

Horse Judging Manual

*Written by Craig H. Wood and Stephen G. Jackson
Revised by Kristen M. Janicki*



Horse Judging Manual

Table of Contents

Using This Manual	3	Head and Neck	18
What Does It Mean to 'Judge' a Horse?	3	Structure	19
Developing Life Skills	3	Travel	19
Characteristics of a Successful Judge	3	Muscling.....	19
The Basics Before Judging.....	3	Quality, Breed, and Sex Character	19
The Five Key Characteristics to Judging		Suggested Terms to Describe Faults in Conformation.....	19
Conformation in Horses.....	5	General Appearance.....	19
Balance	6	Balance	19
Structure and Travel.....	6	Head and Neck	19
Muscle.....	10	Structure	19
Quality	10	Travel	20
Breed and Sex Characteristics	11	Muscling.....	20
Breed Specific Considerations for Judging		Quality, Breed, and Sex Character	20
Conformation Classes	11	Suggested Terms to Describe Pleasure Horses.....	20
Quarter Horse, Paint Horse, Appaloosa, and Other Stock Types.....	11	Suggested Terms Used to Fault a Pleasure Horse.....	20
Hunter in Hand	11	Suggested Terms to Describe a Reining Horse.....	21
Arabian	11	Suggested Terms Used to Fault a Reining Horse	21
Morgan	11	Suggested Terms Used to Describe Western Riding.....	21
American Saddlebred	11	Suggested Terms Used to Fault Western Riding	22
Tennessee Walking Horse	12	Suggested Terms Used to Describe Hunter Hack	22
Draft Horse.....	12	Suggested Terms to Fault Hunter Hack.....	22
Miniature Horse.....	12	Suggested Terms Used to Describe Horsemanship/Equitation.....	22
Specific Considerations for Judging		Suggested Terms Used to Fault Horsemanship/Equitation.....	23
Performance Classes	12	Suggested Terms Used to Describe Pleasure Driving	23
Western Pleasure	12	Connective Terms.....	23
Reining	13	Grants.....	23
Western Riding	14	Connective Terms	23
Horsemanship/Equitation	15	Action Words	23
English Pleasure	16	Opening Pairs.....	23
Plantation Pleasure	16	Conducting a Horse Judging Contest.....	23
Hunter Under Saddle	16	Facilities.....	24
Hunter Hack.....	17	Horses	24
Pleasure Driving	17	Personnel	24
Taking Notes on a Class.....	17	Tabulation and Recording	25
Overview.....	17	The Danish Ribbon System	25
Writing and Presenting Oral Reasons	17		
Overview.....	17		
Major Criteria for Reasons	18		
Suggested Terms for Comparing Conformation.....	18		
General Appearance.....	18		
Balance	18		

Using This Manual

The suggestions, drawings, and lists of terms used in this manual are intended to serve as a guide for developing a 4-H, FFA, or collegiate horse judging team. Because certain breed types change frequently, this guide in no way tries to establish an ideal for each breed of horse. Instead, it lists terms that can be used to describe any individual, no matter the type or style prescribed by a specific breed organization. The parts of the horse, structural diagrams, and list of unsoundnesses provided are primarily the same for all breeds. The suggestions and recommendations for judging are universal rules that have withstood the test of time and should remain unchanged.

What Does It Mean to 'Judge' a Horse?

According to Webster's New World dictionary, the word "judge" means "to form an opinion or estimation of after careful consideration." When you judge a horse—whether in a show, on an individual basis, or in a contest—you form an opinion or estimation about that horse. However, in order to form a valid opinion, you must have the following basic skills:

- Be familiar with the horse.
- Know the criteria used to judge horses.
- Be able to recognize conformational faults.

With these skills at hand, you are on your way to a successful judging experience!

Developing Life Skills

Continuous learning throughout life is important to character development. Judging horses allows you to:

- Learn more about the horse.
- Learn how to evaluate and select a horse for a suitable purpose.
- Learn to make choices and form opinions.
- Learn to have confidence in your horsemanship skills.
- Learn to defend your ideas and take other ideas into consideration.

Characteristics of a Successful Judge

To be a successful judge, either at a show or in a judging contest, it is important to develop the following characteristics:

- A desire to know thoroughly what you are judging.
- A clear knowledge of the ideal or standard type of each breed of horse and an ability to recognize desirable and undesirable conformational characteristics.
- A quick and accurate ability to observe and critically evaluate.
- The ability to form a mental image of many individual animals and to rank them by making comparisons.

- Reasoning power that takes into account practical considerations.
- The ability to reach a definite decision based on sound judgment.
- Extreme honesty and sincerity to avoid bias or prejudice. Decisions should always be based on knowledge and judgment.
- Steady nerves and confidence in your ability to make close, independent decisions based entirely on the animals' merits. Students in practice and in contests should always work independently. A good philosophy for all judging is to do the best work possible at the time and to have no regrets about the results or accomplishments. Every contest is a chance to learn and grow in your skills.
- The ability to evaluate and rank the individual animal according to its appearance on the day of judging, regardless of its rank at a previous show.
- Sound knowledge acquired through practice and experience to give effective reasons for decisions.
- A pleasant and even temperament. Good judges, however, do not fraternize with exhibitors or friends along the ringside.
- Firmness to stand by and defend your placings without being offensive or in any way implying that your decisions are infallible.

The Basics Before Judging

Before you begin judging, it is important that you know the basics of horse anatomy. Figure 1 on Page 4 shows the common parts of a horse from nose to tail. Practice identifying those parts.

Being able to describe common coat colors and markings is also important when judging horses. Here is a list of descriptions commonly used in the horse industry to identify colors and markings:

- **Black**—uniform black color on the body, mane, and tail.
- **Bay**—black mane and tail, black points (black hairs below the knees and hocks, black muzzle, and black tips on the ears), and a reddish body. The color of the body may vary from a light to dark reddish color.
- **Seal brown**—brown hairs located in the flank areas, on the muzzle, under the eyes, and on the tips of the ears. The body is usually brown or black.
- **Chestnut or sorrel**—skin is black or brown with red hairs. Mane and tail are usually the same color as the body.
- **White**—pure white hairs with pink skin and blue eyes.
- **Cremello**—off-white or cream-colored body and blue eyes. May have lighter manes and tails.
- **Perlino**—off-white or pearl white body color with light rust-colored mane and tail.

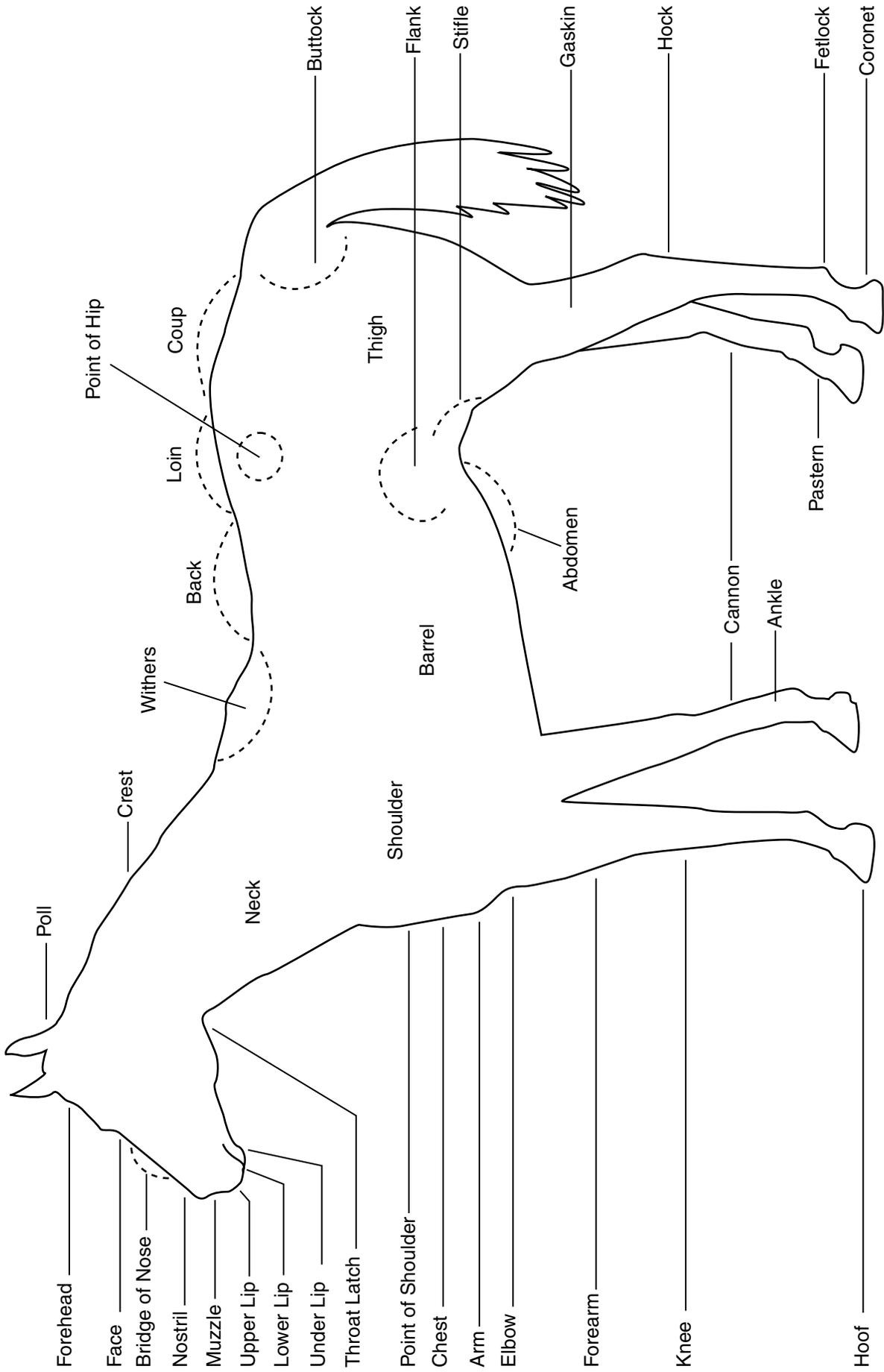


Figure 1. External features.

- **Grulla**—black mane, tail, and, perhaps, black points with a “sooty” black body.
- **Dun**—black mane, tail, and legs with a dingy yellow-colored body. May have dorsal stripe.
- **Buckskin**—black mane, tail, and legs with a light yellow body color. May have dorsal stripe.
- **Palomino**—yellow body color and a white or flaxen mane and tail.
- **Gray**—characterized by white hairs mingled with hairs of the basic color, chestnut, or black. Color eventually grows out until the horse is completely gray.
- **Red roan**—bay horse coloring with white hairs intermixed.
- **Strawberry roan**—sorrel or chestnut horse with white hairs intermixed.
- **Blue roan**—black body color with white hairs intermixed.

Common markings of the head can be seen in Figure 2. Head markings usually consist of white hairs and are described by the shape of the marking. Figure 3 shows common leg markings. As with head markings, leg markings consist of white hairs and are described by the location of the white.

The Five Key Characteristics to Judging Conformation in Horses

In learning to evaluate conformation, you need an understanding of all the factors that should be considered when you thoroughly evaluate each individual horse. The five major criteria for judging a horse include: **balance, structure and travel, muscle, quality, and breed and sex characteristics**. This system was developed to logically organize all selection factors, making them not only easier to learn but easier to recall during the judging of a class.

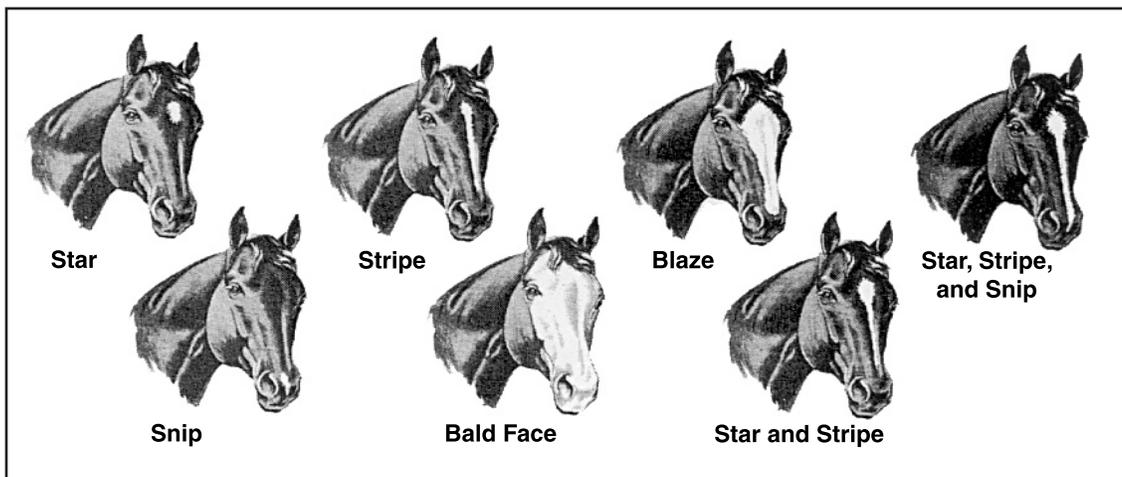


Figure 2. Standard head markings.

Source: Bill Culbertson, *Horse Industry Handbook*

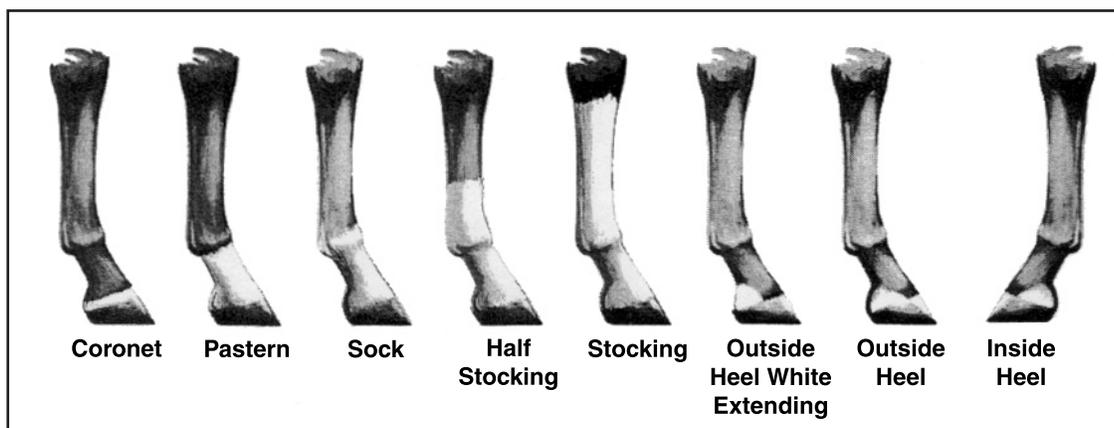


Figure 3. Standard leg markings.

Source: Bill Culbertson, *Horse Industry Handbook*

Balance

Balance is one of the most important selection criteria, but it is sometimes the most difficult to comprehend or visualize. It is defined as the way a horse's parts fit together to form the whole or the blending of the parts to form the entire horse. Balance is evaluated from the side view, about 25 to 30 feet away from the horse. Each of the following parts of the horse will be critically evaluated to determine a horse's balance: **topline, back, croup/hip, heartgirth, shoulder, and neck.**

Starting with the overall balance of the horse, one should be able to draw three equal circles on the horse's body: one starting at the point of the shoulder and extending to the heartgirth, one just behind the heartgirth to the flank, and the last one at the flank to the point of the buttocks. Visualizing these circles in your head can help provide a starting point in evaluating balance. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Are all the circles the same size?
- Which circle is smallest?
- Which circle is largest?

The answers to these questions can help you break down the exact parts of the horse to determine balance. For example, if the middle circle is the largest, the horse may have a long back in comparison to the rest of its body.

The horse's **topline** should represent one continuous line starting at the poll and extending to the tailhead. In horses, look for smoothness of the topline and overall connectivity. The **back** lies from the withers to the loin and should be strong and relatively short compared to the underline. Horses with long, well-sloped shoulders will often give the impression of being short in their backs. A short back will be more capable of withstanding the weight of the rider and equipment and, with mares, will provide more strength and support while they are carrying their foals. A long underline will permit a longer stride, resulting in greater efficiency of movement. Long backs may appear strong in young horses but will weaken with age and use, leaving the horse swaybacked.

As part of the topline, the **croup** should be smooth and strong. A short, steep croup should be faulted because it shortens a horse's stride. The angle of the **hip** extends from the point of the hip to the point of the buttocks and should be about a 65° angle. This will help the horse's stride length and overall quality of movement.

The **heartgirth** represents the point from the horse's withers down to the bottom of the barrel. A deep and fairly thick heartgirth is desirable, and it should extend back into the foreribs and barrel. These qualities will give the horse room for good respiratory and digestive capacity, which is most important for the athletic horse. A good measure of a deep heartgirth is the length, which should be equidistant from the bottom of the barrel to the ground.

Shoulder length and slope are extremely important. Horses with long, well-sloped, well-laid-in shoulders will

have a wider range of motion, will give a smoother ride, and will develop less unsoundness in the forelegs. The slope should be about a 45° angle from the point of the shoulder to the top of the withers. Both length and slope of the shoulder are evaluated by visualizing the scapula's spine. A longer shoulder will permit a greater range of movement by allowing for greater muscular contraction. Since the shoulder bone (scapula) and the arm bone (humerus) work together as part of the "shock absorbing mechanism," it is clear that a well-sloped shoulder will permit more cushion or absorption of the concussive forces during movement than a short, steep shoulder. In addition to length and slope, the shoulder should blend well or be well laid into both the neck and barrel.

Length of **neck** is important because the horse uses its neck and weight of its head as a counterbalance to maintain equilibrium during movement. The longer the neck, the more leverage the horse will have while executing maneuvers. For example, the hunter will raise its head and neck just before taking a jump, a cutting horse will bend its neck and orient its head just before changing direction, and the reining horse will raise its head and neck during a sliding stop. In addition to length, the neck should tie high into the chest, improving the horse's overall ability to balance.

Structure and Travel

Structure is evaluated from the side view, as well as the front and rear views. For the horse to perform properly, it must have sound feet and legs. From the side view, you should be able to draw a straight line from the shoulder down the front of the knee, cannon bone, and hoof in the front, and from the hindquarters down the hock, cannon bone, and back of the hoof. When the horse is facing toward or away from you, a line should be drawn from the point of the shoulder or buttock down through the knee/hock, cannon bone, and through the middle of the hoof.

The feet should be tough, well rounded, and roomy with deep, open heels. They should be set directly under the knees and hocks and should be straight when viewed from the front and rear. The legs should be straight and the knees and hocks should be deep, wide, and free from coarseness. The bone should appear flat and be clean, hard, and free from puffiness. It should be of adequate strength and substance to properly support the horse during strenuous activity. The tendons should be well defined.

Horses should be serviceably sound. Young animals should show no defects in conformation that may lead to unsoundness. You must first know and recognize normal structure and function before you can identify unsoundness. An unsoundness is defined as any deviation in form or function that interferes with an individual's usefulness. A blemish is an abnormality which may detract from an animal's appearance but does not affect its serviceability. Examples of blemishes can be wire cuts, rope burns, shoe boils, and capped hocks.

Figures 4a and 4b and 5a and 5b on Page 8 show some of the common deviations in the structure of a horse, as explained in the following examples:

- **Bench knees**—when the cannons (as viewed from the front) fail to come out of the center of the knees; often causes large splints to develop.
- **Blood spavin**—an enlarged or varicose vein on the inside of the hock.
- **Bog spavin**—a soft filling of the natural depression on the inside and front of the hock.
- **Bone spavin**—a bony enlargement on the inside and front of the hock where the base of the hock tapers into the cannon bone of the lower leg. Bone spavin is an inheritable weakness and one of the most destructive conditions affecting a horse's usefulness. Lameness is most evident when the animal is used following rest.
- **Bow knees**—when horses stand over the outside of their front feet. This faulty position brings undue weight upon the outside position of the front feet, especially the outside lateral cartilages, often causing early formation of "side bones."
- **Bowlegged**—when a horse stands pigeon-toed on its hind feet, with the points of its hocks turned outward. The horse is said to stand bowlegged behind. Such horses go wide at the hocks, making collected performance impossible. A horse should work with its hocks fairly close together, not wide apart.
- **Bowed tendons**—a thickened enlargement of any or all of a group of tendons and ligaments (usually the superflexor tendon, deep flexor tendon, and suspensory ligament) that occupy the posterior space in the cannon region between the knee and fetlock joint or between the hock and fetlock joint. Bowed tendon is the name horsepeople applied to ruptured tendon tissue and is more commonly seen on front legs than on rear legs.
- **Buck knees (over at the knees)**—when a horse is over at the knees or has knees that protrude too far forward when viewed from the side. Buck knees are not considered as severe a fault as the opposite condition, calf knees.
- **Bucked shins**—a slight swelling anterior to the cannon bone due to a tearing of the periosteum; caused by stress and most common in racehorses.
- **Calf knees**—knees (when viewed from the side) that break backwards.
- **Camped out**—when the rear legs are set out behind the back of the hip; usually starts at the hocks and continues down the lower leg.
- **Capped hocks, knees, and elbows**—swelling located, respectively, on the point of the hock, front of the knee, and tip of the elbow; caused by injuries resulting in excess secretion of the synovial fluid.
- **Cow-hocked**—when a horse stands with the point of the hocks turned inward, while being base wide and splayfooted.
- **Curb**—enlargement of the hock tendon or ligament on the upper part of the cannon just below the point of the hock; caused by injury or strain.
- **Fistula**—an inflamed condition in the withers region, commonly caused by bruising.
- **Forging**—a defect in the way of going, characterized by the striking of the supporting forefoot by the striding hind foot on the same side.
- **Founder (laminitis)**—a serious ailment of the fleshy laminae. It can be caused by overeating, overwork, and many other conditions. All feet may be affected, but the front ones are more susceptible.
- **Interfering**—a defect in the way of going, characterized by the striking of the fetlock or cannon of the supporting leg by the opposite foot that is in motion.
- **Knock-knees**—when a horse stands in at the knees or is too close at the knees. Knock-kneed conditions are caused by the bones of the upper and lower leg not entering and leaving the knee squarely.
- **Moon blindness (periodic ophthalmia)**—a cloudy or inflamed condition of the eye that disappears and returns in cycles, often lasting about a month.
- **Navicular disease**—inflammation of the navicular bone area due to faulty conformation caused by excessive concussion to the foot (nerved horses are considered unsound).
- **Osselet**—abnormal bony growth at the fetlock joint.
- **Over at the knees (buck knees)**—when viewed from the side, the knees flex forward and are not aligned directly under the forearm. Although this trait is unappealing, the knee is not likely to suffer excessive wear.
- **Parrot mouth**—a hereditary imperfection in how the teeth come together. It is caused by the lower jaw being shorter than the upper jaw (also known as "overbite"). The reverse of this condition, monkey mouth or underbite, is caused by the lower jaw being longer than the upper jaw.
- **Pigeon-toed (toed-in)**—when a horse appears to be standing with the aim of the hoof turned toward the center of the body. Such a horse commonly exhibits paddling as a result of this condition.
- **Post-legged**—when viewed from the side, there is too little angulation in the hock joint. The classic line drawn up the back of the cannon ends forward of the point of the buttock, toward the hip. This conformation results in a short, rough stride and excessive wear on the hard tissue in the hock.
- **Quitter**—an active, seeping sore at the coronet of the hoof, usually over the area of lateral cartilage. Normally confined to the forefeet, this condition can cause a long-lasting lameness.
- **Ring bone**—bony enlargement near the coronary band that may involve the pastern joint or coffin joint; usually associated with stress and faulty conformation.

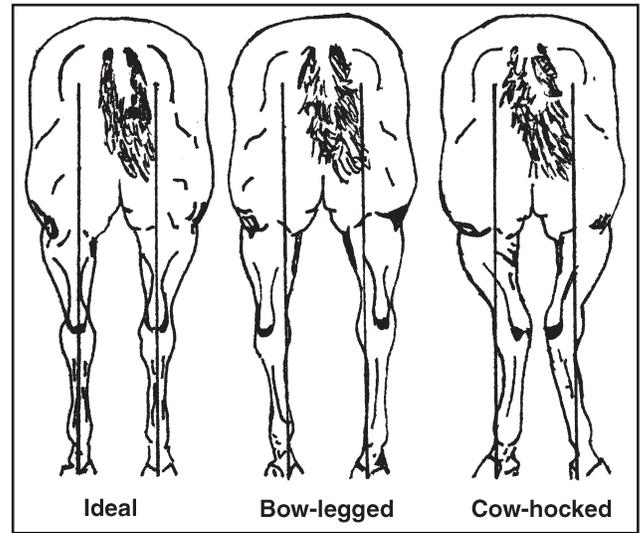
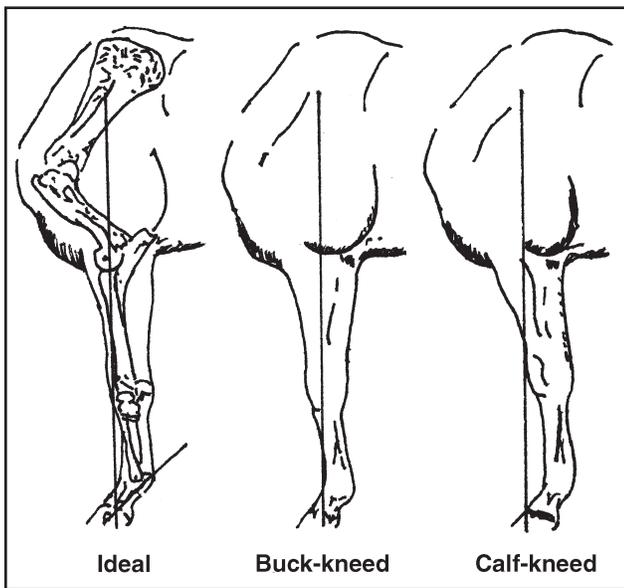
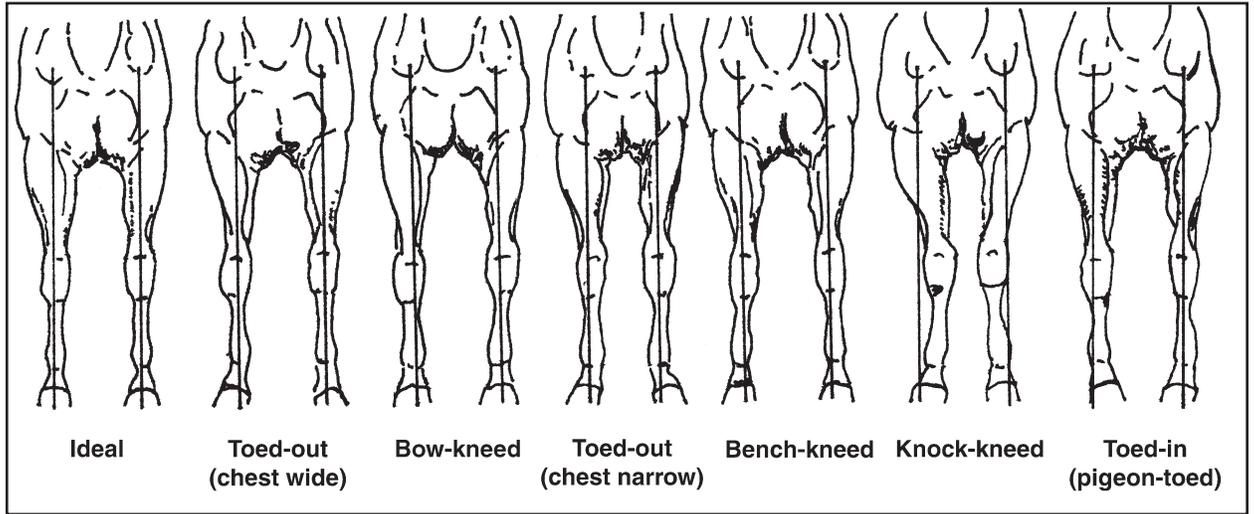


Figure 4b. Front legs, side view.

Figure 5a. Rear legs, rear view.

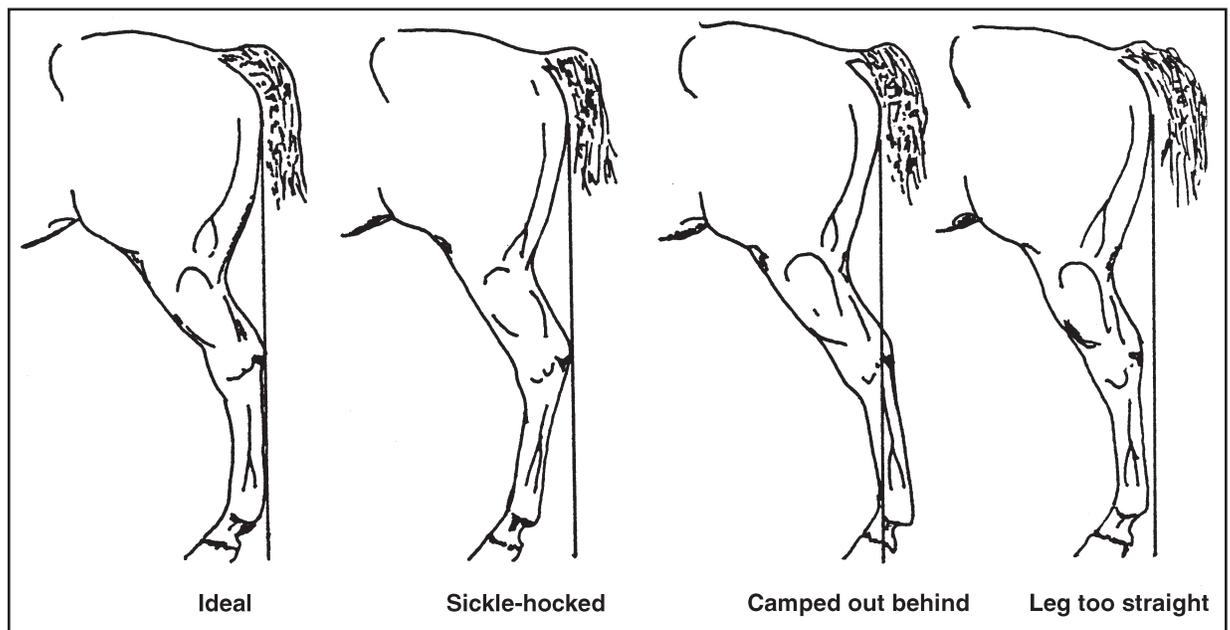


Figure 5b. Rear leg, side view.

- **Shoe boil (capped elbow)**—a soft fleshy swelling caused by an irritation at the point of the elbow. The two most common causes are injury from the heel calk of the shoe and injury from contact with a hard surface.
- **Sickle hocked**—when a horse's rear legs have too much set to the hocks and, when viewed from the side, resemble a sickle.
- **Side bone**—loss of flexibility of the lateral cartilages, usually in the forefeet, caused by ossification; excessive concussion and poor conformation also contribute to the condition.
- **Splint**—calcification between the splint and cannon bones due to injury, stress, or faulty conformation.
- **Stifled**—dislocation of the patella causing a fixation of the leg in an extended position due to injury; faulty conformation may be a contributing factor.
- **Stringhalt**—nerve disorder causing excessive flexion of the rear legs during movement.
- **Thoroughpin**—a puffy condition in the hollow of the hock. The puff can be seen mostly on the outside but is moveable when palpated. Thoroughpins rarely cause lameness.
- **Toed out (splayfooted)**—when viewed from the front, the horse stands with the toes of its front legs turned outward. The horse “wings” when moving, which is when the striding foot swings inward toward the supporting leg.
- **Windpuff**—a puffy enlargement of the pastern joint, also referred to as “windgail.” The enlargement is a fluid-filled distension of the bursa (joint sac or capsule).

In evaluating a horse's travel, or way of going, the degree of action of the horse will vary from breed to breed. However, the usefulness of all horses depends on their ability to move in a motion that is straight and true with a long, swift, and elastic stride. Figure 6 shows the common deviations to a horse's travel. Here are some important terms used in evaluating and describing travel:

- **Length**—the distance from the point of breaking over to the point of contact of the same foot.
- **Directness or trueness**—the line in which the foot is carried forward during the stride.
- **Spring**—manner in which the weight is settled up the supporting structure at the completion of the stride.
- **Step**—the distance between imprints of the two forelegs or two hindlegs.
- **Stride**—the distance between successive imprints of the same foot.
- **Suspension**—the length of time between strides where the legs appear to hang in the air.

Evaluating straightness of travel is a challenge similar to evaluating structural correctness in that deviations in the flight of the feet may range from slight to severe. For example, both winging in and paddling out are common

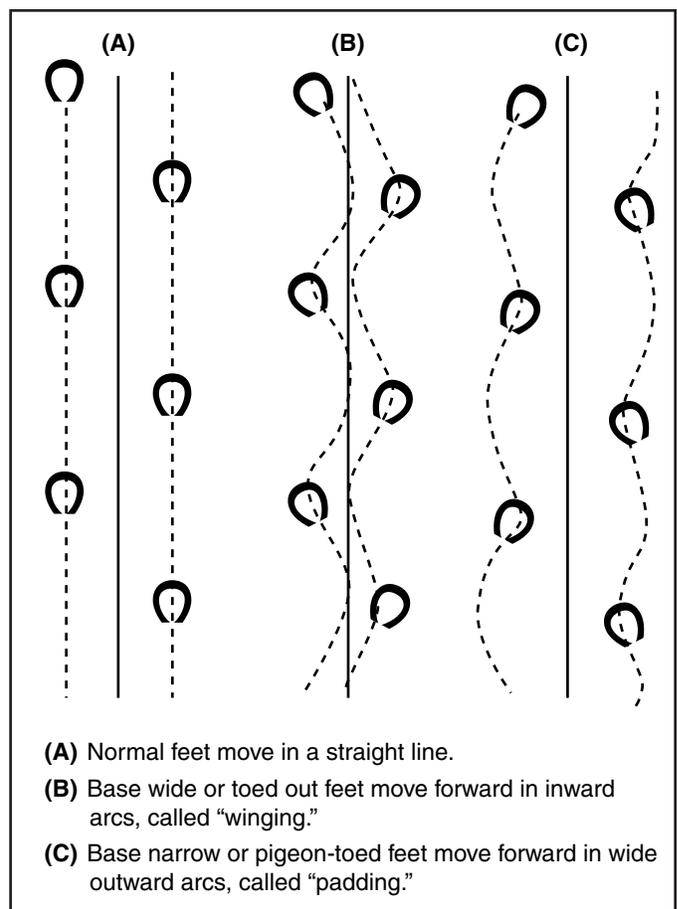


Figure 6. Foot movements.

faults. However, winging in is a much more serious fault due to the effect on the quality of travel over time. If the condition is severe enough, interference between the supporting and striding legs and feet may occur. In addition, length of stride should be evaluated appropriately. A short, choppy stride will result in poor ground coverage and a rough gait. Conversely, an extremely long, over-reaching stride may lead to interference between the fore and rear feet and legs.

The following are some of the most common traveling faults associated with or caused by structural deviations. It is common for a structurally correct horse to be faulty in its movement or for a structurally incorrect horse to move in a fairly true manner.

- **Forging**—the contact between the sole or shoe of the forefoot with the toe of the rear foot due to an over-reaching stride.
- **Dishing (winging in)**—commonly associated with horses that stand toed out, or splayfooted. The flight path of the feet tend to follow an inward arc.
- **Interfering**—a defect in the way of going, characterized by the striking of the fetlock or cannon of the supporting leg by the opposite foot that is in motion; more prevalent in horses that toe out in front.

- **Paddling (winging out)**—when the flight path of the feet tend to follow an outward arc; commonly associated with horses that stand pigeon-toed or toed in.
- **Rope walking**—a twisting of the striding leg around and in front of the supporting leg, resembling the motion of a tightrope walker.
- **Scalping**—another form of over-reaching in which there is contact between the coronary band of the hind foot and the toe of the forefoot.

Muscle

All movement originates from the contraction and relaxation of muscle. The horse depends on muscle for a variety of functions: locomotion, to move food through its digestive system, to run its heart, and even to move certain parts of its body to chase away flies. Because the horse is a performance tool, it is evaluated for the muscling responsible for locomotion. Muscle is located over the entire body, from the knee and hocks upward. Certain areas of the body should possess additional volume and definition of muscling. These areas are the **chest** or pectoral region, the **forearm, shoulder, loin, croup, stifle, and gaskin**. In evaluating muscle, both **quality** and **quantity** are important in all breeds. The most desirable kind of muscling is long, smooth, and deep tying rather than short and bunched. All seven of the major muscle mass areas contribute significantly to the horse's ability to perform as an athlete.

From the side view, the **forearm, shoulder, loin, and hip** can be evaluated for muscling. Evidence of muscling in the forearm will ensure that the horse will have more power and strength during extension. This muscle should be bulging but long, and it should tie down well into the knee. Ample **shoulder** muscling is important to bind the foreleg to the trunk. Also, shoulder muscling is useful during jumping and for forward and lateral movement. A well-muscled **loin** is important for strength and support to withstand the weight of a rider and tack. Muscles in this region play an important role in coordinating the fore and rear quarters during movement, as well as in aiding vertical extension and jumping. A well-defined **loin** should not be confused with the undesirable condition known as being "roach-backed," in which the spine is abnormally elevated in the lumbar area. Light muscling in the loin will permit the back to become weak with age and use. Adequate muscling in the **hip**, particularly the croup, will ensure that the horse has sufficient power for impulsion and drive off the rear quarters, as well as for stopping, jumping, and backing up. Since the obese horse will tend to deposit fat in the area of the croup, the croup should be closely examined to distinguish between fat and muscle.

From the front view, we can evaluate the **chest** and again the **forearm** region. The **chest** or pectoral region should have ample muscling that carries down to the insides of both forelegs and ties smoothly into the knees, giving the

appearance of an upside down "V." Horses that are wide through the chest cavity and possess ample muscling will have more extension and lateral movement power than narrow-fronted, light-muscled horses.

From the hind view, you should take note of the horse's **stifle** and **gaskin** for muscle quality and quantity. The horse gets most of its locomotive power from the stifle and hip area. Therefore, muscling in the **stifle** is necessary for stopping and for manipulation of the rear quarters. Horses should be as thick, or thicker, through the center of the stifle as they are through the point of the hip. In addition to thickness, depth of muscling is important, as the stifle should tie in deep toward the gaskin from the side view. Horses that lack muscling in the stifle region will not be as thick through the center of the stifle as they are through the point of the hip. Gaskin muscling is important for power in the flexion and extension of the rear legs. Muscling in the gaskin should be prominent in both the inside and outside areas and should tie smoothly into the hock.

Quality

Some breed associations put strong emphasis on quality in judging horses. However, few quality factors actually affect the horse's function, serviceability and athletic potential. Still, quality is important and must be considered in total evaluation.

Quality is a combination of the **skin, haircoat, head, throatlatch, feet, and bone structure**. A horse that is "high quality" has a smooth, short **haircoat** and thin, pliable **skin**. On the **head**, the ears are relatively short and erect. The face is short and displays width between the eyes, tapering to a fine muzzle. The eyes are prominent and located on the corners of the face to permit a greater range of vision. The **head** has very little excessive tissue, and the **skin** fits closely to the head, with definition of skull shape and observable blood vessels. In the **throatlatch**, horses are clean and refined. This will allow more flexibility at the poll and will enable the horse to maintain a proper head set when ridden. The **joints** are free of swelling or puffiness, and the skin fits smoothly over the joints. The **feet** are medium sized and well rounded at the front, with width and depth at the heel. These characteristics allow the feet to withstand the forces of concussion because they have larger weight-bearing surfaces and greater expansion range. A horse that is "low quality" may also be described as coarse. This animal has more excess tissue in the **head**, the **skin** and **haircoat** may appear thick and coarse, and there may be more puffiness and swelling around the joints. The horse exhibits a deep, thick **throatlatch** that will limit its ability to flex at the poll and cause difficulty breathing. Extremely large **feet** make the horse move awkwardly, whereas extremely small "mule feet" will not expand and contract properly, predisposing the horse to certain unsoundnesses.

Breed and Sex Characteristics

Breed and sex characteristics can be evaluated by looking at the **head** of the horse. Stallions and geldings should express a certain degree of masculinity about the head, including thicker jaw and larger head overall. Whereas, the mare should exhibit a degree of femininity, including smaller, refined features. In addition, certain breeds of horses carry more muscle than others. Quarter Horses are heavier muscled compared to the lighter-muscled Arabian horses. A heavy-muscled Arabian horse carrying more weight may not be suitable to purpose, such as endurance racing.

Breed Specific Considerations for Judging Conformation Classes

Quarter Horse, Paint Horse, Appaloosa, and Other Stock Types

Stock type breeds usually stand about 14.2 to 15.2 hands tall. Most are deep and broad chested, as indicated by depth of heartgirth and wide-set forelegs that blend into a long, sloping shoulder upward and taper into the knees downward. The good saddle back is created by medium-high but sharp withers, extending well back and combining with a deep, sloping shoulder. The back is fairly short and strong, containing a strong coupling. The barrel is formed by deep, well-sprung ribs back to the hip joints and a long sloping croup with a long bottom line extending straight to the flank.

The amount and kind of muscling is important. Muscling that is long, smooth, and deeply attached to the joints is desirable. From the front, the chest should show a prominent "V," tying into the well-developed forearms that extend down to the knee. The rear quarters are broad, deep, and heavy when viewed from either the side or rear, and they are muscled so they are full through the thigh, stifle, and gaskin, extending down to the hock. The hind leg is muscled both on the inside and outside. When viewed from the rear, there is great width extending evenly from the top of the thigh to the bottom of the stifle and gaskin.

The head of a stock-type horse is short and broad with wide-set eyes, large nostrils, short muzzle, firm mouth, and a well-developed, prominent jaw. The head should appear clean-cut overall.

Hunter in Hand

The overall appearance of a hunter horse makes it look taller, leaner, and more angular, with the body longer, deeper chested, and narrower as compared to other breeds. The head tapers from large, wide-set eyes to a firm muzzle. It is small with a straight, flat face and large, thin nostrils. The ears should be wide set, small, and well formed.

The neck should be lean, without coarseness or heavy appearance; length and a slight arch that join smoothly into the shoulder are also desirable. The shoulder should be long, well sloped, and covered with lean, flat, powerful

muscles. The depth of the shoulders should carry through to the heartgirth. The ribs should be flat, immediately behind the shoulders, well rounded, and full over the rib cage. The thighs and rear quarter should be powerful, showing long, smooth muscle. The bone should be of high quality, showing both substance and strength.

Arabian

The Arabian is commonly between 14.1 and 15.1 hands tall and noted for its overall stylishness. It has a relatively small dished head, with a small muzzle, large nostrils, and large, dark, wide-set eyes. The distance between eyes and muzzle is comparatively short. The short, thin ears add a look of alertness and are curved slightly inward at the tips. The neck is long and arched. It is set high from the chest and joins into high withers. When viewed from the side, the Arabian exhibits long sloping shoulders, well-sprung ribs, long forearms, and short cannons. The back blends well into the comparatively horizontal croup, and the tail carriage is naturally high and straight.

Morgan

The Morgan generally stands between 14.1 and 15.2 hands tall and is noted for its stamina, vigor, personality, and eagerness to work. The head shows alertness with a straight or slightly dished face, large wide-set eyes, and small ears. The Morgan possesses a large, prominent jaw that blends into a narrow muzzle with large nostrils and firm lips. The throatlatch is slightly deeper than other breeds, yet should be refined enough to allow proper flexion at the poll and normal respiration. The head is carried high on a powerful, slightly crested neck. The neck comes out of deep, powerful, well-angulated shoulders. The shoulders blend into a short back, with broad loins and a muscular, well-developed, level croup. Viewed from the side, the topline represents a gentle curve from the poll to the back, giving the impression that the neck sits on top of the withers rather than in front of them. The tail should be attached high and carried with an arch to it. The Morgan's legs are straight and sound, with short cannons, flat bones, medium pasterns, and overall strength and refinement.

American Saddlebred

The head of a Saddlebred may be longer than that of many breeds but should exhibit refinement and sharpness of features. The well-shaped head is carried relatively high, with small, alert, pointed ears set close, large eyes set well apart, a fine muzzle with large nostrils, and a straight face line. The neck should be long and well-arched, with a clean throatlatch, and it may tie low into the chest with a more vertical appearance. The Saddlebred has high withers, with a long, sloping shoulder and a short, level back. The ribs are well-sprung, allowing for maximum function. The croup is level with a well-carried tail coming out high. Legs are straight, with broad, flat bones, sharply defined tendons, sloping pasterns, and good, sound hooves.

Tennessee Walking Horse

The Walking Horse should have an intelligent and neat head, well-shaped and pointed ears, clear and alert eyes, and a tapered muzzle. The horse may be thicker through the throatlatch, and the neck should tie deep into the chest with a vertical appearance. The shoulders should be muscular and sloping into a short, strong back, with good coupling at the loins. The croup is generally more sloping (or steep) than in other breeds due to the Walking Horse's stride. The breed's natural overstride makes it desirable to have some set to the hocks so that the horse appears slightly sickle hocked from the side and toed out from the rear.

Draft Horse

All draft-type horses are characterized by their massiveness. Power, rather than speed, is desirable. In order to possess this power, the draft horse should be block or compact, low set or short-legged, and sufficiently heavy to enable him to pull. The head should be shapely and clean-cut. The chest should be especially deep and of ample width. The topline should include a short, strong back and loin, with a long, nicely turned, and well-muscled croup and a well-set tail. Muscling should be heavy throughout, especially in the forearm and gaskin. The shoulder should be sloping. The legs should be straight, true, and squarely set, and the bone should be strong, flat, and show plenty of quality.

Miniature Horse

The general impression of the ideal miniature horse should be one of symmetry, strength, agility, and alertness. Preferences in judging are given to smaller horses when all other characteristics are considered equal. The miniature horse must not measure more than 34 inches at the withers. The head should be in proportion to length of neck and body, with a broad forehead and large, prominent eyes set wide apart. The distance between the eyes and the muzzle should be comparatively short and end in a clean, refined muzzle with large nostrils, and the teeth should meet in an even bite. The profile of the head should be straight or slightly dished below the eyes. The ears should be medium in size, with slightly curved, pointed tips, and carried alertly. A desirable neck is long and flexible in proportion to body and type and blends smoothly into the withers. The shoulder should be long, sloping, and well angulated, allowing a free, swinging stride and alert head/neck carriage. The body is balanced and well proportioned, with ample bone, muscle, and substance. The topline appears smooth and generally level, with the back and loin short in relation to the underline. The miniature has a deep girth and flank, with a trim barrel. The hindquarters should be long, with well-muscled hips, thighs, and gaskins. Tail set is neither excessively high nor low but smoothly rounds off the rump.

Specific Considerations for Judging Performance Classes

Performance classes are designed to show a horse's suitability for certain types of work. Many of the performance classes incorporate particular tasks or routines common to the horse's everyday use. Pleasure, driving, cutting, jumping, and trail classes are examples of performance classes. There are two types of performance classes to judge: those based on the rider and those based on the horse. Those judged on the rider are called horsemanship or equitation classes, depending on whether Western or English tack is required. Most of the other types are judged on the performance of the horse. Most horse judging contests will declare all appointments legal in the performance classes. Therefore, contestants will need to be concerned only with the performance of the horse or rider. However, youth are encouraged to refer to the specific breed association rule books for more specifics about required and optional appointments and class routines.

Since the format of most of the classes calls for all horses to work simultaneously on the rail, each horse should be evaluated during each segment of the class routine. This is vital to achieve a comparative evaluation. Contestants should plan to have an initial placing by the time the class begins to work the second way of the ring.

The following performance classes are most commonly included in horse judging contests and will be discussed here: Western Pleasure, Reining, Western Riding, Horsemanship/Equitation, English Pleasure, Plantation Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle, Hunter Hack, and Pleasure Driving.

Note: The pleasure classes represent judging on the horse's performance, in that the mount demonstrates its ability to be a pleasure to ride. The routine for each pleasure class requires the horse to walk, trot or jog, and canter or lope both ways of the ring, as well as to back. The pleasure horse should respond readily on command, to be smooth in its transitions, remain consistent and true within each gait, and take the proper leads at the appropriate location. It should maintain the proper head set and neck carriage, move squarely down the rail and, overall, clearly demonstrate that it is easy to handle and a pleasure to ride.

Western Pleasure

The Western Pleasure class is shown at a walk, jog, and lope in both directions of the ring. Horses are required to back easily and stand readily. A good pleasure horse has a stride of reasonable length in keeping with its conformation. Ideally, such horses should have a balanced, flowing motion while exhibiting correct gaits that are of the proper cadence. The quality of movement and the consistency of the gaits are major considerations. The horse should carry its head and neck in a relaxed, natural position, with the poll level with or slightly above the level of the withers. It should not carry its head behind the vertical,

giving the appearance of intimidation, or it should not be excessively nosed out, giving a resistant appearance. The head should be level with the nose slightly in front of the vertical, having a bright expression with alert ears. The horse has enough cushion in the pastern to give the rider a pleasant, smooth ride. It should move lightly in the front, with the hocks well underneath the body and exhibiting a great deal of hindquarter impulsion. The horse should be shown on reasonably loose rein but with light contact and control. Transitions should be smooth and responsive when called for. When asked to extend, the horse should move out with the same flowing motion. Maximum credit should be given to the flowing, balanced, and willing horse that gives the appearance of being fit and a pleasure to ride.

The walk is a natural, flat-footed, four-beat gait. The horse should track straight and true at the walk. The walk should be alert, with a stride of reasonable length in keeping with the size of the horse.

The jog is a smooth, ground-covering, two-beat diagonal gait. The horse works from one pair of diagonals to the other pair in rhythmic fashion. The jog must be square, balanced, and with a straight, forward movement of the feet. Horses walking with their back feet and jogging on the front are not considered to be performing the required gait and should be duly penalized.

The lope is an easy, rhythmical, three-beat gait. Horses moving to the left must lope on the left lead, while horses moving to the right must lope on the right lead. Horses performing a four-beat gait are not considered to be performing a proper lope and should be penalized significantly. The horse should lope with a natural stride and appear relaxed and smooth, and it should be ridden at a speed that appears natural.

Faults to be scored accordingly but not necessarily cause for disqualification:

- Changing hands on reins.
- Two hands on reins.
- More than one finger between reins.
- Being on the wrong lead.
- Excessive speed at any gait.
- Excessive slowness at any gait or loss of forward momentum.
- Breaking gait.
- Failure to take the appropriate gait when called for.
- Touching the horse or saddle with free hand.
- Head carriage too high or too low.
- Nosing out or flexing behind the vertical.
- Mouthing the bit excessively.
- Stumbling or falling.
- Being quick, choppy, or pony-strided.
- Use of spurs or romal forward of the cinch.

Reining

Most breed shows and judging contests use the National Reining Horse Association (NRHA) guidelines for reining classes. Each contestant is required to perform a pattern of eight maneuvers individually and separately. To rein a horse is not only to guide him but to also control his every move. The Reining horse should respond readily to cues and work the pattern in an easy, fluent, and effortless manner while maintaining a reasonable amount of speed. Light contact should be maintained at all times. The Reining horse should execute a smooth, sliding stop on the rear haunches. All circles or figure eights should be round and even, and leads should be taken smoothly and without hesitation. Rollbacks should be tight and spins or pivots executed with speed. A Reining horse should settle easily and remain calm.

The best Reining horse should be willfully guided or controlled with little or no apparent resistance. Any movement on his own must be considered as a lack of control, as are any deviations from the exact pattern. Therefore, faults are marked according to severity of the loss of control. Credit will be given for smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness, and authority in performing the various maneuvers while using controlled speed. Each individual performance is scored on a basis of 1 to 100, with a 70 denoting an average performance.

Scoring Guidelines

Points are added or subtracted from the eight maneuvers in the pattern. They are indicated in the maneuver scores space on the reining score sheet and are independent of the penalty points. Points to be added/subtracted are as follows:

+1½	excellent
+1	very good
+½	good
0	average
-½	poor
-1	very poor
-1½	extremely poor

The following will result in no score (you cannot place in a reining competition, but you can still place in a judging contest):

- Abuse of the animal.
- Use of illegal equipment.
- Use of illegal bits, bosals, or curb chains.
- Use of tack collars, tie downs, or nose bands.
- Use of whips or bats.
- Use of any attachment that alters the movement of or circulation to the tail.

- Failure to provide horse and equipment to the appropriate judge for inspection.
- Disrespect or misconduct by the exhibitor.

The following will result in a score of 0 (can place in a reining competition; should place above a no-score in a judging contest):

- Use of more than index or first finger between reins.
- Use of two hands or changing hands.
- Use of romal that does not meet NRHA regulations.
- Failure to complete the pattern as written.
- Performing the maneuvers other than in specified order.
- The inclusion of maneuvers not specified, including, but not limited to:
 - Backing more than two strides.
 - Turning more than 90 degrees.
- Equipment failure that delays completion of pattern.
- Balking or refusal of command where pattern is delayed.
- Running away or failing to guide where it becomes impossible to discern whether the entry is on pattern.
- Jogging in excess of one-half circle or one-half the length of the arena.
- Overspins of more than a one-fourth turn.
- Fall to the ground by horse or rider.

The following will result in a deduction of 5 points:

- Spurring in front of cinch.
- Use of either hand to instill fear or praise.
- Holding saddle with either hand.
- Blatant disobedience, including kicking, biting, bucking, rearing, and striking.

The following will result in a deduction of 2 points:

- Break of gait.
- Freeze up in spins or rollbacks.
- On walk in pattern, failure to stop or walk before executing a canter departure.
- On run in patterns, failure to be in a canter prior to the first marker.
- If a horse does not completely pass the specified marker before initiating a stop position.

The following will result in 1-point penalties (deduction for each occurrence):

- Over- or under-spinning one-eighth to one-fourth turn.
- In patterns requiring a runaround, failure to be on the correct lead when rounding the end of the arena for half the turn or less
- Each time a horse is out of lead (judge required to deduct one point; a cumulative penalty).

The following will result in ½-point penalties (deduction for each occurrence):

- Delayed changed of lead by one stride.
- Starting a circle at a jog or exiting a rollback at a jog for up to two strides.
- Over- or under-spinning up to one-eighth of a turn
- Failure to remain a minimum of 20 feet from the wall or fence when approaching a stop and/or rollback.

Faults against the horse or rider to be scored accordingly but not to cause disqualification:

- Opening mouth excessively when wearing bit.
- Excessive jawing, opening mouth, or head raising on stop.
- Lack of smooth, straight stop on haunches—bouncing or sideways stop.
- Refusing to change leads.
- Anticipating signals.
- Stumbling.
- Backing sideways.
- Knocking over markers.
- Loss of stirrup.

Western Riding

Western Riding is an event in which the horse is judged on quality of gaits, lead changes at the lope, response to the rider, manners, and disposition. The horse should perform with reasonable speed and be sensible, well-mannered, and free and easy moving. Each Western Riding horse shall perform the pattern individually. The Western Riding horse should display the traits of the quiet, well-mannered, sensible ranch horse. The horse should not touch the log obstacle when crossing at either the jog or lope and should show some curiosity when negotiating it. Credit will be given for and emphasis placed on smoothness, even cadence of gaits, and the horse's ability to change leads precisely, easily, and simultaneously both hind and front at the center point between the markers. The horse should have a relaxed head carriage, showing response to the rider's hands, with a moderate flexion at the poll.

Scoring Guidelines

Scoring will be on a basis of 0-100, with a 70 denoting an average performance. Points will be added or subtracted from the maneuvers on the following basis:

+1½	excellent
+1	very good
+½	good
0	average
-½	poor
-1	very poor
-1½	extremely poor

Maneuver scores are to be determined independently of penalty points.

A contestant shall be penalized each time the following faults occur:

5-point penalties

- Out of lead beyond the next designated area.
- Blatant disobedience, including kicking out, biting, and bucking.

3-point penalties

- Not performing the specific gait (lope or jog), or stopping when called for in the pattern within 10 feet of the designated area.
- Break of gait at the lope.
- Simple change of leads.
- Out of lead at or before the marker prior to the designated change area or out of lead at or after the marker after the designated change area.
- Additional lead changes anywhere in pattern.
- Failure to start the lope within 30 feet after crossing the log at a jog in pattern 1 and 3
- Break of gait at walk or jog for more than two strides.

1-point penalties

- Break of gait at walk or jog up to two strides.
- Hitting or rolling the log.
- Out of lead more than one stride either side of the center point and between the markers.
- Splitting the log (log between the two front or two hind feet) at the lope.

½-point penalties

- Tick or light touch of log.
- Hind legs skipping or coming together during lead change.
- Nonsimultaneous lead changes.

Disqualified—0 score

- Illegal equipment.
- Willful abuse.
- Off course.
- Knocking over markers.
- Completely missing log.
- Major refusal (stop and back more than two strides or four steps with front legs).
- Major disobedience—rearing, schooling.
- Failure to start lope prior to end cone in patterns 1 and 3.
- Four or more simple lead changes and/or failures to change leads.

The following characteristics are considered faults and should be judged accordingly in maneuver scores:

- Opening mouth excessively.
- Anticipating signals.
- Stumbling.

Horsemanship/Equitation

Horsemanship is a class in which the Western rider and his or her ability to control the horse is judged. Appropriate Western attire must be worn. Clothes and person are to be neat and clean. The exhibitor should appear natural in the seat and ride with a balanced, functional, and correct position, regardless of the maneuvers or gait being performed.

- **Hands**—Both hands and arms shall be held in a relaxed manner, with the upper arms to be in a straight line with the body, the one holding the reins bent at the elbow. When using a romal, the rider's off hand shall be around the romal, with at least 16 inches of slack. Some movement of the arm is permissible, but excessive pumping will be penalized. Hands are to be around the reins. One finger between reins is permitted when using split reins but not with a romal. Reins are to be carried immediately above or slightly in front of the saddle horn. Only one hand is to be used for reining and it should not be changed. Reins should be carried so it has light contact with the horse's mouth, and at no time shall reins be carried more than a slight hand movement from the horse's mouth. In the event a horse is shown with a snaffle bit or hackamore, it is legal for a rider to show with two hands on the reins.
- **Basic position**—Rider should sit in the saddle with his or her legs hanging straight and slightly forward in the stirrups. The stirrup should be just short enough to allow heels to be lower than the toes. Body should always appear comfortable, relaxed, and flexible. Feet may be placed in the stirrup, with the boot heel touching the stirrup, or it may be placed less deep. Riding with toes only in the stirrup will be penalized.
- **Position in motion**—Riders should sit to jog and not post. At the lope, the rider should be close to the saddle. All movements of the horse should be governed by the use of imperceptible aids. Exaggerated shifting of the rider's weight is not desirable. Moving of the lower legs of riders who are short shall not be penalized.
- **Class procedures**—The class procedure usually requires that each rider ride a prescribed pattern and then proceed to work on the rail in one direction. Some breed and show organizations require that the rider work on the rail first, followed by a test or pattern. Regardless of the procedure, the class can be judged the same way.

Hunt Seat or Saddle Seat equitation uses the same system in judging this class. The rider should have a workmanlike appearance, seat and hands light and supple, conveying the impression of complete control.

- **Mounting and dismounting**—To mount, take up reins in left hand and place hand on the horse's withers. Grasp stirrup leather with right hand, and insert left foot in stirrup to mount. To dismount, rider may either step down or slide down. The size of the rider must be taken into consideration.
- **Hands**—Hands should be over and in front of the horse's withers, knuckles 30 degrees inside the vertical, and hands slightly apart and making a straight line from horse's mouth to the rider's elbow. Any method to hold the reins may be used, and bight of reins may fall on either side of the horse's neck. However, all reins must be picked up at the same time.
- **Basic position**—The rider's eyes should be up and the shoulders back. Toes should be at an angle best suited to rider's conformation; ankles flexed, heels down, calf of leg in contact with the horse and slightly behind the girth. Iron is placed on the ball of the foot.
- **Position in motion**—At the walk or slow trot, the rider's body should be vertical; in a posting trot, inclined slightly forward; in a canter, halfway between posting the trot and the walk; galloping and jumping, rider should sit in the half-seat position. The saddle seat rider will maintain the vertical body position at all gaits. Excessive pumping of the legs or arms should be penalized.

English Pleasure

The English Pleasure horse is shown in English appointments with two hands on the reins. The head carriage is somewhat higher than that of the Western Pleasure horse, and the head set should be perpendicular to the ground, showing more arch to the neck. This horse is ridden more "up in the bridle," with light rein contact, and it should show flexibility upon contact. The walk should be a square, flat-footed, easy, four-beat gait. The pleasure or normal trot is a two-beat diagonal gait that is square, cadenced, collected, balanced, and free moving. Credit is given to horses that maintain cadence and collection with additional animation and brilliance. The strong trot, or road trot, is also two beat, cadenced, and square, but it is longer strided and more ground covering. This trot is performed at a speed that allows a balanced, lengthened stride with moderate collection, without becoming strung out or sacrificing form for speed. Excessive speed will be penalized. The canter is a smooth, easy, collected, three-beat gait without any laboring action. The hand gallop is an extension of the canter and should show true lengthening and extending of the stride, not just increased speed. Excessive speed or loss of control will be penalized. Horses must show a willingness to move forward at all gaits. When asked to back, the horse should back in a straight and free, easy manner.

Plantation Pleasure

The Plantation Pleasure Walking horse is shown in English appointments with two hands on the reins. The head carriage is similar in height to that of the English Pleasure horse, with the head set being slightly ahead of a line perpendicular with the ground. The Plantation Walking horse is ridden with light contact on the reins and, like other pleasure horses, should exhibit flexibility upon contact. The horses are judged on quality of movement and manners. The flat walk and famed running walk are both a basic, loose four-cornered gait, a 1-2-3-4 beat with each of the horse's feet hitting the ground separately at regular intervals. As the horse moves, its head will nod in rhythm with the regular rise and fall of its hooves, overstriding the track left by the front foot with the hind foot. In general, the horse should travel in a straight, direct motion, never winging, crossing, or swinging. The flat walk should be loose through the shoulder and hindquarters, bold in pace, and square. The running walk should also be executed with loose ease of movement, pulling with the forefeet and pushing and driving with the hind feet. The croup should remain low and steady. There should be a noticeable difference in the rate of speed between the flat walk and running walk. A good running walk should never allow proper form to be sacrificed for excessive speed. Judging should not be influenced by speed, rather true form exhibited. Credit should be given to horses that maintain form and perform with brilliance and animation. The rocking chair canter is a high, rolling gait with distinct head movement, chin tucked, and in a smooth and collected manner. The horse must be straight and true on both leads.

Hunter Under Saddle

Hunter Under Saddle horses should suit their purpose of hunting and jumping. They should be obedient, alert, and responsive to their riders. They should move in a long, low frame and be able to lengthen their stride and cover ground, as in traveling over hunt country following hounds. Horses should be serviceably sound, and quick, short strides should be penalized. Judges should emphasize free movement and manners.

Horses are to be shown at a walk, trot, and canter both ways of the ring and are required to back. Horses are to back easily and stand quietly. They must be brought to a flat-footed walk before changing gaits. They are ridden with light contact on the mouth. The trot should be brisk, smart, cadenced, and balanced without loss of form. Smoothness is more essential than extreme speed, and excessive knee action should be penalized. The canter should be smooth, collected, and straight on both leads with the ability to push on if so required in a hand gallop. In the hand gallop, horses should be at a brisk speed under control, after which the horses will pull up and stand quietly on the rail for a few moments before being asked to line up for final inspection.

Hunter Hack

The Hunter Hack horse should move in with a strong and forward stride. The class will be judged on flat work, manners, way of going, style over fences, and even hunting pace. Placing for this class shall be determined as follows: 70% for individual fence work and 30% for work on the flat. Horses are required first to jump two fences that are 2 feet, 3 inches to 3 feet in height and set at least two strides apart. Faults to be scored accordingly, but not necessarily to cause disqualification, include:

- Being on the wrong lead and/or wrong diagonal at the trot.
- Excessive speed.
- Excessive slowness.
- Breaking gait.
- Failure to take gait when called.
- Head carried too high or low.
- Nosing out or flexing behind the vertical.
- Opening mouth excessively.
- Stumbling or falling.

Faults that result in elimination include:

- Third refusal, runout, bolting on course, extra circle, showing an obstacle to a horse, or any combination of these.
- Jumping an obstacle before it is reset.
- Bolting from the ring.
- Failure to keep the proper course.
- Jumping obstacles not included on the course.
- Falling of horse and/or rider.

Pleasure Driving

In stock-type Pleasure Driving, a horse should carry itself in a natural balanced position with a relaxed head and neck. The horse's poll should be level with or slightly above the level of the withers. Maximum credit should be given to a horse that moves straight with free movement, manners, and a bright expression. Each horse shall be exhibited at the walk, park gait, and road gait in both directions of the show ring. The walk should have an average, flat-footed, relaxed stride. The park gait should be a long, yet easy-strided, working trot. An obvious change of speed is to be made into the road gait, which is a faster gait with a more extended and reaching stride. A change of direction shall be accomplished by the horses crossing the show ring while walking. Each horse shall be required to back easily and straight and stand quietly. The horse shall be severely penalized for the following: head carried behind the vertical, overflexed at the poll, excessively nosed out, poll below the withers, and lack of control by exhibitor. Consistently showing too far off the rail shall be penalized according to severity.

In Morgans, Saddlebreds, and Arabians, Pleasure Driving calls for more animation and vertical movement in the gaits, similar to their respective English Pleasure or Three-Gaited classes. In these breeds, the ideal is a more upheaded individual, breaking over higher in the knees and showing more ring presence and breed type.

Taking Notes on a Class

Overview

In competitive horse judging, students usually give their reasons several hours after they have placed a class. Under these circumstances, they need to take notes on a class as they judge it. These notes are useful as you prepare your reasons but should never be used when presenting them formally to a judge.

Horse judges should purchase a stenographer's notebook with the wire binding on top of the page for taking notes. Use a separate sheet of paper to take notes on each class of horses you judge. Divide each sheet into four spaces and label them "1," "2," "3," and "4" (Figure 7, Page 25). In taking notes, beginners often find it helpful to indicate anything special about the animals that might help them to visualize the classes later. Usually, it is helpful to write down the colors and specific markings of each horse. Be sure to take enough notes while you are in the ring, including writing down the essential facts. Each person develops his or her own note-taking method, and many develop a type of shorthand to save time. For example, to indicate a horse that is deep in the heartgirth, you might write "DH" in your notes.

Writing and Presenting Oral Reasons

Overview

To be a good judge, you not only must have complete knowledge of the ideal breed type, but you also must be able to give effective and accurate reasons for your placing. By the time you reach your final decision, you should be able to justify your placing with those reasons. Most people training to be judges spend considerable time learning to give reasons and gaining experience and confidence. To give effective reasons, you must train your mind to absorb and retain a mental image of an animal's good and bad points. Then you must develop a vocabulary to state these points accurately, concisely, and effectively. While many listeners do not time reasons, the presentation should be delivered within two minutes.

Public speaking is intimidating for many people. It is important that as coaches teach their judges to present oral reasons, they provide feedback that is constructive and assist each judge in overcoming the normal reluctance to give oral reasons. This is done by providing a solid foundation in format and, then, gradually increasing the amount of content as the judge gains confidence and experience.

Major Criteria for Reasons

(See Figure 8 on Page 25 for an example of a set of oral reasons)

- **Organization**—Styles of reasons vary with individual personalities and coaching tactics. No matter the style, all reasons should be well-organized. The basic approach in the comparison of horses is to work in pairs. A class of four animals has three pairs. For example, in a placing of 1-2-3-4, 1 and 2 are the top pair, 2 and 3 the middle pair, and 3 and 4 are the bottom pair. Reasons should also be comparative, rather than descriptive. For example, instead of stating that 2 had a deep heartgirth, you would point out that 2 was deeper in the heartgirth than 3.
- **Relevancy**—Reasons should reflect differences in the pair and should focus on the primary points that were significant in the placing of the pair, in order of importance. Higher scores will be given for reasons that focus on the important reasons that the horses were placed, not for minor details. If reasons are “canned” or sound methodical and not consistent with the true differences in the class of horses, the judge will significantly reduce the score of that individual.
- **Accuracy**—Truth is the primary consideration in scoring oral reasons. While an individual may lose only a few points by leaving out important details, he or she may be severely penalized for inaccurate statements. A complete, accurate set of reasons should receive a high score even if the student’s placing is not in agreement with the official placing.
- **Terminology**—Some emphasis is placed on the correct use of terminology common in the equine industry. Terminology may vary among breeds and disciplines. It should never include slang. Comparative, rather than descriptive, terminology should be used. A set of reasons that consistently describes the traits of the animals, instead of comparing them, will be penalized.
- **Presentation**—Oral reasons should be presented in a poised, confident, convincing manner. Loud, aggressive, arrogant delivery is penalized, while shy, timid reasons will not receive the highest score either. Reasons should be given in a relaxed, conversational manner, and the speaker should move smoothly through the set of reasons. Contestants should stand a comfortable distance from the listener and stand with their weight balanced evenly on both feet, with hands behind their backs.

Suggested Terms for Comparing Conformation

The following list of general conformation terms can be used for all breeds:

General Appearance

- The best combination of
- Combined, to a higher degree, balance, muscling and size

- Overwhelmed the class with his/her balance, size, and muscling
- Dominated the class in terms of his/her overall balance, heavy muscling, and structural correctness
- Showed more balance and symmetry
- Showed more refinement and style
- Nicer profiling
- Represented the ideal (breed)
- More stylish
- More substance of muscle and bone

Balance

- Longer, more sloping shoulder
- Had a more desirable slope to his/her shoulder and was neater and sharper at the withers
- Exhibited a more correctly angled shoulder and more prominent withers, thus giving him/her a shorter, stronger back in relation to a longer underline
- More angulation to the shoulder
- Larger mare/stallion/gelding that was deeper in his/her chest floor
- Deeper barreled horse
- Showed greater capacity in the heartgirth
- Deeper ribbed, wider chested
- More arch of rib
- Longer in his/her hip, shorter in his/her back, and showed more depth of heartgirth and hind rib, indicating more body capacity
- Taller at the withers and showed more uniformity of height from the croup to the withers
- More powerful topline
- Was shorter and stronger over the top
- Wider topped, showing a more powerful loin
- Stronger coupled
- Longer, wider croup
- A nicer turn of the croup
- Straight and smooth over the top
- Had a shorter back in relation to his/her underline, due to a more sloping shoulder and longer, flatter croup
- Exhibited more balance with all parts blending smoothly and symmetrically

Head and Neck

- Was less course about the head
- Sharper-chiseled features
- Noticeably deeper chiseled from eyes to muzzle
- Shorter head
- Brighter about the eyes
- Wider between the eyes

- More prominent, larger, brighter eye
- Shorter, neater ear
- Was tighter in the throatlatch and had a more naturally arching neck, which tied higher into his/her shoulder
- Longer, leaner neck
- Higher tying from the neck into the shoulder
- More elegant and refined head and neck
- More expressive about the eyes and ears
- Longer neck that rose out of a more angulated shoulder
- Typier, more elegant head

Structure

- Stood straighter and more structurally sound
- Was more structurally correct by being
- Squarer-placed legs
- Stood on straighter legs
- Cleaner about the knees and hocks, with a finer and flatter cannon bone
- Cannon bones coming out more nearly to the center of the knee
- Stood on shorter cannons
- Stood on more rugged, durable type bone
- More substance of bone
- More correct angle at the hock
- Longer, more sloping pasterns

Travel

- Moved out with more clearance between the knees and hocks
- Was a wider traveling mare/gelding/stallion
- Moved out straighter and more correct at the walk/trot
- Tracked out straighter with a longer stride
- Straighter, truer stride
- Longer, more efficient, ground-covering stride
- More fluid
- More flexion to the hocks, with more elevation and reach from the forehand
- More forward impulsion
- Greater freedom of movement
- More stylish mover
- Showed more movement and freedom of motion in the shoulder
- Drove from behind with more hock action

Muscling

- Showed a greater volume of muscling over a larger frame
- Spread a greater total volume and mass of muscling

- More length of hip
- Stood on a wider, more desirable foundation
- More evidence of V muscling
- Thicker, heavier muscled stifle
- Was more vast and bulging through the outer and inner gaskins
- Fuller through the forearm and shoulder

Quality, Breed, and Sex Character

- Higher quality hair coat
- Showed more beauty, bloom and vigor
- Showed more breed character about the head and neck
- Showed more femininity/masculinity
- More refined about the head
- Showed a more prominent jaw

Suggested Terms to Describe Faults in Conformation

General Appearance

- Lacked balance and quality
- Smallest, least-balanced horse in the class
- Lacked style and presence

Balance

- Shallow through the heart girth
- Long backed
- Long and weak over the topline
- Steep shoulder and croup
- Short, straight shoulder
- Coarse at the withers

Head and Neck

- Coarse head
- Long ears
- Narrow between the eyes
- Thick throatlatch
- Low neck attachment
- Cresty neck
- Short, thick neck that tied low into the shoulder
- Small, unattractive eye

Structure

- Shorter, straighter pasterns
- Post-legged
- Crooked through the front legs, with the cannon bone coming out of the side of the knees

- Stood on a hoof too small
- Stood on bone too fine for her massive size
- Puffy about the knees and hocks

Travel

- Appeared to be the least athletic
- Was a coarser moving individual
- Walked close at the ankles
- Lacked the length of stride when compared to
- Did not travel straight
- Small, being choppy and short in his/her stride
- Lacked animation and style
- Had a rough, pounding gait
- Sluggish mover
- Tracked with more deviation from a straight plane of motion

Muscling

- Flat chested
- Lacked volume and dimension through the hip, gaskin, and stifle
- Lacked quality to muscle

Quality, Breed, and Sex Character

- Showed the least breed character
- Lacked a powerful jaw
- Lower quality haircoat
- Lacked style, symmetry, and animation

Figure 8 on Page 25 and Figure 9 on Page 26 are examples of a set of reasons for conformation.

Suggested Terms to Describe Pleasure Horses

- Most broke, consistent, and relaxed horse
- A steadier, nicer-mannered horse
- Showed less resistance and hesitation to the rider's aids and cues
- Was the most broke and honest performer in the class
- A more solid, quieter horse
- Backed easily without being forced
- Backed with less mouthing of bit
- Quicker to make transitions through the gaits
- Smoother transitions
- Accepted transitions with less resistance
- Took leads without hesitation
- Stopped squarely and easily
- Was a willing worker
- More obedient down the side rail

- More alert and attentive
- More pleasant and willing attitude
- Readily yielded to the rider's commands
- Lighter and more responsive to the rider
- Was a lower, flatter, smoother moving horse
- Was a lighter, softer traveling horse
- More extended and freer moving
- More definite two-beat trot
- More length and spring to stride
- Went more collected at the lope
- Engaged the hindquarters with greater drive and impulsion
- Moved in a collected manner
- Traveled straighter down the rail at a more desirable pace
- Looked straighter through the bridle
- Had more contact with the bit
- Carried his/her head more desirably
- More natural flex at the poll
- Carried his/her head in a more natural way
- More show ring presence
- More alert and attentive

Suggested Terms Used to Fault a Pleasure Horse

- Lacked style, type, disposition
- Lacked the style and movement of the ideal pleasure horse
- Was the least broke horse in the class
- Inconsistent throughout the class
- Required the most restraint from the rider
- Unresponsive to the rider
- Broke gait
- Hesitated when asked to back
- Had slow, rough transitions
- Seemed unpleasant
- Anticipated rider's aids
- Hard mouthed, fights the bit
- Poorly mannered about the head
- Rough in his/her way of going
- Lacked smoothness
- Lacked suppleness
- Had a short, choppy stride
- Lacked animation
- Lacked balance
- Heavy on the bit

- Heavy-fronted horse
- Showed the least ability

Figure 10 on Page 26 shows an example set of reasons for a Western Pleasure class.

Suggested Terms to Describe a Reining Horse

- Exhibited the most agility and control
- Simply got more done
- Exhibited more athletic ability and handle throughout the pattern
- A more suitable reiner, being more broke, accepting the rider's control without resistance
- Flowed through the pattern
- More accurate in his/her pattern
- Showed more finesse and control
- Fell deeper into the ground
- Dropped his hocks deeper into the ground
- Deeper, straighter slides
- Performed a more correct sliding stop
- Exhibited a more controlled and relaxed sliding stop
- Dropped his hindquarters deeper into the ground, while keeping his front legs relaxed, allowing him to execute a more correct sliding stop
- Used the ground more, stopping deeper and staying in the stop longer
- Drove out harder in the runs, stopped smoother, and slid farther
- Moved more freely into the rollback, driving out harder over the hocks
- Ran harder with less hesitation in the stops
- Came out of the rollback with more speed
- Ran harder and faster circles
- Ran flatter and smoother circles
- Showed more variation of size and speed in circles
- Greater contrast in speed and size of his figure eights
- Flowed through his circles
- Crisper and more direct lead changes
- More prompt and exact lead changes
- Simultaneous lead changes
- Turned faster in the spins with his front loose and low
- Kept a lower center of gravity in his fast spins
- Faster, flatter spins with her pivot foot firm to the ground
- Had more flexion of the hocks, maintaining a lower center of gravity while spinning
- Ran harder from rollback to rollback

- Performed a more correct 180-degree rollback
- Rolled back cleaner over the hocks
- Showed sharper, quicker pivots
- Backed more readily over his tracks
- Backed faster and with more ease
- Was more responsive to the slightest cue
- Settled easier
- More readily yielded to his rider's cues and aids
- Was quieter about the mouth and tail
- Showed more response to the rider

Suggested Terms Used to Fault a Reining Horse

- Lacked control, finesse, and style
- Showed to be under the least control by his rider
- Came out of his stops early
- Popped on his front end
- Was heavy on the front end
- Ran through the stops
- Anticipated in the runs
- Ran slow and with great resistance
- Dropped his shoulder, drifting in and out of the circles
- Lacked size and speed variation
- Shouldered out in each circle
- Was late in his changes of leads
- Changed leads early each time
- Lost her pivot foot, ending the spins far off center
- Backed out of the spins
- Came up and out of the spins too soon
- Was slow and awkward in his rollbacks
- Hung in his left/right rollback
- Pivoted over her front end
- Was hesitant to back
- Lacked a positive expression and willingness
- Required the most restraint

Figure 11 on Page 26 shows an example set of reasons for a Reining horse class.

Suggested Terms Used to Describe Western Riding

- Maintained a more consistent pace from start to finish
- Flashier mover
- Kept in frame as he maneuvered the line changes with ease
- Easiest, freest moving, most stylish
- Concurrent in his changes

- Fewer penalties
- More correct in the placement of his lead changes
- Changed more precisely in between the cones
- Loped over log with ease
- Calm, cool, and collected
- Unhurried in his changes, maintaining the same pace
- Natural
- Level headed
- Accurate, true, exact
- More pleasant in his attitude
- Showed less anticipation
- More forward in his changes
- More balanced in his changes
- Showed more pattern desirability
- Required less handling throughout the pattern
- Was simultaneous in both his line and crossing changes
- Smoother in his transitions

Suggested Terms Used to Fault Western Riding

- Anticipated the line changes
- Changed early
- Changed late
- Exhibited an unwilling attitude
- Exhibited less straightness in his body while changing
- Hesitated when jogging over log
- Split the log at the lope
- Hit the log at the lope
- Least responsive to the rider's cues
- Required the most cuing from the rider
- Resistant when asked to stop and back

Figure 12 on Page 27 shows an example set of reasons for a Western Riding class.

Suggested Terms Used to Describe Hunter Hack

- Stayed more evenly between the reins
- More relaxed and attentive in his approach to the first fence
- Maintained a more even pace down the line
- More direct in his approach to the first fence
- More correct down the line, as he did not change leads
- Jumped with more hindquarter impulsion
- Exhibited greater tuck to his front legs, with higher and more even knees
- More preferred in his frame when jumping
- Extended more into his hand gallop

- More relaxed at the halt
- Showed less hesitation prior to his takeoffs
- More tuck to his knees
- Remained straighter between the standards
- More balanced in his stride to and from fences
- Had more style over the fences
- Met the fence with less stride interruption
- Had more scope over the fences
- Was softer in his landing

Suggested Terms to Fault Hunter Hack

- Was faulted for a rub
- Was faulted for rapping the fence
- Was faulted for knocking down a rail on the first fence
- Changed leads between the fences
- Was crooked in his approach
- Increased pace when approaching the jumps
- Increased pace between jumps
- Chipped in on the second fence
- Took off long to the first fence
- Showed more separation at the knees
- Exhibited more twist of the hindquarters when jumping
- Less use of the hocks
- Less balance and control over the fences
- Uncontrolled at the hand gallop
- Hesitant to stop

Figure 13 on Page 27 shows an example set of reasons for a Hunter Hack class.

Suggested Terms Used to Describe Horsemanship/Equitation

- Gave a more complete picture of horse and rider working in unison
- Maintained confidence and control
- Showed a more elegant and correct posture
- Was a stronger, more capable, and confident rider
- Was quieter and deeper seated
- Maintained the proper vertical line from shoulder to heel at all gaits
- Maintained a horizontal line from bit to elbow
- Lighter, more effective hands
- Stronger, more effective leg with more angulation to the heel
- Easier and more fluid posting at the trot
- Was quieter with her hands and lower leg at the posting trot
- Stayed with her horse and sat transitions more smoothly

Suggested Terms Used to Fault Horsemanship/Equitation

- Was a sloppier rider with less control of her leg
- Carried his leg too far forward
- Was rough and unsteady with her hands
- Exhibited less balance and control
- Hung on her horse's mouth when posting
- Lacked control and confidence
- Turned her toes out too far
- Showed no control of her lower leg at the posting trot

Figure 14 on Page 27 shows an example set of reasons for a Western Horsemanship class.

Suggested Terms Used to Describe Pleasure Driving

- Worked straighter through the shafts
- Showed more changed of speed from park to road gait
- Moved out with more eagerness and impulsion into the road gait
- Was steadier and more responsive in the reverse
- Turned with more smoothness and efficiency in the corners
- Stopped with more control
- Backed willingly
- Moved at the park gait with more impulsion in the hock
- Moved more forward through the shoulder

Figure 15 on Page 28 shows an example set of reasons for a Pleasure Driving class.

Connective Terms

To distinguish your reasons and make them unique, it is helpful to use terms that are different from everyone else's and are as descriptive as possible. Following are lists of possible terms:

Grants

- I realize
- I allow
- I concede
- I recognize
- I fully realize
- I appreciate the fact
- I am aware
- I do respect
- Indeed
- I acknowledge
- I agree
- I noticed and admit

- I certainly credit
- It was also very apparent

Connective Terms

- In addition
- Moreover
- Besides this
- Also
- Furthermore
- Additionally
- Aside from this
- It was also very apparent
- Nevertheless
- However, at the same time

Action Words

- Exhibited
- Displayed
- Showed
- Demonstrated
- Performed
- Possessed
- Executed
- Presented
- Accomplished a greater degree of

Opening Pairs

- In reference to the middle pair
- Coming to the bottom pair
- Proceeding to
- Moving to
- Drawing your attention to
- In regards to
- In discussing the top pair, I favored
- In analyzing the top pair
- Focusing your attention on
- Continuing to the bottom pair
- In discussing the middle pair
- Finally
- Concerning the top pair
- In justifying my middle pair

Conducting a Horse Judging Contest

The horse judging competition is one of the most educational of the 4-H horse events. However, the educational value is directly influenced by the contest's success. The following is a list of guidelines for planning and conducting a successful horse judging event.

Facilities

If an indoor arena is available, make arrangements for its use. Rain or cold, windy weather will affect the contestant's vision, concentration, and ability to take notes. The facilities should have bleachers or an area that will permit contestants to easily view all performance classes, as well as an isolated area or series of rooms in which contestants can study notes and give reasons without distraction. The arena should be large enough to handle all of the classes, be adequately lighted, and have a public-address system. Space should be available for a registration/tabulation table and for trailer parking and unloading. Restrooms are necessary, and stall space may be required by some contest exhibitors.

Horses

The "Official Handbook of the Kentucky 4-H Horse Program" lists those classes which may be scheduled for a Kentucky 4-H Horse Judging contest. Once the number of conformation and performance classes is decided, the number of horses needed for the contest will be known. It is often helpful to select horses for conformation classes that can be used in performance classes. This will decrease the total number of horses needed to conduct the contest. If, for example, four conformation classes are scheduled, at least 16 horses will be needed for the contest. Ideally, five horses should be available for each class to select a four-horse class. This will give the official judges flexibility in selecting a more placeable and educational class. If a weanling, yearling, or 2-year-old conformation class is scheduled, these horses should be of the same age. Age, sex, and breed generally will have no bearing on performance classes.

Personnel

A horse judging contest requires the assistance of a number of individuals. Their roles and responsibilities are varied, but each is important to the contest's overall success. A handler or rider is needed for each horse in each conformation or performance class. Horses in conformation classes should be placed head to tail (profile) from left to right in numerical order (1 to 4) in a straight line, with one horse-length between. Handlers should remain conscious of the animals during each class period, keeping them alert and properly set up or parked out. Handlers should make their numbers visible to contestants and, when possible, remain out of the line of view of the contestants. Horses should be tracked in a straight line from the center of one group of assembled contestants to the center of the other group. Horses should be walked both ways and then trotted (or shown at an appropriate increase in speed, depending on breed) both ways. This will give each group a front and rear view of each horse at both the walk and the trot.

A group leader should be assigned to each group of contestants and should stay with that group from the start

of the first class period until the final class is finished. If reasons are to be given, a group leader should stay with the contestants until the reasons are finished. The group leader should be aware of the titles or numbers of all classes and which classes are reasons classes. Contestants should only be permitted to talk to their group leader during the contest, and any contestant found visiting with another should be reported by the group leader to the contest manager. Group leaders are responsible for keeping their contestants in a group at all times. Contestants should be kept at least 25 to 30 feet from the horses (except during close inspection) and moved from one class to the next as a group. The use of cones can help the contestants know how close to the horses they are allowed to stand. Group leaders are responsible for picking up the contestants' cards after each class.

One individual should be designated as the official contest timer and announcer. This individual should have a list of all classes, including those that are reasons classes. In addition, he or she should be responsible for the timing of each class.

A card runner is needed to pick up the cards from group leaders following each class and to deliver those cards to the tabulation volunteers. The card runner should also be responsible for periodically picking up cards with reasons scores on them from each reasons judge.

Several official contest judges are needed to put the conformation and performance classes together, to put the official placings and cuts on each class, and to listen to reasons. This may be a team effort between the judges, but it is important to have more than one official judge at a contest to give the contestants the best overall chance at placing the class correctly. Good sources for official contest judges are former horse judging team members, horse show judges familiar with reasons and their scoring, leaders or agents that have been judging team coaches, etc.

If time allows, schedule a critique of the classes by the official judges before giving the contest results. This will greatly add to the contest event's educational aspect.

In addition, the official contest judges should be aware of the importance of the proper assigning of "cuts" to the class placings. Each of the three cuts must be based upon the level of difficulty or the amount of difference that exists between two horses in a given pair. An extremely close placing, one which is difficult or in which not much difference exists between the two horses in the pair, should be assigned a relatively low (1 to 3 points) cut. An easier placing, or one in which more difference between the two horses is evident, should command a higher (4 to 5 points) cut or penalty for a wrong placing. If a large amount of difference exists, a higher (6 to 8 points) cut is in order. Cuts must have a numerical value of at least 1 with the total of the three cuts not exceeding 15. If the total of all three cuts is 14, the middle cut cannot be greater than 8.

Several individuals should be in charge of registration and tabulation. You should assign each contestant a number, especially in contests that have a large participation. That number should precede the contestant's name on the registration sheet and can be printed on each of the cards in the contestant's card packet. The number of cards that each contestant receives should be equal to the number of classes to be judged by the contestant. Using a number and letter system, the contestants can be identified as a team, such as 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D. This is an easy way to divide contestants into four equal groups and to ensure that no two team members judge in the same group.

Tabulation and Recording

Once all contestants have been properly registered, efforts can then be turned towards tabulation and recording. All tabulation sheets should have the class titles list in the appropriate columns on each sheet. Tabulation of placings can begin when the cards from the first class judged have been turned in along with the official placings and cuts.

There are three means of scoring a placing card. Several computer-based programs have been developed in the last few years. A computer tabulation program developed by the University of Kentucky and the North American International Livestock Exposition is one option. This is a DOS-based program used in scoring all types of judging contests. Another method is using the Hormel Computing Slide. Directions for its use are listed on the front of the slide. When the 24 possible scores have been computed, a key can be made by copying the scores on a regular placing card, which can be used to record a score for any placing card handed in on that class.

The third method of scoring a placing card is by long-hand. This process requires more time, and the figures should always be double-checked. However, this procedure is relatively simple. Check with your local Cooperative Extension Service office to see which method of tabulation is commonly used in your location.

The Danish Ribbon System

As a judge, you may be asked to assign Danish ribbons to all participants at a horse show. The Danish ribbon system is commonly used in youth events, such as 4-H horse shows. They are given in addition to and independent of placing ribbons.

In the Danish ribbon system, three ribbon colors exist and each represents a specific level of achievement. The use of the Danish ribbon system serves to recognize all participants. A blue, red, or white ribbon is awarded to every contestant exhibiting a horse, pony, or mule.

Judges will obviously be asked to rank the competitors in the traditional manner. The judge then must assign each exhibitor a Danish ribbon relative to his or her performance. Serious consideration should be used when choosing a Danish ribbon for a participant. Naturally, not

all contestants will be fortunate enough to place in every class. For instance, suppose the placing ribbon winners in a large English Plantation Pleasure class also earn a blue Danish ribbon. Other participants receiving a blue Danish ribbon will recognize their individual performance as high quality as well. The Danish ribbon system can also be used to subtly educate a showman. For example, a young contestant receives a blue Danish ribbon in a Western Pleasure class but only earns a red Danish ribbon in his respective horsemanship class. The youngster may realize he has a quality horse but must work to improve the manner in which he rides or maneuvers his mount.

For a more detailed description on how to use the Danish ribbon system, visit www.uky.edu/ag/4horse.

Figure 7. Aged Quarter Horse mares class.

Notes	
<p>1 Sorrel with sock -coat condition good -overall smallest mare -lacked balance, short steep shoulder, hip</p>	<p>3 Sorrel -balanced, neck trim -SS back-heavy muscling, stifle, gaskin, loin -small muscle = f.arm, gaskin</p>
<p>2 Bay -heavy muscled all over -balanced, level over croup -SSB -rope walked when traveling</p>	<p>4 Black with star -tallest in class -QH head -straightest traveling</p>

Figure 8. Example oral reasons from notes above.

Hello. My placing of this class of Aged Quarter Horse Mares was 3-2-4-1, with an obvious superior top horse in 3. Beginning with the top pair, I placed 3, the sorrel, over 2 as she was a nicer-balanced mare that exhibited a longer, trimmer neck that set in higher to the shoulder. She had a shorter, stronger back with a longer underline that resulted in a straighter, smoother, more efficient, ground-covering stride. She showed more breed character about the head, being more refined from eye to muzzle and having a shorter, neater ear and a more prominent jaw. I realize that 3 was a lighter-muscled mare in her forearm and gaskin.

Moving to the middle pair, it was 2, the bay, over 4. Two was a heavier-muscled mare, being more V-ed up in the chest and having a more prominent bulge to her inner and outer forearms and gaskins. She was a more propor-

tional mare, being leveler over her croup and shorter and stronger over her back. She was also longer in her underline as compared to her topline. I concede that 2 was the poorest traveling mare by rope-walking in both the front and rear.

In reference to the bottom pair, 4, the black, was placed over 1. She was a larger, heavier-muscled mare through her forearm and shoulder and stronger through her loin. From the hind view, four was wider and thicker through her stifle, quarter, and gaskin. She was the straightest, most correctly moving mare in the class at the walk and trot. I admit to you that 4 was thick in the throatlatch, which would not allow as much flexion at the poll.

I criticize 1 and place her on the bottom of the class because she was the smallest, lightest-muscled mare. She was lighter in her forearm and gaskin and light through the hip. 1 also lacked balance because she was straight in her shoulder and short and steep in the hip.

Figure 9. Reasons for a class of Saddlebred mares.

Hello. Today, I placed this class of Saddlebred mares 3-2-1-4, with a pair of well-balanced and typier mares on top.

In the top pair, I placed 3, the chestnut, over 2 because 3 was especially more structurally correct as indicated by a straighter front column of bone, with cannons coming more nearly from the center of the knees, more width between the hocks as viewed from the rear, and a more correctly sloping pastern. Furthermore, 3 had a longer, smoother typing neck, a shorter, stronger back, and a more level croup. She had the most refined head, showing more breed character. Also, 3 tracked truer and with more flexion of the knee and hock. I grant 2 was taller and showed more thickness and muscling through the stifle and more depth of hearthgirth, but she did not have the structural correctness as 3.

In the middle pair, I selected 2, the chestnut with two hind socks, over 1 as 2 was nicer balanced, showing a longer neck, a shorter back, and a longer hip. Further, 2 was more correct in the slope of her pasterns and shoulder. 2 stood on a straighter front column of bone and had more width to her chest. Also, 2 had longer, deeper tying muscle. I admit that 1 showed more volume of muscle and exhibited more total body capacity, but lacked the overall balance of 2.

In regards to the bottom pair, I favored 1, the bay, over 4. 1 was especially more refined and feminine in her head, cleaner in her throatlatch, longer in her neck and cleaner and flatter in her bone. Further, 1 was more structurally correct, showing more width between the hocks as viewed from the rear, having a straighter column of bone, being less splayfooted, and having a more correct slope to her pasterns. 1 tracked truer and with more grace and animation. Though 4 was a taller, heavier-muscled mare, I faulted her and left her last because she was coarse about

her head, thick in her throatlatch, and short in her neck. In addition, 4 tracked very narrow behind and paddled in front due to the fact that, when standing, she stood excessively pigeon-toed.

Figure 10. Reasons for a class of Western Pleasure.

Hello. My placings for this class of Western Pleasure today was 2-1-3-4, with the most athletic-moving horses topping the class.

In my initial pair, it was the bay stallion at the top because he showed the highest level of training and the greatest attitude to do the work. He gave a more pleasurable ride in terms of being quieter and calmer, going both ways of the arena while moving on a looser rein. 2 also had a desirable head carriage, carrying his head with his eyes more nearly level to his withers. Also, the bay was the softest jogging pleasure horse in the class, hitting the ground softer and lighter on all fours. Aside from this, he showed smoother transitions when going from the lope to the walk. I admit that 1 backed more willingly but lacked cadence during the jog to the left.

In reference to my middle pair, I selected the palomino gelding as he was a more willing worker, performing his duties in a more workmanlike manner and with more response to his rider. When going both ways of the arena at a lope, 1 picked up both leads with greater ease and quickness, showing less resistance and hesitation to his rider. Plus, the palomino backed more readily and smoothly, having more of a definite two-beat back. I concede that 3 exhibited greater flexion to his poll, with his eyes more nearly level to his withers, but lacked the attitude of the palomino.

Coming to the final pair, I favored the gray as she moved with more balance and symmetry in the walk, jog, and lope. She showed more cadence and a definite two-beat jog. The gray showed a more fluid movement at the lope, having greater collection while engaging the hindquarters with more drive and impulsion. Further, 3 had a more desirable head carriage, showing more flexion at the poll, holding his head nearer to the vertical, and looking straighter through the bridle with more alertness. I faulted the dun gelding and placed him last in this class for being uncollected at the lope both directions and consistently breaking gait at the jog and lope.

Figure 11. Reasons for a class of Reining horses.

Hello. In today's Reining class, I favored 4-3-2-1, with 4 displaying the highest level of training and the greatest attitude for the work in this class.

Beginning with the dark chestnut, I found that he ran the hardest, fastest pattern, had the smoothest, most level spins, and set his pivot foot more firmly underneath him, spinning more back over his hocks. In addition, he had the

longest, deepest stops and sank deeper into the ground. Although 4 did travel with his nose slightly up and out of position during his circles, he proved to be the most trained and willing to work in this class.

In reference to my middle pair, I favored the bay as he had the smoothest circles in this class and showed more size and speed variation in addition to changing his leads nearer to the center of the ring. He also performed more correct rollbacks by getting into the ground deeper and turning more over his tracks. 3 was also more responsive to his rider's aids, being more into the bit and working with lighter contact from his rider. Although 2 had faster spins, he lacked the collection and consistency of the bay horse.

Moving to the bottom, the gray was placed over the brown as he changed leads more quickly and correctly when asked in addition to performing faster, flatter spins. 2 also showed more harmony between horse and rider, performing in a more workmanlike manner. I admit that the brown was more consistent in the size of his circles but, overall, was the least-precise, least-trained reining horse in the class who was high in his stops and rough in his spins.

Figure 12. Reasons for a class of Western Riding.

Good morning. I liked this class of Western Riding 1-2-3-4. I started with 1, the bay, as he was more correct in his combination of pattern precision, consistency, and brokenness. In relation to 2, he was a flashier mover who kept in frame more as he maneuvered the line, with flatter and more forward changes that were more precise in their placement between the cones. I won't dispute the fact that 2 gave more to the bridle while backing; however 1 loped smoother and straighter over the log, being freer from hesitation.

Moving to my intermediate pair, I used 2 over 3, as he was cleaner over the log at the jog, maintaining a more consistent pace throughout the pattern with a quieter tail. Yes, 3 was a smoother-stopping individual. But even still, 2 was a higher-quality mover who was more correctly hinged in the shoulder and hip, thus having more suspension during his changes.

Dropping to my final pair, I used 3 over 4 simply because he was a more fundamentally correct individual who accumulated fewer penalty deductions, being freer from disobedience. He held his body straighter while changing leads, stayed more relaxed in the bridle and was ridden on a longer, more giving rein. The 4 in the class today received the most penalty points, thus falling to the bottom of today's class. In addition to having a 5-point deduction for kicking-out, he was held on a tight rein, behind the vertical, and crooked in his body while changing leads. When asked to stop, he came out of the bridle and was resistant.

Figure 13. Reasons for a class of Hunter Hack.

Good afternoon. Today, I placed this class of Hunter Hack 1-2-3-4, starting with the more athletic pair of horses.

In my opening pair, I started with the bay as he was the most correct in his combination of jumping ability, brokenness, and quality of motion. In relation to 2, he was more direct in his approach, jumping more evenly off both hind legs, with a rounder form and more arc to his spine. He duplicated this performance on his second fence, following which he had a smoother lead change and he extended his stride more in the hand gallop. He was more relaxed at the halt, displaying a greater ability to relax and recover when the rider dropped the reins. Although he did show a slight increase in speed prior to the first fence, he showed to have the most athletic ability.

Moving to my intermediate pair of individuals, who both jumped early for their second fence. I used 2 over 3 because he exhibited more self-carriage. He was more correctly hinged in his shoulder and hip. Consequently, he was flatter and more forward off his forehand and lifted his back more, enabling him to strike off into the canter with a deeper hock. He was more referred in his frame and moved with a softer foot-to-ground contact. Though 3 did extend more quickly into the hand gallop, 2 exhibited a more comfortable ride.

Dropping to my final pair, it was 3 over 4, as he was more relaxed in his courtesy circle, stayed more evenly between the reins, and was more correct down the line as he did not change leads. Yes, 4 was a flatter-kneed, longer-striding individual; however, he lacked brokenness, was inconsistent in his approaches, and swapped leads prior to his second fence. Furthermore, he was against the bridle and negative in his expression during his hand gallop.

Figure 14. Reasons for a class of Western Horsemanship.

Hello. I placed this Western Horsemanship class 1-3-2-4, finding 1 to give a more complete picture of horse and rider working together in unison.

My top individual, the girl riding the dun, displayed more elegant and correct posture, and maintained a picture of confidence and control. Furthermore, she was squarer in her shoulders, yet more relaxed in her back, allowing her to more easily absorb the concussion of the horse's motion. I grant that 3 had a more correct angulation to the heel, but it was 1 who maintained a smoother and more controlled ride throughout the class.

Moving to my middle pair, I placed 3 over 4 because the girl on the sorrel executed her aids with more discretion and was quieter and more stable in her hands. Furthermore, she had a more secure leg that maintained

closer contact with the sides of the horse, allowing her to be discreet with her aids. I readily admit that 4 sat deeper in the saddle; however, it was 3 who was smoother and more effective in cuing her horse and more proper in her hand movement.

Advancing to my final pair, I placed 4 over 2 because 4 carried more weight in her heel and sat transitions more smoothly. In addition, her horse backed the most correctly of any in the class. I grant that 2, the girl riding the bay, carried her head up more; however, it was 4 who had a steadier seat at the jog and lope. Realizing that 2 was squarer in her shoulders, I nonetheless must fault her because she did not display balance or control, turned her toes out too far, and pulled excessively at her horse's mouth at the jog and lope.

Figure 15. Reasons for a class of Pleasure Driving.

Quality of movement and manners were the criteria I used in placing the Pleasure Driving 3-4-1-2. I had an obvious top pair, starting with the sorrel horse that combined impulsion and fluency to a higher degree. I put the black horse on bottom, as he moved asymmetrically from his shoulder and bobbed his head.

In my top pair, I put 3, the long-strided sorrel, over 4, the gray, as 3 showed more energy and determination in the park gait with great length to each stride. He showed more change of speed from the park to the road gait, was

more supple in the poll, and was more horizontal across the neck. Furthermore, he was more elevated in the shoulders and had more lift and strength across the back, allowing for a more effortless way of going. I can appreciate that 4 was smoother in the transition down to the walk and used his shoulders more efficiently in the reverse; however, it was 3 that traveled in a longer, lower hunter frame, combining hindquarter impulsion and style to a higher degree.

For my middle pair, I easily had the gray over the bay since it was 4 that gave a more well-mannered performance. He was quieter in the mouth and tail, showed less resistance in the face, and worked straighter through the shafts. 4 was also more consistent in speed and frame. I realize that 1 had the ability to move out in the road gait with more drive from behind and less weight in the front, giving him a longer, flatter-kneed stride. But it was 4 that maintained a consistent way of going, showing more eagerness to work and willingness to respond.

To my final pair, it was the bay over 2, the black, since 1 exhibited a more two-beat, diagonal road and park gait, working with more symmetry from the shoulders, allowing him to maintain a steadier, more consistent head carriage. I grant that 2 did give a quieter, more relaxed performance and required less prompting for the backup, but he was short-strided in his front left and bobbed his head. His lack of cadence, collection, and quality of movement could simply merit him no higher placing today.
