

Glossary of Terms

Aids: Signals or cues by which the rider communicates his wishes to the horse. The "natural" aids include the voice, the legs, the hands, and weight. "Artificial" aids include the whip and spurs.

Bit: Metal mouthpiece on a bridle to which the reins attach

Body brush: Soft-bristled brush used to remove dust and light dirt

Bridle: Harness that fits around the horse's head while being ridden

Canter: Three beat faster gait of the horse in which the outside hind leg strikes the ground first, followed by the inside hind leg and outside foreleg simultaneously and finally the inside foreleg. Called the lope in western riding

Coggins: A blood test for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA). Horses which test positive may be required by the state of occupancy to be destroyed or permanently quarantined.

Coldblood: Draft horses who are very strong and often used to pull heavy loads

Colic: General term describing abdominal pain in the horse. Ranges in severity from mild to life-threatening. A veterinarian should always be consulted in case of suspected colic.

Crop or whip: Long thin hand-held device used to encourage a horse forward - also may be referred to as a "stick"

Curry comb: Hard rubber or metal comb used to remove sweat and stimulate skin

Dandy brush: Hard bristled brush used to remove dried mud and sweat

Disciplines: Equine sports that include: Dressage, Show Jumping, Eventing, Western, Mounted Games, Hunt Seat Equitation, Polo, and Polocrosse

Dressage: Training and education of the horse through prescribed movements and patterns on the flat (no jumping) from level to level

Equestrian: One who rides horses

Equine: Anything horse-related

Equitation: The position of the rider on the horse

Eventing: Equestrian competition held over one, two, or three days and including the disciplines of dressage, cross country, and show jumping

Farrier: Skilled professional who shoes horses

Fault: Penalties assessed for knocking a rail, traveling too slowly, refusing to jump a fence during competition

Frog: The sensitive, triangular area on the sole of the foot that acts as a shock absorber

Gallop: Four-beat gait of the horse, in which each foot touches the ground separately, as opposed to the canter, which is a three-beat gait

Gelding: Castrated male horse

Green: A horse that is in the early learning stage of his particular discipline is said to be green

Ground line: Pole placed on the ground in front of a fence to help the horse and/or rider judge the take-off point

Half halt: A tug on one rein or change in the rider's seat to communicate to the horse, "pay attention, please." Usually used before asking for a change of direction or gait, or other exercise or movement.

Halter: Head harness used in the barn to control or restrain a horse

Hand: How horses are measured—one hand equals 4 inches.

Helmet: Safety headwear that must meet certain standards to be worn

Hoof: The horse's foot. Round in shape. Made of hard human fingernail-like material.

Hoof pick: grooming tool used to keep the hoof free of debris

Horse Inspection (Jogs): When a horse is trotted in hand to make sure it is sound for competition

Hotblood: Term describing horses of Arabian or Thoroughbred blood, they are speedy and fine boned

Jump Cup: Attaches to the wing or standard of a jump to hold the rail in position

Junior: Any rider under the age of 18.

Lead: Term used to indicate the horse's leading leg in canter i.e. "right lead canter" or "left lead canter"

Mare: Female horse aged four and over

Mounted Games: Games on horseback that help improve balance and confidence in a rider

Oxer: Single fence consisting of two elements which make a spread jump

Pace: The speed and way of going of the horse gait

Pony: A small horse, standing 14.2 hands or less. Historically in England, all mounts ridden by children, regardless of height.

Refusal: When a horse intentionally avoids jumping a particular obstacle when asked

Saddle: Tack on which the rider sits on the back of a horse

Show Jumping: Riding competition showing speed and agility over technically difficult jumps that easily fall down

Spur: Pointed device attached to a rider's boot heel and used to cue a horse

Stallion: An intact male horse often used for breeding purposes

Standard: The upright portion of a jump used to create height

Stride: The step of the horse. Often used as a system of measurement between 2 jumps.

Tack: Term includes saddle, bridle, and other horse equipment

Time Faults: Incurred when the rider uses too much time between the start and stop. Usually 1 penalty point per second over the allowed time.

Trot: Moderate-speed gait in which the horse moves from one diagonal pair of legs to the other, with a period of suspension in between

Vaulting: Equestrian sport involving gymnastic exercises done on the back of a moving horse

Vertical: Jump with poles or planks placed one directly above another with no width

Warmblood: In general terms, a half-bred or part-bred horse, the result of an Arabian or Thoroughbred cross with other breeds. Also, one of a number of specific breeds of horse which were developed by crossing hotblood and coldblood horses to produce a more refined, but athletically strong and capable horse.