

# HorseSense Learning Levels

## EQUINE TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

### TERM

### DEFINITION

## Yellow Horsemanship

20-METER CIRCLE	Ring figure with 20-meter diameter, usually ridden in dressage test between B and E, or between X and A or C.
ACROSS DIAGONAL	In the arena, this term refers to the path that you take to ride from one corner of the ring, through the center, to the opposite corner.
AIDS	Signals that a rider uses to communicate with her horse (e.g., hands, seat, voice, legs, crop).
APPROACH	Your path ridden towards a fence before you jump; ideally, this should be straight enough to allow the horse time to see the jump clearly.
BASE OF SUPPORT	Correct position of a rider's lower leg, held securely at the girth, that keeps the rider balanced at all gaits, through turns, and over fences.
BEND	The curve of your horse's spine as you ride through turns.
BOLTING	When a horse runs away out of the rider's control.
BUCKING	When a horse puts his head down between his knees, rounds his back and kicks upward with his hind legs, sometimes in an attempt to get rid of a rider or saddle.
CENTERLINE	Invisible path that divides the dressage arena in half lengthwise, running from the letter A to the letter C.
CHANGE OF DIAGONAL	At the posting trot, sitting for one extra beat so that you are rising with the opposite diagonal pair of legs.
CHANGE OF REIN	Method used to change direction while riding in the arena.
CHANGING SEATS	Exercise at the trot that alternates the rider's position from posting to two-point to sitting.
CLOSING CIRCLE	Circle ridden after the last fence on a jump course to allow the horse to slow and settle before heading to the gate.
COEFFICIENT	Mathematical notation used on dressage tests that emphasizes the importance of a movement or collective mark by multiplying the score by 1, 2, or 3.
COLLECTIVE MARKS	Scores on a dressage test which evaluates overall impressions of the horse's gaits, impulsion and submission, along with the rider's position, use of aids, and accuracy.
CONFLICTING AIDS	Giving a horse multiple signals at the same time and confusing him; e.g., squeezing with your legs while pulling on the reins, which tells him to both go and stop.
CONTACT	Holding the reins at the correct length so that the rider can feel pressure and movement from the horse's mouth through the reins.
CORE MUSCLES	Muscles of a rider's stomach and back that are used when riding.

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<b>CORRECT POSTING DIAGONAL</b>	While riding at the trot, rising when the horse's inside hind leg and outside foreleg move forward, making it easier for the horse to stay balanced on a turn.
<b>COURSE</b>	A pattern of jumping fences that must be ridden in the correct order.
<b>CROSSING STIRRUPS</b>	While your feet are out of the stirrups, your stirrup leathers and irons are crossed over the horse's withers so that they won't bang loosely against the horse's sides.
<b>CROWHOP</b>	A small bucking movement in which a horse puts his head down, rounds his back and kicks slightly upward with his hind legs.
<b>DEPARTURE</b>	On a jump course, the few strides ridden immediately after a horse has cleared the fence.
<b>DIAGONAL PAIRS</b>	Movement of the horse's legs at the trot: as the left hind leg moves forward, so does the right foreleg, with a small moment of suspension.
<b>DIRECTIVE IDEAS</b>	Notations next to every movement on a dressage test score sheet that tell you how that movement should be performed.
<b>DISCIPLINES</b>	Competitive equestrian sports.
<b>DISENGAGING HINDQUARTERS</b>	The movement made by a horse when he stops going forward and swings his hindquarters sideways.
<b>DOWNWARD TRANSITION</b>	The act of moving from a faster gait to a slower gait, e.g., from a walk to a trot.
<b>DRESSAGE</b>	French word for "training"; riding sport that assesses the training and partnership of both horse and rider, using patterns called "tests".
<b>DRESSAGE LETTERS</b>	Marked locations in a dressage arena where movements are to be performed.
<b>DRESSAGE TEST</b>	Pattern of riding in which rider and horse must perform ring figures and movements at different gaits along precise points of a rectangular arena.
<b>DRESSAGE TEST MOVEMENT</b>	Task performed at or between the letters around a dressage arena.
<b>DROPPING STIRRUPS</b>	Removing feet from stirrups while riding.
<b>EMERGENCY DISMOUNT</b>	The action involved in quickly removing yourself from the horse's back, usually to prevent injury.
<b>ENTER AT A</b>	First movement on a dressage test in which the rider enters the dressage ring at the judge's signal, through the space marked by the dressage letter A.
<b>FLAT CLASSES</b>	Collective name for various horse show classes that do not involve jumping, in which a group of competitors ride at the rail, changing gaits or riding patterns at commands from the judge.

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FREE WALK	Movement at the walk in which the rider lengthens the reins to allow the horse to stretch his head and neck forward and walk with loose and swinging ground-covering strides.
GIRTHY	Equine behavior related to having a girth or cinch fastened or tightened: the horse may pin his ears, shake his head, grind his teeth, or try to bite or kick. Caused by sore muscles, improperly-fitted tack, stomach ulcers, or bad associations with the saddle. AKA "cinchy".
GRAND PRIX	The highest level in the modern sport of dressage.
GRID	A series of jumping fences or ground poles, carefully spaced, used for training both the rider and the horse.
GROUND POLE	Jump pole placed on the arena ground in such a way that a horse must step over it; used singly or in combination with other poles as a training aid for both horses and riders.
HALF-CIRCLE REVERSE	Method used to change direction while riding: basic U-turn shaped like an ice cream cone.
HALF-HALT	Riding skill that uses your seat, leg and hand together in a brief moment that asks your horse to rebalance himself; useful for getting a horse's attention and preparing him for transitions.
HALF-TURN REVERSE	Method used to change direction while riding two 90-degree turns so that you cross straight through the middle of the arena.
HALT	The gait where the horse stands still, with no forward movement.
IMPULSION	The energy of a horse's forward movement.
INSIDE	When working in an arena, this is the side of the horse and rider that faces the middle of the arena.
INSIDE LEG	The leg of a horse or rider that is nearest to the inside of the arena and farthest from the "wall" or arena fence.
INTERFERE	Term used when one of a horse's feet strikes another leg or foot while the horse is moving.
LONGE LINE	Long, sturdy line, attached to the horse's bridle, that your instructor holds while you ride in a circle around your instructor; allows you to concentrate on aids, position, gaits, and transitions without having to steer the horse.
LONGEING CAVESSON	Tack similar to a halter that is used when longeing; the longe line attaches to rings on the noseband.
MEDIUM WALK	Movement at the walk in which the horse moves energetically forward while the rider maintains contact with the reins.
METER	Unit of measurement for distance used in equestrian sports; equal to 3 feet plus 3 inches.
MOUNTED DRILL TEAMS	Equestrian sport in which teams of riders ride in formation.

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MOUNTED GAMES	Sport in which teams of riders compete in relay races, completing a tasks with a variety of equipment.
MUSICAL FREESTYLE	Dressage tests choreographed to music.
NATURAL AIDS	Signals you give the horse from a part of your body that tells him what to do. These include our seat, legs, hands, and voice.
OBSTACLE COURSES	Riding exercises with a course made up of transitions, ground poles, and fun steering exercises.
ONE-REIN STOP	Emergency brakes method where you assume your safety seat, shorten one rein and apply steady pressure as you turn the horse and disengage his hindquarters.
OPENING CIRCLE	Circle ridden at the start of a jump course to create rhythm and pace before approaching the first fence.
OUTSIDE	When working in an arena, this is the side of the horse and rider that is next to the rail.
OUTSIDE LEG	The leg of a horse or rider that is nearest to the "wall" or arena fence farthest from the inside of the arena.
PAS DE DEUX	Mounted activity, usually ridden to music, in which a team of two riders perform a choreographed routine of dressage movements.
POLO WRAPS	Stretchy bandages wound around a horse's lower leg to warm and protect the tendons and ligaments.
POSTING AHEAD OF THE MOTION	Movement of the rider when posting to the trot in which the rider tends to fall forward onto the front of the saddle or the horse's neck; usually caused by perching.
POSTING BEHIND THE MOTION	Movement of the rider when posting to the trot in which the rider tends to fall heavily into the saddle, closer to the cantle than to the pommel; usually caused by riding in a chair seat.
PULLEY REIN	Strong rein aid that involves strongly pulling one rein back and forth in an attempt to slow down a bolting or unruly horse.
QUADRILLE	Mounted activity, usually ridden to music, in which a team of four riders perform a choreographed routine of dressage movements.
QUARTERLINES	Invisible paths that divide the dressage arena into quarters lengthwise, from the centerline to the rail.
REARING	Movement in which a horse stops and lifts both forelegs into the air, standing briefly on his hind legs, usually as an indication that he does not want to go forward.
RELEASE	Rider movement in which the hands move forward onto the horse's neck, causing slack in the reins so that the horse is not caught in the mouth by the bit as he jumps.

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RING FIGURES	Shapes ridden in the arena to test the rider's communication with the horse, to loosen the horse's muscles by asking him to bend and stretch in each direction, and to keep the horse interested in his work.
RISING TROT	Also called a "posting trot", in which the rider lifts out of the saddle during alternate beats of the trot.
SAFETY SEAT	Position that helps you stay balanced when your horse is out of control: sitting deep in the saddle, with your shoulders back, your heels down, and your eyes up, possibly with one hand holding the mane.
SALUTE	Dressage movement where the rider takes reins in one hand, drops other hand downward and nods at the judge as a sign of respect.
SERPENTINE	Ring figure made of several large half-circles connected together.
SITTING TROT	Method of riding the trot in which the rider remains in a deep seat during the gait.
SNAFFLE BIT	A bit that operates with direct pressure on a horse's mouth, lips and tongue.
SPLINT BOOTS	Protective boot that covers the horse's legs to protect them from blows.
SPOOKING	A horse's reaction when startled or frightened, in which the horse experiences flight-or-fight emotions.
SQUARE	Position of the horse at a halt in which his legs are aligned and his body is straight.
STIRRUP SCOOP	Placing your feet in the stirrups without looking down or using your hands while the horse is moving forward.
STIRRUP STAND	Riding exercise in which the rider stands all the way up in the stirrups, pushing the hips up and over the pommel of the saddle, sometimes balancing with arms outstretched.
SUBMISSION	Willingness and obedience of a horse when responding to aids, as demonstrated by his body language during movements of a dressage test.
SUSPENSION	A brief moment during the motion of a trot, canter, or gallop when all four of a horse's legs are off the ground.
TRACK	The path you and the horse travel when you are riding.
TRACK LEFT or RIGHT	Part of a movement in a dressage test that tells you which direction to go.
TRANSITIONS	Change in a horse's gait, upward or downward (ie, a walk to a trot).
TROT POLES	A line of ground poles, carefully spaced, that allow you to practice your jumping skills safely; can also be used as a training exercise for the horse.

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TWO-POINT POSITION	Riding position in which the rider shift his weight into his feet as he rises slightly in the saddle, tilting forward just enough to stay balanced. Also called "jumping position" or "half-seat".
UPWARD TRANSITION	The act of moving from a slower gait to a faster gait, e.g., from a trot to a canter.
WESTERN GYMKHANA GAMES	Equestrian sport with speed event patterns.
WORKING TROT	Trot in which a horse is moving forward with energy and rhythm.