

15  
MIN

**Review:** Trotting along rail, one at a time. If time permits, trot on both reins; long sides only on the first side, maintaining trot for 3/4 lap of arena on the second side.

**Demonstrate:** Walk "invisible horse" around circle, passing through all cones and returning to rail after circle is complete.

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MIN

**Emphasize:** A good circle is **round like an orange**—not an apple, a pear, or a watermelon! The cones should not be ridden as corners, or the circle will turn into a diamond.

**PRACTICE:** Have riders line up at one end of arena, facing the circle. One at a time, each student should ride forward, complete one full circle, and return to rail, stopping at opposite end. Repeat on other rein. Once students are able to maintain a consistent, reasonably round track, offer two challenges: **1) walking around the circle with distance between cones shrunk to a narrow gap**, just large enough for a horse to pass through, or **2) riding the circle at the trot.**

30  
MIN

**Emphasize:** Circles should continually curve and **end exactly where they begin**, as if drawn by hand. While bend and alignment can be difficult concepts for a beginner to grasp, you can lay the foundation by drawing attention to how the spine feels and to each horse's individual tendencies.

#### REVIEW

- ? Do you think it is easier to circle your horse to the left or the right?
- ? Are there specific places where your horse drifts out or cuts in? What could you do to prevent this?

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MIN

# LESSON #19

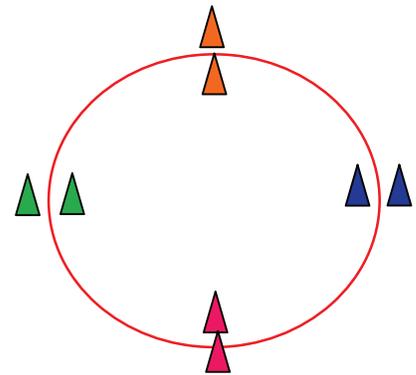
## MERRY GO ROUND

RED LEVEL

### FUN AND GAMES

Groups with an eye for spacing can participate in **fun walking races** by forming an **actual merry-go-round**. Station each rider at a set of cones, one at each quarter of the circle. (If you have more than four riders in the group, divide into teams as evenly as possible.) It is best if each cone is a different color, or has unique markings; **if using dressage letters, assign a fun mnemonic to each pairing of letters**, such as "Brave Monkeys" or "Cuddly Koalas."

On "Go," students ride around one complete circle, halting when they return to their own set of cones. The first rider to halt within a horse length of their cones wins, but anyone who misses a set of cones or halts early or late has to perform a re-do before continuing! Establish rules for maintaining spacing and the penalty for unauthorized trots.



### GROUP VS PRIVATE LESSONS

- 🐾 Large **groups** must be spaced out carefully and the circles practiced efficiently. Asking the students to ride through the figure individually will eat up your minutes, especially if they have trouble or the horses are naturally poky in their walk. If your riders are good about monitoring spacing, you can send them through in pairs instead. Just alternate the leader, because the rider in the rear won't have to do much steering, thanks to horses' natural tendency to follow a lead!
- 🐾 **Private** students will not have to wait for other riders to go, allowing them time for additional repetitions and the opportunity to ride both the narrower track and attempt the trot at a circle, if all goes well.

### FINAL NOTES

- 🐾 If your students have taken several lessons on the longe line, you can **draw on this experience to help them establish a round circle**. Stand in the center of the circle and instruct them to maintain a consistent distance from you all the way around, as though they are attached to an invisible longe line. If they get too close, the line falls under the horse's feet; too far away, and they have pulled you on your face!
- 🐾 Many riders overdo their turning aids when they first attempt this ring figure, resulting in sharp corners or circles that shrink as they go. **Emphasize intent** (eyes and position of seat), making the rein aid the final part of the request, only used as necessary. Remember that an opening rein is preferable to a direct rein aid for most beginners, who can be slow to release pressure and often overpower their leg with accidental braking.
- 🐾 Experienced riders know that there are **many ingredients to a perfect circle**: correct bend and alignment in both horse and rider, the position of the inside and outside leg, the roles of the inside and outside rein, the difference in riding the hollow side of the horse versus the stiff side... Even if your students are analytical adults, **keep it simple** and be careful not to overload with information. You can briefly point out the bend in the horse's body, or discuss the importance of a steady outside rein as the horse drifts out through one shoulder, but **prioritize action over discussion**. Learning to ride a round circle can be difficult for a new rider, and frustrating for a perfectionist! There will be plenty of time to introduce more advanced concepts once they can produce the basic shape.

# LESSON #20

BASIC SKILLS

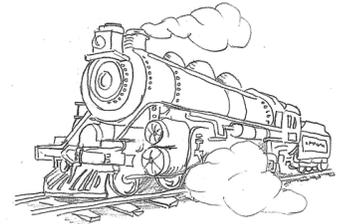
RED LEVEL

## TRAIN TRACKS

**OBJECTIVE:** *Students will learn to maintain the posting trot independently while keeping horse out on the rail of the arena.*

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:**

- ❑ SIX TO TEN GROUND POLES TO CREATE TRACK



**PREP**

Set poles near corners and along sides of arena, approximately one horse length from the fence, to create a track just wide enough for students to trot around comfortably. Ensure that rail is free of standards, empty jump cups, mounting blocks or other hazards.

**INTRO**

"Trotting on your own means you have to do two things at once: remain balanced with the horse's motion and communicate clearly to remain in control. We talk to our horses about both **direction** and **pace**." **ASK: Which of these do you think is most important?**

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MIN

**LESSON  
AND  
EXERCISES**

 **Review:** Walk through previously-learned ring figures single file, to include changes of rein across the diagonal and through center of the arena, large circles, and half-circles.

10  
MIN

**Emphasize:** Consistency is very important when working with horses. It might not seem like a big deal to let the horse cut the corner in the walk, but that same swerve might cause a loss of balance at faster gaits. Students should ride every turn and line as though they are cantering towards a large jump!

 **Review:** Transitions between walk and trot. For now, trots should occur on the long sides only, with the student returning to walk before the rail.

10  
MIN

 **Discuss:** Riding into corners, **away from the herd and instructor**, is contrary to the natural tendency of most horses, and a good test of control. **ASK: Does your horse cling to the rail? Or does he drift and cut inside poles and/or cones?**

5  
MIN

 **PRACTICE:** Establish that the track between the poles and rail represents a **train track**, running around a mountain. **ASK: What happens to a train if it goes off the rails?** Students must leave the station (a designated pole at A or C) and trot all the way around without their train leaving the tracks. Have each student practice this individually, with the rest of the group standing in the center of the arena. Allow each rider at least two turns (one to the left and one to the right), with repetitions as necessary.

25  
MIN

**Emphasize:** Horses go where our focus goes, which means students should **keep their eyes ahead on the track**—not down at the poles or in toward the group, even if they feel their horse going off the rail!

**REVIEW**

- ? Is it easier to keep the horse on the rail going left or going right? Why?
- ? Where does your horse speed up? Break to walk? Why do you think this occurs?

5  
MIN

# LESSON #20

## TRAIN TRACKS

RED LEVEL

### FUN AND GAMES

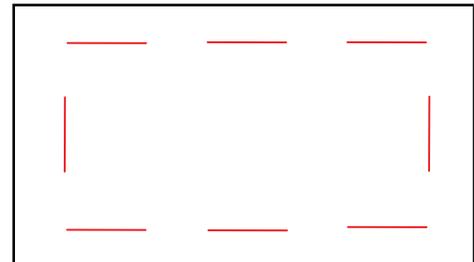
🐾 If students are able to produce a steady trot all the way around the track, have an eye for spacing, and the horses remain quiet when trotting together, you can **make the last circuit of the arena a full-length train, with all riders lined up single file**. Remind the riders in the rear that their horses will naturally be more forward as they try to keep up with the group, and that leaders must provide a consistent pace to keep the train cars from piling up. Discuss strategies for adjusting spacing as necessary before sending students off at the trot!



🐾 **Award prizes to students who are able to keep their “train” on the tracks** all the way around. You can emphasize the theme of the day by wearing a conductor’s cap, or blowing a whistle twice—in imitation of a train whistle—to signal the start of each round.

🐾 You may wish to **start with a generously wide track**, especially during the warm-up figures at the walk, and roll poles in to narrow the track as students demonstrate their ability to trot around it. This variation can be especially useful for **private** students, who have time for additional repetitions but won’t have the optional challenge of maintaining spacing and the correct pace.

**Students not ready to trot off the line quite yet?** This lesson can easily be taught at the walk—especially if you are working with a large group with limited assistance, and need students to immediately grasp the concept of keeping the horse on the rail. In this case, you can teach it concurrently with **#7 Stoplight**, **#8 Mountain Trail**, and/or **#10 Ring Rules**. You can also add variations by asking students to walk around track in two-point, or with feet out of stirrups.



### PUT THE HORSE BEFORE THE CART

As your students begin to navigate independently at the trot, make sure to **emphasize priorities**:

**FIRST, direction is more important than speed.** The rider should remain committed to the track they intend to take, and communicate this commitment to the horse. Most accidents occur when horses unexpectedly swerve, turn, or otherwise deviate from their intended path, especially if there are obstacles in the arena. Even if the rider is going slower or faster than they intend, for safety’s sake, they **must continue to steer**.

**SECOND, the horse should go at the intended pace.** Ideally, we want our horses to maintain a consistent rhythm in all gaits; while beginners may not achieve this initially, they should be able to maintain the walk or trot until asked for a transition.

**THIRD, attention to details, such as posture and accuracy.** (In later Levels, this includes posting diagonals and leads.) While we know the horse’s obedience and freedom of movement will improve along with the rider’s position, you may need to overlook a beginner’s slouching shoulders or a creeping chair seat until you have established the first two basics. **A student will find it very hard to focus on body awareness if they are afraid of losing control.**

Throughout all your mounted lessons, consider the horse’s welfare. **While rider safety must take priority above all else**, we must always strive to **avoid abusing the horse’s generous nature**. If in doubt, return to a walk, or arrange for the student to ride on a lead and/or longe line for as long as needed. **Never be afraid to go back to basics!**