



# HorseSense Learning Levels

## LEVEL UP QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### Red Horsemanship

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS for each page in the STUDY GUIDE

#### Page 1 - Equine Behavior

- Is a horse a prey animal or a predator?**  
Horses are prey animals - they're hunted by other animals.
- Are you a prey animal or a predator?**  
Humans are predators.
- Why is it important to remember that horses are prey animals?**  
Since we are predators, we don't have the same survival instincts as prey animals. This means horses don't think or react the same way we do.
- Which will a frightened horse choose first: flight or fight?**  
Horses will try flight first; if they can't run away from a threat then they will stand and fight.
- Name five normal human activities that might frighten a horse.**  
running; loud voices; loud or unexpected noises; sneaking or moving quickly into his blind spots; waving or flapping objects; unfamiliar objects such as bicycles, toys, umbrellas, etc.; unfamiliar animals
- Your pony has two "blind spots". What are they and where are they located?**  
Blind spots are places where his vision is obstructed and he cannot see; he can't see directly in front of his face or behind his tail.
- Can your pony see you if you stand directly in front of his face?**  
No. He can only see you if you stand to the side.
- What might happen if I approach a pony from in front of his face or behind his tail and startle him?**  
He might get scared and try to kick me.
- What is the safe way to approach a horse's body?**  
You should approach him from the side, towards his neck and shoulder. This is the way horses approach each other to show they are friendly.

## Page 2 - Equine Behavior

- What does it mean when my pony's ears are splayed and droopy?**  
It means my pony is bored or sleepy.
- What does it mean when my pony's ears are pricked forward?**  
It means he's alert and listening.
- How does a horse tell you that he is angry?**  
When angry he pins his ears back on his head to look fierce.
- What should I do when my pony pins his ears against his head?**  
He's warning me that he's mad, so I should move a safe distance away.
- Can your pony tell if you are scared or nervous?**  
Yes - horses are very good at reading our body language.
- Why is it dangerous to yell or make loud noises around horses?**  
Loud noises could scare them and make them want to kick or run away.
- Why is it dangerous to sneak or run around horses?**  
Sneaking and running are predator behaviors, and may trigger your horse's flight-or-fight response.
- If something goes wrong while you're working with your horse, why is it important that you not panic? How can you stay calm?**  
Your horse wants you to be the leader to keep him safe, so if you panic he is also likely to panic. Take a deep breath and remember: if you want him to be calm, you must be calm first!

## Page 3 - Equine Behavior

- Why are horses unhappy when they live alone, without other animals for companionship?**  
Horses are herd animals. They feel safest in a group and usually form deep bonds with their herdmates. Without a herd, a horse will be lonely and fearful, even if he doesn't show it.
- A herd's hierarchy, or pecking order, determines which horses have power over other horses in the herd. Who gets to eat first, the dominant horses or the submissive horses?**  
The most dominant horses in the herd usually eat first, while the most submissive eat last and are often picked on by the other horses.
- What is a "mare"?**  
A mare is an adult female horse.

**What is a "gelding"?**

An adult male horse who has been gelded, or castrated so he cannot produce offspring.

**In most herds, which is the leader, a mare or a stallion?**

Most herds have a dominant mare, called the lead mare, who decides where the herd will graze and go for water.

**In a herd, what role does a stallion usually have?**

Most stallions have the role of protector, keeping the herd safe from predators and other stallions.

**In what way are horses are "claustrophobic"?**

They hate to be enclosed in tight spaces because their instincts tell them to always have a safe route away from danger.

**Name two situations that could make a horse feel claustrophobic.**

You can trigger your horse's claustrophobic tendencies by crowding him, asking him to squeeze through narrow spaces, or restraining him in some way, such as tying him. Horses also are defensive of their own personal space bubble, and will kick or bite any horse that invades it.

**What might happen if you tie your horse right next to another horse?**

The horses might kick or bite each other to defend their space bubbles.

**If a horse gets too close to you, you can ask him to move away by applying pressure. Describe two ways to apply pressure.**

To move the horse away from your space bubble, apply physical pressure, such as pushing gently against his shoulder or hindquarter; or send the horse away using motion.

**Your instructor tells you to defend your personal space bubble by using your "chicken wings". What does that mean?**

Flap your elbows like chicken wings to make the horse aware of your personal space and drive him away.

## Page 4 - Unmounted Safety

**When you are working with your horse, you become a "herd of two". Who should always be the leader in this herd?**

You should be the leader with your horse, because you are responsible for making sure that everything is done safely.

**How should you behave so that your horse respects your leadership?**

If you are calm and confident, authoritative yet fair, he will agree you are the lead horse and follow your directions willingly. If you are timid, unsure or inconsistent, the horse will not respect your leadership or trust you to look after him.

- What is the best way to prevent accidents when working with horses?**  
Learn to think critically and ask questions about everything you do.
- Name five rules for working safely around horses.**  
Boots and helmet; approach shoulder confidently; no predator behavior; respect personal space; hand on horse when grooming or walking behind him; quick-release knot for grooming and saddling; never sit or kneel next to horse; don't stand behind tail; use pressure to reposition horse.

## Page 5 - Mounted Safety

- What should you always remember to put on before you ride in the hot sun?**  
Apply sunscreen before riding in hot sun.
- Proper footwear is very important for safe riding. Describe what makes safe footwear.**  
tall riding boots, jodhpur boots, paddock boots, or safe riding shoes with distinct heel & smooth sole
- When the weather is very cold, it's important for a rider to wear gloves. Why?**  
Cold hands can't hold the reins safely.
- How can you tell if your helmet fits tightly enough?**  
Helmet should be tight enough that my eyebrows wiggle when you lift the brim up and down.
- How can you tell that your helmet's chin strap is adjusted correctly?**  
Chin strap should be adjusted so that it touches my skin and can't slip off.
- What kind of clothing should we wear when we're riding?**  
Wear long stretchy pants or leggings; close fitting shirt; boots with a smooth sole and a heel.
- Why is it a bad idea to wear loose, dangling jewelry when you ride?**  
Loose jewelry could get caught on your tack and hurt you.
- Why are boots with a smooth sole and a heel important when you're riding?**  
Boot heels should keep your feet from sliding through the stirrups; smooth sole will allow you to move feet easily in and out of stirrups.
- How can you tell that your helmet is sitting level on your head?**  
It should sit over my eyebrows, not above my forehead.
- Your helmet has a sticker inside it with the letters ASTM-SEI? What do these letters mean?**  
Your helmet is manufactured and tested to be safe.

## Page 6 - Unmounted Safety

- Can you name all SIX steps in preparing for a ride?**  
Dress in safe attire; catch and lead horse out of paddock or stall; tie horse safely; groom and pick hooves; tack up; lead horse to arena for safety check before mounting.
- What items of tack do you use to lead and tie your pony safely?**  
Lead with correctly fitted halter and lead rope.
- What makes a halter safer than a bridle for tying your pony?**  
The halter doesn't have a bit, which could hurt the pony's mouth if he pulled back.
- Is it a good idea to stick your fingers under the halter to lead your horse?**  
No - if your horse suddenly pulls away you could get dragged with him. Always use a lead rope with a halter.
- Where does the lead rope attach to the halter?**  
It snaps onto a ring under the horse's chin, which lets you handle him safely.
- Can you locate all of the parts of a standard buckled halter and lead? (Use a real halter or a photo to demonstrate, if possible - otherwise, describe the location.)**  
lead rope, snap, noseband, throatlatch, crownpiece

## Page 7 - Ground Handling

- What do you have to learn to do in order to safely catch a horse by yourself?**  
You have to approach the horse in stall or pasture, put the halter on, and lead him through gates - with an awareness of equine body language and safety procedures.
- True or False: You should always speak to your pony when approaching him to halter and lead him.**  
True
- Why should you organize your halter and lead rope BEFORE approaching a horse to catch him?**  
With the halter and lead already organized in the correct hands, you can efficiently put it on the horse as soon as you're close to him. If you wait to untangle them after you've approached him he may use that time to move away from you.
- You need to catch your horse in his stall - but he's dozing with his hindquarters facing towards you. What should you do?**  
Don't approach him until he turns to face you. It can be dangerous unintentionally sneaking up on a horse, so always make sure he knows you're there before you approach him.

- When approaching a horse with to catch him, is it okay to pet his neck before putting on the halter?**  
Yes, it's okay to let him know you're friendly - but don't wait too long to slip the lead rope around his neck or he may try to evade you!
- What should you do if your horse turns and walks (or runs!) away when he sees you approaching with a halter?**  
Don't chase him - just stand quietly and wait for him to stop moving. Hold out your hand and talk to him as you approach again.
- Your instructor says you could use a small treat when approaching your hard-to-catch horse. When should you give it to him?**  
It's preferable to give him the treat after the halter is buckled around his head.
- Your horse is difficult to catch and you are nervous about approaching him. Should you ask for help?**  
YES! Always let your instructor know when you're uncomfortable, so she can help you practice catching skills with confidence.
- What is the first step in haltering a horse?**  
Put the lead rope around the horse's neck first so he knows he is caught and give you more time to put on the halter.
- TRUE or FALSE: You should stand right in front of a horse's face when putting the halter.**  
FALSE! You should always stand on his side - usually the near (left) side - by his neck, so he can see you clearly.
- As you slip the noseband over the horse's muzzle, which hand holds the crownpiece so you can pull it behind the horse's ears and down into the buckle?**  
Your RIGHT hand holds the crownpiece and guides it into the buckle, which you are holding in your left hand.
- You're not sure which hole to use when buckling on the halter. Should you just guess?**  
No, make sure you ask your instructor to show you which hole to use so that the halter fits your horse's head correctly. Otherwise, the halter may hurt your horse's head - or slip off when you try to lead!

## Page 8 - Ground Handling

- Does your barn use tie-rings or cross-ties for tying horses? Why might it be a good idea to practice BOTH methods of tying?**  
You might have to tie your horse at another barn, at a show, or on the trail, so you should learn more than one way of tying.
- What kind of knot should be used to tie a horse to a tie-ring?**  
Tie horses with a quick-release knot.

- What do we call the special easy-release snaps on the cross-ties that attach to the horse's halter and to the tie rings on a wall or tie post?**

Cross-ties have panic snaps.

- Your horse had a bad experience while tied and now he panics whenever someone tries to tie him. Is it okay for you to just leave him loose for grooming and tacking up?**

No, you should ask someone to hold his lead rope while you are working around him to help keep both you and the horse safe.

- Is it okay to tie your horse to a fence board?**

No - you should always tie him to something solid, like a fence post.

- Is it safe to tie your pony using the reins?**

No - the metal bit could hurt your horse's mouth if you tied with the reins.

- What is a breakaway halter?**

A halter with a piece of leather (sometimes it's the crownpiece) that can break if a horse panics; this will keep him from hurting himself in an effort to get away.

- If you don't have a breakaway halter, how can you safely tie your horse with a nylon or rope halter?**

Tie him to a loop of breakable hay twine that is attached to your tie ring, or use special breakaway tie rings from the tack store.

- How high should your tie-ring be from the ground? What could happen if it's too low?**

Tie your knot level with your horse's eye whenever possible. If you tie too low, your horse may be able to get a foot over the rope.

- How much rope should you leave between the quick-release knot and your horse's halter? Why is this important?**

Allow your horse about 18" of rope, just enough that he can look around and doesn't feel trapped. If you tie too long, he will be able to move around too much and might get his hoof caught in the rope.

- How much clear space do you need in order to tie and work safely around your horse?**

Tie where you can work safely on both sides of the horse. Remove anything from the area that the horse might paw at or get tangled in.

- Is it okay to tie your horse inside an area where other horses are loose?**

No - your horse will need to defend his space bubble and to have an escape route when he's around loose horses, so you should remove him to a safer location to tie him.

## Page 9 - Ground Handling

- When preparing to lead your horse, where should you stand?**  
Stand by the horse's left shoulder, facing forward.
- Is the "near side" the left side or the right side of the horse's body?**  
The left side.
- What do we call the right side of the horse's body?**  
The "off side".
- When leading your pony from the near side, where should your LEFT hand be?**  
Your left hand should hold the folded end of the lead rope.
- When leading your pony from the near side, where should your RIGHT hand be?**  
Your right hand should hold the end of the lead rope that is clipped under the horse's chin, about 6" below the halter ring.
- Why is it dangerous to coil the lead rope around your hand when leading your pony?**  
If your horse pulled away, the lead rope would tighten around your hand and you could get dragged.
- When leading your horse, how do you get him to go forward?**  
To ask your horse to walk, step forward decisively and look where you want your horse to go. You can encourage a slow horse by clucking or making a kissing sound with your tongue, or telling him, "Walk on."
- When you lead your pony, it's important that you look straight ahead - not back at your pony. Why?**  
Looking ahead tells your pony where to go; when you look back at him you will block his motion and he may slow down or stop.
- When leading your horse, how do you get him to stop?**  
To ask your horse to stop, still your feet and quietly say, "Whoa." If necessary, apply pressure to the halter by pulling the lead rope back toward the horse's chest.
- What could happen if you let your lead rope drag on the ground while you're leading your horse?**  
You or your horse could trip over it.
- If you are leading your pony and he gets too close to you, how can you tell him to move away?**  
Flap your elbow like a chicken.

## Page 10 - Grooming

**Why is important to groom your horse before every ride?**

If you put a saddle or bridle over a rough or dirty coat, the tack will chafe and create sores on the horse's skin. He can also become seriously lame if ridden with rocks or other debris in his hooves.

**Tell me two good reasons for grooming your horse even when you're not planning to ride.**

It gives you the opportunity to check your horse thoroughly for cuts or swelling; it keeps the horse's coat healthy and shiny; it is a great way to get to know your horse.

**Show or tell me the first step in getting ready to groom a horse.**

Tie your horse in a safe and quiet place, using a quick-release knot or cross-ties.

**What part of the horse should you groom first - and why?**

Pick out his feet first, in case there is a rock that would make it difficult for him to stand quietly.

**When you start grooming, which part of the horse's body should you groom first? In what direction should you continue grooming?**

Start grooming at his neck and work your way back to his tail; repeat this direction when you move to his other side.

**What is the name of the grooming tool we use in small circles to break up mud and bring all the dirt to the surface of the horse's coat?**

the currycomb

**Should you use a curry comb on sensitive areas of the horse's body like the face, lower legs, or flanks?**

No, the currycomb is too rough for these areas unless you use it very gently.

**Should you ALWAYS use the currycomb first? Why or why not?**

You should use it to remove mud or dirt - but it's not necessary to use it on a relatively clean horse. If your horse objects to currying, it's okay skip this step.

**What do we call the hard brush that is used to whisk dirt and loose hair from the horse's coat? Demonstrate how you should use it?**

The dandy brush. Start at the top of the horse's neck and brush with firm strokes in the direction of the hair growth.

**Which grooming tool is softer, the dandy brush or the body brush?**

The body brush is softer.

- What is the name of the grooming tool we use to carefully brush around the horse's ears and face and under his belly, paying particular attention to where the girth will fasten?**  
the body brush
- Should you always brush out your horse's mane and tail before you ride?**  
It isn't necessary to brush your horse's mane or tail before every lesson, but you may comb away big tangles or shavings. It is better not to brush the tail too often, since hair falls out of the tail easily.
- In the summer, you may need to apply fly spray to your horse's body to make it easier for him to relax during your ride. What parts of his body should you spray?**  
Fly spray can be applied to the horse's chest, belly and legs; avoid spraying his face. Not all horses are comfortable being sprayed, so make sure he is familiar with it first.

## Page 11 - Hoof Care

- Why is it important to clean your horses hooves before every ride?**  
Picking the horse's hooves before every ride can prevent bruising and lameness, and helps keep your horse's hooves healthy.
- What is the name of the grooming tool we use to clean out the horse's hooves?**  
the hoof pick
- When you pick your horse's hooves, should you stand facing his head or his tail?**  
Stand facing his tail when picking hooves.
- Why should you run your hand down your horse's leg before lifting his hoof?**  
Running your hand down the leg first lets your horse know that you're about to lift his hoof, and allows him to shift his weight so it's easier for him to balance.
- How do you ask your horse to lift his foot so you can clean it?**  
Ask your horse to lift his hoof by squeezing the chestnut on the inside of his forearm; on hind legs you can gently squeeze his hock.
- TRUE or FALSE: You should hold the horse's leg well above the hoof when picking out feet.**  
FALSE. The hoof is heavy, and you should support it properly to help your horse keep his balance. As he lifts his hoof, run your hand down and grasp the hoof firmly by the toe.
- Some horses wear shoes and some horses are barefoot. Describe how to clean feet in both situations.**  
A deep groove runs on either side of the frog. Use the hoof pick to dislodge packed dirt. If the horse is barefoot, clean out the top of the grooves first; if the horse wears shoes, start by scraping around the inside of the shoe. It is safest to scrape from heel to toe.

- When you are finished cleaning a hoof, you should gently release the hoof - but what might happen if you're not careful?**

Your horse might step on you - always remember that he doesn't know where your feet are!

- What is the safest position for your body while you're cleaning hooves?**

Keep your legs straight and your head up so that you will stay safe if the horse pulls his foot away.

- When cleaning a horse's hoof, is it better to work quickly and efficiently, or to work slowly and carefully?**

Horse's hooves are heavy and it's not easy for horses to balance on three feet for a prolonged time, so you should learn to clean feet with quick confidence.

- What should you do if your horse won't lift up a foot so you can clean it?**

If your horse doesn't want to lift his hoof, he may have all his weight on that foot. Lean against his shoulder to help him adjust his balance.

- If you have trouble picking your horse's hooves, what should you do?**

Always ask a knowledgeable horseperson to help you.

- Show me or name three parts of the hoof.**

heel, heel bulbs, bar, sole, frog, white line, toe, hoof wall

## Page 12 - Tack

- What term do we use to describe the process of putting a saddle and bridle on a horse?**

We call it "tacking up" the horse.

- Name three items of tack that we use when we are tacking up our pony for a ride.**

halter; saddle pad or saddle blanket; saddle; girth; bridle; reins; stirrups; stirrup leathers; riser pad; protective boots; fly mask or ear bonnet

- What do we call the big strap that buckles around the pony's belly and holds the saddle on his back?**

The girth (English) or cinch (Western) holds the saddle on the horse.

- Is the pommel the front of the saddle or the back?**

The pommel is the front of both an English saddle and a Western saddle.

- What is a "stirrup"?**

A stirrup is a piece of tack that attaches to the saddle to hold our feet.

- On both an English and a Western saddle, what do we call the piece of tack that holds the stirrup onto the saddle?**

The stirrup leather holds the stirrup onto the saddle.

## Page 13 - Tack

- What do we call the piece of tack that fits over the horse's head and helps you communicate and control your horse while riding?**

the bridle

- What do we call the piece of tack, usually made of metal, that fits in the horse's mouth and allows us to communicate through the reins?**

the bit

- Name all of the parts of this English or Western bridle. [answers will vary depending upon your tack]**

crownpiece, browband, cheekpieces, throatlatch, bit, reins; noseband or bit keepers (English only); curb strap (Western only)

- If your horse needs to wear protective boots or wraps, should you put them on BEFORE or AFTER you saddle and bridle?**

Protective boots and wraps should be put on before you start to saddle and bridle.

- There are many specialized pieces of tack that your horse might need. How can you learn about them?**

Ask your instructor questions; visit a tack shop, or look for online tack catalogs; learn more in the Red, Yellow and Blue HorseSense Study Guides.

- As you are learning to tack up your horse, it can be difficult to recognize if the tack fits properly - especially with bridles and girths. If you're not sure about the fit, what should you do?**

Always ask your instructor to check the fit of the tack, because tack that isn't adjusted properly will make your horse uncomfortable and could be a safety hazard.

## Page 14 - Tack

- You are tacking up for a ride: what goes on your pony first, the saddle or bridle? Why?**

Always put on the saddle first, while your horse is still safely tied with the halter. Once the bridle is on, you cannot tie your horse with the reins.

- Why is it important to be gentle when putting the saddle on your pony's back?**

If you are rough when putting on the saddle it could hurt his back or scare him.

- True or False: You should pull the saddle pad up into the gullet of the saddle before tightening the girth.**  
TRUE. You should be able to fit your fist between the saddle pad and the withers to make sure that the pad isn't tight across the withers, which would be painful for the horse and make it difficult for him to move freely.
- TRUE OR FALSE: When you saddle up, you should tighten the girth gradually until you can just fit your hand between the girth and the horse's belly - and then tighten it again if necessary right before mounting.**  
True

## Page 15 - Tack

- When putting on the bridle, how can you safely keep your pony tied so he doesn't run away?**  
Buckle the halter around his neck.
- When putting on the bridle, where do you put the reins?**  
Reins should go over the pony's head.
- When tacking up or leading your pony, is it VERY dangerous to let the reins hang down or touch the ground. What could happen?**  
Your pony could step on the loose reins and get caught; it will hurt his mouth and could scare him.
- When putting on the bridle, where does the bit go?**  
The bit slides into the pony's mouth.
- When bridling your horse, which hand holds the bit? How do you protect this hand from the horse's teeth?**  
Use your left hand to guide the bit against the horse's teeth. Keep your hand flat so your fingers don't get bitten.
- When you are preparing to lead a tacked-up pony, what do you do with the reins and the stirrups?**  
1. Run up the stirrups. 2. Take the reins over the pony's head.

## Page 16 - Mounted Safety

- Name 3 things to to check on YOURSELF in a Safety Check.**  
Is your helmet buckled and properly adjusted? dangling jewelry removed? gum or candy spit out? shirt tucked in? boot laces tied? clothing appropriate to the weather? sunscreen applied if needed?
- Why must you remember not to eat or to chew gum when you are mounted on your pony?**  
If your pony gets startled and moves suddenly you could choke.

**Name 3 things to to check with our TACK in a Safety Check.**

Girth appropriately tight; buckles and fasteners secure; tack properly adjusted to fit your horse; stirrup bars open; stitching sound and intact; stirrups pulled down and set to your length; reins straight and over your horse's head.

**Name 2 things to to check with our HORSE in a Safety Check.**

Is your horse...clean and comfortable? forelock/mane pulled free of bridle? calm and relaxed? standing quietly?

## Page 17 - Flatwork Skills

**True or False: you should use a mounting block if you have one available.**

TRUE. The block doesn't just make it easier to reach the stirrup - it also reduces the strain on the horse's back and helps keep your saddle from shifting.

**When mounting, what side of the horse do you normally stand on?**

Mount from the left side, also called the "near side".

**When preparing to mount, should you stand facing the horse's face or his tail?**

Position yourself next to the horse's shoulder, facing his tail.

**What should you do with the reins while you are preparing to mount?**

You should hold the reins in your left hand, short enough that you can stop the horse from moving. Rest this hand on the horse's neck, and grab a bit of mane if necessary.

**Describe the three steps in mounting safely.**

1. Left foot in stirrup, turn to face withers. 2. Reins and mane in left hand and pommel in right hand. Spring up from right foot until standing on left stirrup. Swing right leg over horse's hindquarters and sit gently in saddle. 3. Use toe to pick up right stirrup and settle it on ball of right foot.

## Page 18 - Flatwork Skills

**Describe the three steps in dismounting safely.**

Take both feet out of the stirrups. Lean forward as though hugging your horse and swing your right leg over the cantle of the saddle. Turn your body as you jump down so that you land next to your horse's side, facing forward.

**On which SIDE of your pony do you usually dismount, the NEAR side or the OFF side?**

Dismount on the left - or near - side.

**If you are carrying a whip, in which hand do you hold it when dismounting?**

Hold your whip in the left hand.

- Why is it important to take BOTH feet out of the stirrups before dismounting?**

You will not lose your balance if your horse walks off mid-dismount.

- Name one reason you might have to perform an emergency dismount.**

Do an emergency dismount if your girth is too loose and your saddle is slipping; your horse is rearing; you have dropped your reins and cannot recover them.

## Page 19 - Flatwork Skills

- A good rider uses \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to stay on their horse instead of holding on with hands or legs.**

balance and alignment

- When sitting in the saddle, you should be able to drop a straight line from your head through your \_\_, \_\_ and \_\_.**

head, shoulder, hip, heel

- Name 3 things about your body position that show you are in a good basic balanced seat.**

Eyes up; arms hang beside ribs; knees, ankles relaxed; head balanced; back straight; balanced on seat bones; feet and legs under body; heels down.

- How can you tell that your stirrups hang at the correct length to keep your leg properly positioned?**

Your stirrups should be adjusted so the bottom of the stirrup iron reaches the middle of your ankle bone. Your instructor will help you find the length that is right for you and adjust the leathers.

- How should your foot be positioned in the stirrup?**

The stirrup iron should rest across the ball of your foot, with the outer branch next to your little toe. Drop weight into your heels until they are the lowest point of your body.

- Why is so important that you keep your eyes up and look ahead while riding?**

Your head is heavy, so if you ride with it tipping down or to the side, it will affect your balance and confuse your horse.

- Why is it important to remember to BREATHE when you are learning to ride?**

Don't forget to breathe! Deep breathing will help you sit tall, relax, and follow the horse's movement.

## Page 20 - Flatwork Skills

- Describe - or demonstrate! - three examples of common position faults.**

"Conductor hands" that are held too high; "diver toes" point downward and tip you forward; "chair seat" with legs too far in front of your seat; "perching" with pinched knees; "stiff elbows" with no bend in your arms.

**What are some things you can do to help you develop a better riding position?**

Ask your instructor for exercises you can practice at home; frequently get photos of yourself riding, from the side, front and rear; watch riders you admire, preferably those with excellent form.

## Page 21 - Flatwork Skills

**What is the difference between "natural aids" and "artificial aids"?**

Natural aids are signals from a part of our body. Artificial aids, including crops, whips, and spurs, can be used to reinforce our natural aids.

**Describe the four natural aids we use to communicate while riding.**

seat; legs; hands; voice

**Which of natural aids could be considered the "gas pedal" to get your horse moving?**

Your lower leg squeezes to ask the horse to move.

**Why is looking up and turning your eyes and shoulders an effective aid when you want your horse to turn?**

Looking where you want to go changes the pressure of your seat, which the horse can feel through the saddle.

**If your horse doesn't respond with to a light squeeze of your legs, what should you do?**

Always ask politely with a light squeeze first. If the horse doesn't respond, repeat with a firmer squeeze, gradually increasing the pressure until you get a response. As soon as he moves off, relax your leg.

**If I move one rein out to the side, what am I asking the horse to do?**

One rein asks the horse to turn.

**Give an example of a common voice aid.**

Voice aids include saying clucking or saying words like "whoa" or "easy" or "walk on".

## Page 22 - Flatwork Skills

**Name three examples of poor hand position.**

Hands too low and not over withers; stiff, straight elbows; thumbs not on top and pointing towards horse's ears; fingers not closed around reins.

**How can you shorten your reins without dropping them?**

You can shorten reins easily by reaching over and grasping the rein above your hand with your opposite thumb. Relax your fingers and slide them towards the bit, then release your thumb and repeat with the other side.

- Why is it important to hold both reins just a couple of inches over the horse's withers?**  
If the reins are too low or too high, the bit will create uncomfortable pressure in the horse's mouth
- Can you use the reins to help you stay balanced in the saddle?**  
NO, that will make your horse unhappy! Remember that the reins are for communicating, not balancing.

## Page 23 - Gaits and Movement

- What do we mean when we say a horse has performed an "upward transition"?**  
We use the word to describe the moment when a horse changes from one gait to another. If a horse is walking and starts to trot, we say he has performed an upward transition.
- What is a "halt"?**  
The gait where your horse remains at a standstill.
- Describe the steps in asking a horse to halt.**  
Take a deep breath and stretch tall, making your seat still. Exhale so seat and thighs feel heavier on saddle. Squeeze reins and/or resist slightly with elbows. When horse stops, relax and release all pressure.
- You instructor gives you a crop to use whenever your lazy horse ignores your all of your natural aids. How should you use it?**  
Put your reins in one hand and reach back to give the horse a firm tap with the crop, behind your leg. Take your reins in two hands again when he moves forward.

## Page 24 - Flatwork Skills

- What are "inside aids" and "outside aids"?**  
Whenever you ride a turn or circle, your inside aids are on the side you are turning or bending toward. Your outside leg and rein are the farthest from the center of your turn. If you are riding on the rail, or next to the arena fence, your outside aids are the leg and rein closest to the fence.
- The first step in riding through a turn is to look in the direction you want to go. What is the next step?**  
Keep your inside leg at the girth, and move your outside leg back a few inches
- Your instructor tells you to "open your inside rein" as you ask your horse to turn. What does this mean?**  
Take your inside rein and move it outwards, guiding your horse's head in the direction you want to go. Keep your hand low and soft, using just as much pressure as necessary.
- What are three rider errors that might make your horse ignore your turn signals?**  
Looking where the horse is going instead of where you want to go; leaning in or collapsing your body so it's hard for your horse to turn; reins are too long or held unevenly.

## Page 25 - Flatwork Skills

- What is the best way to learn how to stay calm when your horse spooks or you lose control?**  
Frequently practicing emergency drills will help you respond appropriately in a real crisis.
- What is the FIRST thing you should do whenever your horse unexpectedly shies, changes speed or direction, bucks, or bolts?**  
Get in your safety seat: sit deep in the saddle and bring your shoulders back as you push your heels firmly down and forward. If you need to, you can grab onto some mane or the pommel of the saddle for extra security.
- When should you use a one-rein stop?**  
A frightened or determined horse might ignore your usual request to stop. One way to solve this problem is to turn him - if the footing is not too slippery.
- What is the difference between a one-rein stop and a pulley rein?**  
A pulley rein is stronger; it is hard on your horse's mouth, so only use it if your horse is running away, bucking, or ignoring all your other aids and you can't safely turn him to stop.

## Page 26 - Gaits and Movement

- How many beats are there in the horse's walk?**  
There are 4 beats in the walk.
- Your instructor tells you to ride at the walk "on the rail". What does this mean?**  
Riding close to the fence or the inside edge of a riding arena.
- Your arena has letters marked around the edges. Why?**  
Some arenas are marked with letters to give you specific points to ride turns and transitions.
- Name 3 things you can practice while riding at the walk.**  
ring figures; riding without stirrups; obstacle courses; patterns; mounted games

## Page 27 - Flatwork Skills

- Why do we start a ride with balancing and suppling exercises?**  
Exercises will warm up our muscles, improve our seat, build strength and flexibility, and give us confidence.
- Describe - or demonstrate! - 4 simple balancing and suppling exercises you can do at a walk.**  
arm circles; poll touches; croup touches; ankle circles; toe touches; alternate toe touches

- Is it a good idea to practice your balancing and suppling exercises without stirrups?**

Yes, if your position is balanced and secure, this is a good way to make those exercises even more beneficial.

## Page 28 - Flatwork Skills

- Why is it important for the horse to change direction every few minutes when riding in an arena?**

Like people, horses need to stretch evenly in both directions to keep from getting sore and crooked bodies.

- Name three ways you can change direction while riding in an arena**

Change directions with a half-turn reverse, change of rein across diagonal, change of rein across short diagonal, or half-circle reverse.

- What term do we use to describe riding around the arena counterclockwise with the inside rein in your left hand?**

You are "riding on the left rein".

## Page 29 - Flatwork Skills

- What is a "ring figure"?**

A ring figure is a shape used to practice communicating with the horse and to stretch or strengthen his body; circles, half-circles, and figure-eights are all ring figures.

- What must happen in order for a horse to ride a ROUND circle?**

He has to bend through his body, with a curve in his spine.

- Why should you ride BIG circles when you are learning to ride ring figures?**

If your circle is too small, it will put stress on the horse's body and make him reluctant to move forward.

- You are trying to ride in a nice round circle, but horse keeps falling in and making the circle more of a D shape. What should you do?**

Ask him to move more energetically; stretch tall and apply pressure from your inside leg at the girth; make sure your inside rein isn't pulling!

## Page 30 - Mounted Safety

- When you're riding, how big is your horse's "space bubble"?**

twice the size of his body

- You're riding in a group lesson. How much space should there be between your horse and the other horses?**

Maintain at least one horse length of space between each horse.

- If the rider in front of you is moving too slow, what three things can you do to avoid a space-bubble issue?**

Cut across the middle of the arena and ride along the rail in your original direction; ride a full circle and return to the rail; pass the horse in front.
- You need to pass the pokey rider in front of you - what is the safe way to do this?**

Ride a full horse length away from the rail, to the INSIDE, and ask your horse to move forward energetically. Be sure that you are a full horse length in front of the other horse before you return to the rail.
- What should you do if you and another rider meet while traveling in opposite directions on the rail?**

Pass left shoulder to left shoulder; loudly tell the other rider where you are going to move by shouting "Outside!" or "Inside!"
- If you are riding in the arena and you hear the words "Heads Up!", what should you do?**

Come immediately to the halt. This phrase is used when a rider falls or loses control of their horse. Be prepared to dismount if necessary!

## Page 31 - Flatwork Skills

- What position is best for riding your horse over poles?**

Ride over poles in two-point position.
- Why should you practice riding in two-point position?**

It improves your balance and leg position, and strengthens your leg and core muscles; it frees up your horse's back, helping him move forward and negotiate obstacles such as hills, poles and logs; it prepares you for advanced riding skills like jumping and galloping.
- When you are in two-point position, where should your hands be positioned?**

Reach forward with your hands until they rest about one third of the way up the horse's neck. Keep your fingers closed and rest your knuckles against the horse's crest.
- What do we call your hand position when you are in jumping position going over a pole?**

We call this a "release" because when sliding your hands forward over the horse's neck you are releasing control of the horse through the reins, which allows the horse to stretch his neck while jumping.

## Page 32 - Flatwork Skills

- What are "ground poles" and why do we use them?**

Ground poles are rails placed flat on the ground, creating an obstacle no more than 6" high. They are used to improve balance and jumping technique in both horse and rider.
- Describe the correct way to ride over a ground pole.**

Line horse up with center of pole; set pace at an energetic walk; focus on a target on the other side of the pole; fold into two-point position right before the horse steps over the pole.

**What is the difference between riding over a "grid" and a "course"?**

A grid has two or more poles set in a row; a course has poles spaced out to allow large turns between each obstacle.

**What three things make your jump course track successful?**

Good approaches and departures; wide turns that flow smoothly from one jump to the next; a plan that lets you look and think ahead to each jump.

## Page 33 - Gaits and Movement

**What do we call the horse's second fastest gait?**

a trot

**Which gait is bouncier, a walk or a trot?**

The trot has much more vertical movement than the walk, so it's bouncy.

**How many beats are there in the trot? How does the horse move his legs?**

There are two beats to the horse's trot, which means he picks up his legs and puts them down in pairs.

**At the trot, the horse's left hind leg and right foreleg step forward at the same time, as do his right hind leg and left foreleg. What word do we use to describe these moving pairs of legs?**

diagonals

**Name three positions for riding a horse at the trot.**

sitting trot; two-point position; posting trot

**When you ride in two-point position at the trot, do you sit in the saddle?**

No - your seat stays above the saddle as your horse trots and your upper body is still and quiet.

**How can you maintain a balanced position when riding a sitting trot?**

To absorb the bounce of the trot, you need to stay relaxed through your hips, knees and ankles, breathing deeply with your shoulders back.

**What does it mean to post to the trot?**

When you post, you rise up and down in time with your horse's trot.

## Page 34 - Flatwork Skills

**What is the difference between two-point position and a "stirrup stand"?**

In stirrup stand, your hip angle is open to allow you to stand up straight. Your hips move forward to stay aligned with your shoulders. In two-point position, your hip angle is closed. Your seat folds and shifts back as your shoulders move over your knees.

- Which is just a strengthening exercise, and not a regular riding position: two-point or stirrup stand?**  
stirrup stand
- While you're learning to ride a posting trot, what can you do to help you find the rhythm?**  
Count out loud in time with his steps: "One, two, one, two."
- When you are learning a posting trot, your horse won't like it if you fall down heavily in the saddle on every other beat. How can you avoid this?**  
Lower your seat back carefully using your legs - try to just touch your seat to the saddle. And work on making your legs and core muscles stronger!

## Page 35 - Flatwork Skills

- How should you hold the reins when you are riding a posting trot?**  
You'll need to relax your elbows to allow your hands to stay at the withers as you post. Imagine your elbow joint is a hinge that opens as you rise and closes as you sit.
- What will happen if you look down while you are learning to post at the trot?**  
Looking down will throw your upper body out of balance and confuse your horse.
- What will happen if you lose the posting trot rhythm and hang in the air too long before sitting?**  
This throws you and the horse out of sync and creates an extra bounce on the sitting beat.
- How do you know how high you should rise when posting to the trot?**  
Post just as high as the horse pushes you, so your posting is energy efficient and smooth.
- When riding at a walk, how do you transition to a trot?**  
To trot, sit up straight and squeeze energetically with both legs. Back up your request with a kiss, cluck or firmer squeeze if necessary. Make sure your hands are low and quiet - if you pull on the reins, your horse won't want to trot!
- When you are riding the posting trot, how should you transition back to a walk?**  
To walk, sit deep in the saddle and close your fingers on the reins. Sink your weight into your thighs and heels and keep your shoulders back, or you may tip forward!

## Page 36 - Conditioning

- Name three signs that you are preparing to ride like an athlete.**  
You practice on a regular basis; you stretch before and after a workout; you learn your body's physical capabilities and work to improve them; you eat well-balanced meals, drink plenty of water, and get plenty of sleep.

- What could happen if you show up for a riding lesson when you are exhausted, stiff and sore, or full of sugar?**

You won't ride effectively, and you are putting your horse and yourself at risk of an accident.

- Why should you do exercises like stair stretches and squats in between riding lessons?**

They will improve your strength and balance, which will keep you safer and help you progress faster.