

The Instructor Credential Lesson Levels Chart

The Instructor Credential Lesson Levels Chart endeavors to delineate specific goals of grooming, horsemanship, and riding for three levels of riders. Level 1 is for Beginner riders, Level 2 is for Novice riders, and Level 3 is for Intermediate riders. The chart is designed to provide parameters for progression from a rider's first experience with a horse to the ability to complete a course of 2'6" jumps. The document does not present methodology of teaching nor a timeline for progression. Each instructor must establish a style of teaching and evaluate when a student is ready to graduate to the next program. The actions in each column represent a set of abilities that are important cornerstones of knowledge in the education of equestrians. They are not comprehensive and are to be considered as fundamental skills for rider development. Note: judgement of the instructor needs to be used to determine appropriateness of each task/skill, taking into account rider, horse or pony, conditions, and situation.

Horsemanship

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Rules of the barn/general safety	Catch a horse in the field	Jog in hand for competition
Rider attire	Turn out a horse	Use a chain over the nose
Approach a horse in the stall	Jog a horse in hand	Load and unload a horse from the trailer with assistance
Safely move around a horse when in a stall or tied/cross tied	Safely graze and hand walk	Know basic conformation faults
Basic mannerisms (ears back, etc)	Face and leg markings	Longeing basics (assisted)
Halter/remove a halter from a horse	Know a variety of breeds and their uses	Develop anatomy knowledge
Lead a horse (start, stop, turn)	Know 20 horse parts	Identify good footing (and less than ideal footing)
Tie a quick release knot	Muck a stall without assistance	Strip and bed a stall, know proper bedding depth, types of bedding options
Basic horse colors		
Know 4 basic breeds		
Know 10 horse parts		
Muck a stall with assistance		

Grooming

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Identify and learn the purpose of each tool	Pick feet without assistance	Vacuum
Identify where/how to use each tool and	Give a bath with assistance	Mane pulling
Pick feet with assistance	Mane and tail care	Braiding and removing braids
Maintain good manners and cleanliness in barn	Blanketing and unblanketing	Clipping/trimming with assistance
	Use and adjust boots and bell boots	Properly apply polo wraps

Tack

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Know the equipment used when riding/tacking up	Tack/bridle horse without assistance -Know tack placement and fit -Know how to properly adjust the fit of a bridle and saddle	Basic bits -Snaffle vs curb, Pelham -Single joint vs double joint -Basics of severity in cannons and leverage -Identify common types of cheekpieces (dee, full, eggbut, loose ring)
Know how to clean tack and why it is important	-Put on breastplate, standing and running martingales	
Know the parts of the saddle	Know how to fasten/fit a curb chain	Ride in a bridle with two sets of reins
Know the parts of the bridle	Untack horse without assistance	Fit/adjust breastplate, standing and running martingale; understand function of each
Tack a horse with assistance	Perform a safety check of tack before ride	
Untack, cool out, and care for tack with assistance	Clean and condition/oil tack (take apart and reassemble bridle; strip leathers and irons, reattach)	

Horse Health and Nutrition

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>What is a farrier?</p> <p>What is a vet?</p> <p>Why does your horse need these professionals?</p> <p>Signs of discomfort, illness, and soundness</p>	<p>What and how to feed a horse</p> <p>When to call a vet</p> <p>Basic shoeing knowledge- lost shoe, sprung shoe, etc.</p> <p>Intro to deworming</p> <p>Intro to vaccinations</p> <p>Recognize a lame horse</p>	<p>TPR: what it is, how to take it, normal ranges</p> <p>Treat a minor wound</p> <p>Recognize stable vices</p> <p>Wrap legs with assistance</p> <p>Poultice and hoof packing with assistance</p> <p>Identify heat or swelling in legs</p> <p>Identify area of lameness or unsoundness</p> <p>Types of hay (grass, legume, mix) and basic understanding of forage needs</p> <p>Grains and oral supplements</p>

Riding

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Tighten the girth from the ground	Adjust stirrup length before the ride, mounted and unmounted	Be able to receive a leg up to mount and give a leg up to another rider
Mount and dismount from a mounting block with assistance	Mount and dismount from a mounting block without assistance	Understand qualities of correct position
Hold the reins, shorten the reins, and bridge the reins	Tighten the girth while mounted	Introduce more advanced rein and leg aids -Indirect rein, holding leg -Opening rein in coordination with leg
Proper placement of foot in stirrup	Know why warm-up and cool-down are important	-Introduce leg yield and lateral work
Start, stop, steer	Pick up/drop stirrups at a trot	Proper use of double reins.
Rein aids for a beginner rider: -Leading/opening rein -Two direct reins of opposition to slow/stop -Pulley rein for emergency -Inside rein and outside rein	Secure position at walk, trot, canter	Pick up/drop stirrups at a canter
Urging leg	Introduce sitting trot (with or without longe line)	Properly execute three speeds at trot and canter
Pick up/drop stirrups at a walk	Know leads at canter (visually)	"Feel" canter leads without looking
Basic arena figures (circle, serpentine, weave cones, change directions, walk over a pole)	More refined rein and leg aids: -Direct reins to turn -Displacing legs to shift the horse's hind end, -Leg aids to affect turns and lateral movements	Rising trot and canter without stirrups
Steer at the trot	Canter in group of 4-6 riders safely spaced	Consistent, light contact with precise transitions and consistent impulsion/reserve energy
Posting trot and diagonals	Properly execute two speeds of trot and canter	Proper crest release over jumps
Demonstrate two point at walk and trot	Understand mechanics of gaits -How a horse moves and corresponding head and neck gestures -Foot falls	Upward and downward transitions that develop timing of the rider's aids in coordination with the horse's gaits
Steer while in two point at walk and trot	Introduce passive leg to hand contact	Introduce turn on forehand and turn on haunches
Arena figures in posting trot and two point in good balance with steering	Trot in two point over a cross rail	Trot then canter a basic course of cross rails- uncomplicated lines with simple changes of lead

<p>Learn to canter</p> <p>Gradual transitions to develop relaxation, timing, and balance in the rider</p> <p>Trail ride/hack with instructor at walk, trot</p> <p>Trot course of poles</p> <p>Run up stirrups and why it is important</p> <p>Hold a stick, use a stick, drop a stick</p>	<p>Demonstrate releases (mane release) -Early two point on approach to a jump/pole grabbing mane</p> <p>Land and recover from a trot-in-canter-out combination or line of jumps</p> <p>Canter a course of poles</p> <p>Canter a single jump</p> <p>Simple change of lead, introduce flying change</p> <p>Understand when and how to use a spur</p> <p>One-step and two-step transitions, balanced and smooth</p>	<p>Introduce more advanced over fences questions at a low height such as bending lines or roll backs</p> <p>Trot and then canter courses at 2'</p> <p>Gymnastic work to further develop balance, strength, and timing over fences</p> <p>Complete course of jumps at 2'6" or higher</p> <p>Flying change of lead</p> <p>Developing different canter seats</p> <p>Hack independently</p> <p>Proper and appropriate use of spur</p>
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