

Ground School Program Sample Book



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Sample from participant book

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Leading

Learning to properly lead your horse is key to having a successful and safe partnership with your horse during unmounted activities. Whether you are bringing your horse in at mealtimes or leading a horse for an inexperienced rider, it's important to know how to keep both yourself, your horse, and anyone around you safe. It is also important to note what equipment is best for what situations, like knowing when a rope halter may be a better option for your horse than a regular halter.

Approaching a Horse

When getting a horse out of his stall, wait to enter until he turns and faces you. Do not enter if he has his ears back. Make sure the horse is facing you before you walk into the stall.

- Let the horse know you are coming. Speak softly and approach the horse from an angle. Never walk directly in front of or behind a horse, as they have blind spots in their field of vision and cannot see you when you are in those two areas.
- Walk and speak normally. Do not run, creep, shout or whisper.
- When approaching from the rear, walk towards the horse at an angle and touch them gently as you pass by the hindquarters.
- Be careful when approaching a horse that is busy, such as when it is eating hay or drinking water.
- When approaching a horse in a field, approach towards its left shoulder. Move slowly but confidently, talking gently as you get closer. Pay attention to the horse's body language.



Haltering

A halter is a piece of equipment that is put on a horse to tie or hold them while they are not being ridden. There are two main types of halters: a regular halter and a rope halter.



Halter



Rope Halter



The above diagram demonstrates step by step how to correctly put on a regular halter.

Some horses will use a rope halter when you work with them on the ground. Because of the strategically placed knots on a rope halter, they work in a different way to help the horse learn and understand to move away from pressure instead of into it. Below is a diagram of how to correctly put on a rope halter.



Leading

Leading the horse represents the most common method of horse handling. It is the most used horse handling skill at any farm and is often the most frequently misused technique. Poor leading compromises the biomechanics of the horse and may affect the long-term welfare and soundness of the horse. Horses are most comfortable and willing when they know who is in charge, so strong leadership and communication skills are key to leading your horse correctly and safely.



DO NOT COPY

Horse First Aid Worksheet

1. What is the normal body temperature range for a horse?

2. Which picture shows a horse with healthy gums?



3. What is the range for a normal resting heart rate for a horse?

4. What materials should you use to bandage a horse's leg?

5. When should you call the vet?

Sample from instructor book

Horse Sense

Understanding your horse's body language and ways of communicating is key to having a working relationship with your equine partner. Your horse is in tune to your body language, but are you in tune to what they are telling you? Since horses can't verbally communicate, we need to read all the subtle cues they are sending our way. Horses use nearly every part of their body to talk to you; you just have to know what to look for.

Teaching Activities

- A. Video observation – Watch on Ground School YouTube channel
 - B. Watch an established herd of horses in their own pasture. Some of the things that you want to point out and talk to the participant(s) about are:
 1. The herd dynamics: What is the pecking order of the herd?
 2. What do the horses tell each other with their body language?
 3. Make note of how the horses move each other around
 4. Ask the participant(s) to observe the following:
 - 1) Which horse is the lead horse in the pasture?
 - 2) Which horse seems to be the least dominant?
 - 3) Are the horses standing together or further apart? Why do you think this is?
 5. Watch a different pasture of horses and see if the participant(s) is able to pick out these same things without as much assistance as in the first pasture.
 - C. Put two horses who are established pasture mates in a safe area (round pen or arena) without grass. Watch the horses' behaviors and see what can be observed.
 1. What do the horses tell each other with their body language?
 2. Do the horses move each other around?
 3. Who is the more dominant horse?
 4. How do the horses act when not being distracted by food?
 - D. Put one horse in a small paddock or round pen alone. Watch the horse's behavior and see what can be pointed out.
 1. Does the horse look for its pasture mates?
 2. Does the horse call for its pasture mates?
3. Does the horse find something to occupy its time or does it seek human contact?

Sample of a Level 1 Test

Level 1 Grooming Written Test

Name: _____

1. What brush is this?



a) Curry Comb b) Hard Brush c) Soft Brush d) Hoof pick e) Mane and Tail Brush

2. What brush is this?



a) Curry Comb b) Hard Brush c) Soft Brush d) Hoof pick e) Mane and Tail Brush

3. What brush is this?



a) Curry Comb b) Hard Brush c) Soft Brush d) Hoof pick e) Mane and Tail Brush

4. What brush is this?



a) Curry Comb b) Hard Brush c) Soft Brush d) Hoof pick e) Mane and Tail Brush

5. What brush is this?



a) Curry Comb b) Hard Brush c) Soft Brush d) Hoof pick e) Mane and Tail Brush

Sample of a Level 2 Test

Level 2 Lungeing Written Test

Name: _____

1. What are two reasons why someone may decide to lunge a horse?
 - A. For conditioning exercise
 - B. To build muscle tone without added weight of a rider
 - C. To get all the bucks out

2. What are three basic pieces of equipment that are needed to lunge a horse?
 - A. Lunge line
 - B. Spurs
 - C. Lunge whip
 - D. Gloves

3. What are the two ways to correctly hold the lunge line while lunging?
 - A. Twisting
 - B. Folding
 - C. Wrapping

4. How do you use your body and lungeing equipment to get the horse to halt on the lunge line?
 - A. You want to use the downward transition cues but hold the body/aid positions for as long as you want the horse to be halted. The horse should stay out on the circle and NOT turn in to face you.
 - B. You want your body in neutral position. Neutral position should look like the triangle pictured above with you moving to stay in this position as the horse moves around you on the circle.

5. How do you get the horse to transition up on the lunge line using your body and lungeing equipment?
 - A. You want to point your belly button towards the horse's head, use a verbal cue for the gait you would like them to move into, and use the whip under the lunge line (pointing in front of the horse's head) as an aid.
 - B. You want to point your belly button towards the horse's hips, use a verbal cue for the gait you would like the horse to move into, and use your whip as a final aid.

Sample of a Level 3 Test

Level 3 Equine Massage Written Test

Name: _____

1. What are the benefits that a horse may get from a massage?

2. What is a release when a horse is getting a massage?

3. What are four examples of releases that you may get from a horse?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

4. What are five of the different techniques you can use to give a horse a massage?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

5. When giving the horse a massage, what part of the horse do you never want to massage on top of?

6. What massage technique do you use for running the bladder meridian?

Sample of a Practical Test

Horse Desensitization Training Practical Test

Give the participant(s) as little prompting as possible, but as much as they need to succeed for the answers depending on their level.

1. Have the participant(s) demonstrate their knowledge of desensitization items (both common and uncommon) by setting up an obstacle course with ten items to get their horse through. These items can include but are not limited to:
 - 1) Common
 - a) Water hoses
 - b) Wheel barrows
 - c) Tractors
 - d) Other animals
 - e) Bridges
 - f) Water puddles
 - 2) Less Common
 - a) Balloons
 - b) Musical Instruments
 - c) Plastic bags
 - d) Bubbles
 - e) Mirrors
 - f) Tarps
 - g) Flags
 - h) Umbrellas
2. Have the participant(s) lead their horse(s) through their obstacle course while getting their horse(s) past each obstacle along the way.