



HORSEMANSHIP

Assessment

LEVELS 1 to 3



CANADA
4-H Alberta

The 4-H Motto

“Learn To Do By Doing”

The 4-H Pledge

I pledge:

My **head** to clearer thinking,

My **heart** to greater loyalty,

My **hands** to larger service,

My **health** to better living,

For my club, my community,

my country, and my world.

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HORSEMANSHIP ASSESSMENT: INTRODUCTION

The assessment tools you are about to work through with your leader will give you a better idea of where you are needing to work with your horse for the project year. Regardless of your age and experience, you should work through these tools from the start. New members and experienced riders alike should make certain that all the skills listed have been mastered.

The levels have been set up to ensure safety for the horse and rider and to build a strong foundation for your future in riding, wherever it may take you. One of the project goals is to ensure riders are safe and effective in groundwork and riding skills as well as knowledge of their horse and equipment used. Your love for horses and the skills you gain through your project work will be of great benefit to you for your whole life.

How to use your Assessment Checklists

Keep your checklists up-to-date. Review each level with your leader to determine which skills you have already mastered and highlight the ones you are working on. Keep going back and reviewing the lists. This will be a useful tool to move you to the next level of Horsemanship. Happy riding!

LEVEL ONE: **DISMOUNTED SKILLS**

Levels 1 – 3 of the horse program are mandatory for all horse members before they can branch out to any of the other projects offered.

- Catch and halter your horse safely. Explain how a halter should fit and why.

- Lead your horse safely at a walk, turn right, stop and back up.

- Lead around in a large circle (20 m) using at least 4 markers.

- Lead your horse across 2 diagonal lines of the riding area.

- Demonstrate and explain how and where to tie your horse using a quick release knot.

- Demonstrate how your horse moves sideways away from pressure by cueing with your hand while the horse is tied.

- Identify five grooming tools and explain their use.

- Demonstrate how to use a hoof pick correctly by cleaning one of your horse's feet (someone else may hold the foot).

- Give three safety rules to remember while riding your horse, three safety rules to remember when working with your horse on the ground and two dress rules.

- What is your horse's first reaction when he is frightened? If he is tied, what is he likely to do? If this happens what should you do?

- Describe three signs that your horse might show if he is going to bite or kick.

- Describe three signs that a horse might show if he was going to bolt or buck.
- Explain what you would do if your horse ran away while you were riding.
- Explain what you would do if someone else's horse ran away while you were riding.
- Describe where you keep your horse.
- What does your horse eat?
- Describe three signs that show a horse is healthy.
- What breed and colour is your horse? What markings does he have?
- Demonstrate with your own hands and feet the footfall sequence of a horse at the walk and jog/trot.
- Unsaddle and Unbridle your horse. (Smaller members should be able to explain correct methods even if they are not able to do it entirely.)
- Demonstrate how to correctly put your tack away after riding.

Evaluator's signature

Date

LEVEL ONE: MOUNTED SKILLS

To assess the rider levels: Rider levels are set up on a progressive format. Each session should include a warm-up with each lesson and a review of previously taught skills so both rider and horse can progress. At every skill taught, reinforce basic position, balance, suppleness, focus, timing and appropriate aids. We suggest that the individual skills be assessed first and only those who are successful at these skills be invited to ride the pattern. At all rider levels, the skills may be performed with two hands on the reins unless there is a reference to neck reining. Our preference would be that snaffle bits be used, but because safety is our number one concern, any humane bit may be used or refer to the standard set by your regional committee. To help the riders with pattern accuracy, please place $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ markers down the sides of the riding area and one at the middle of each end.

Warm-up:

- a) Before mounting, with your hand either on the cheek piece of the bridle, or using the rein, quietly **flex** your horse's neck by bringing his nose to 3 o'clock and then to 9 o'clock.
- b) Demonstrate a **tack check**.
- c) **Mount** correctly while explaining what each hand must do (the horse may be held and a mounting block may be used).

While sitting in the saddle, demonstrate how and where to hold the **reins** with two hands.

Explain and demonstrate correct **basic position**, correct **balance** and **focus**.

Do 3 arm and 3 leg **exercises** while your horse is standing still and then while moving including two point.

At a halt, demonstrate:

- a) How to establish correct **contact** on horse's mouth.
- b) Hand and leg aids used to **turn** your horse with an **open rein**.
- c) Use that **open rein** to **flex** his neck and turn his head to 3 and 9 o'clock.

At a walk, ride to at least 4 markers zig-zagging back and forth across the arena **turning** first one way and then the other. An **open rein** must be used at each turn and both of the rider's legs will be doing their job.

- Demonstrate how to do an **emergency stop** using an **open rein** to pull the horse's nose towards his ribs and circling until the horse stops.
- Ride a **circle** around at least 4 markers, demonstrating **basic position, balance, correct focus** and that you are not over-gripping with your hands or legs.
- Demonstrate at least 10 steps of **jog/trot** without breaking stride, bolting or over-gripping with your hands and legs. Western riders may jog sitting or do a rising trot - English riders should post trot. Explain how many **beats** there are in this gait and what you can do to keep from bouncing.
- Ride all the way around the arena at a walk in both directions.
- Explain the 3 aids (weight, voice and hands – 2 direct reins) that are used to stop your horse. Demonstrate a **stop** using all 3 aids. Explain and demonstrate what you would do if your horse did not stop.
- Explain and demonstrate how to use the correct aids (position, hands and legs) to **back** your horse 2 steps.
- While riding in a small group (4 or less) demonstrate and explain how to **keep** a **safe distance** from other horses and how to **pass** safely.
- Ride the **pattern**. Start the pattern with a **tack check** and correct **mount**. You may use a mounting block and a helper to hold your horse.
- Safely **dismount** your horse. You must not use a mounting block but a helper may hold your horse. What is the left foot safety feature that you must remember? What is your left hand doing? Your right? On which side of the horse should your head be?

Evaluator's signature

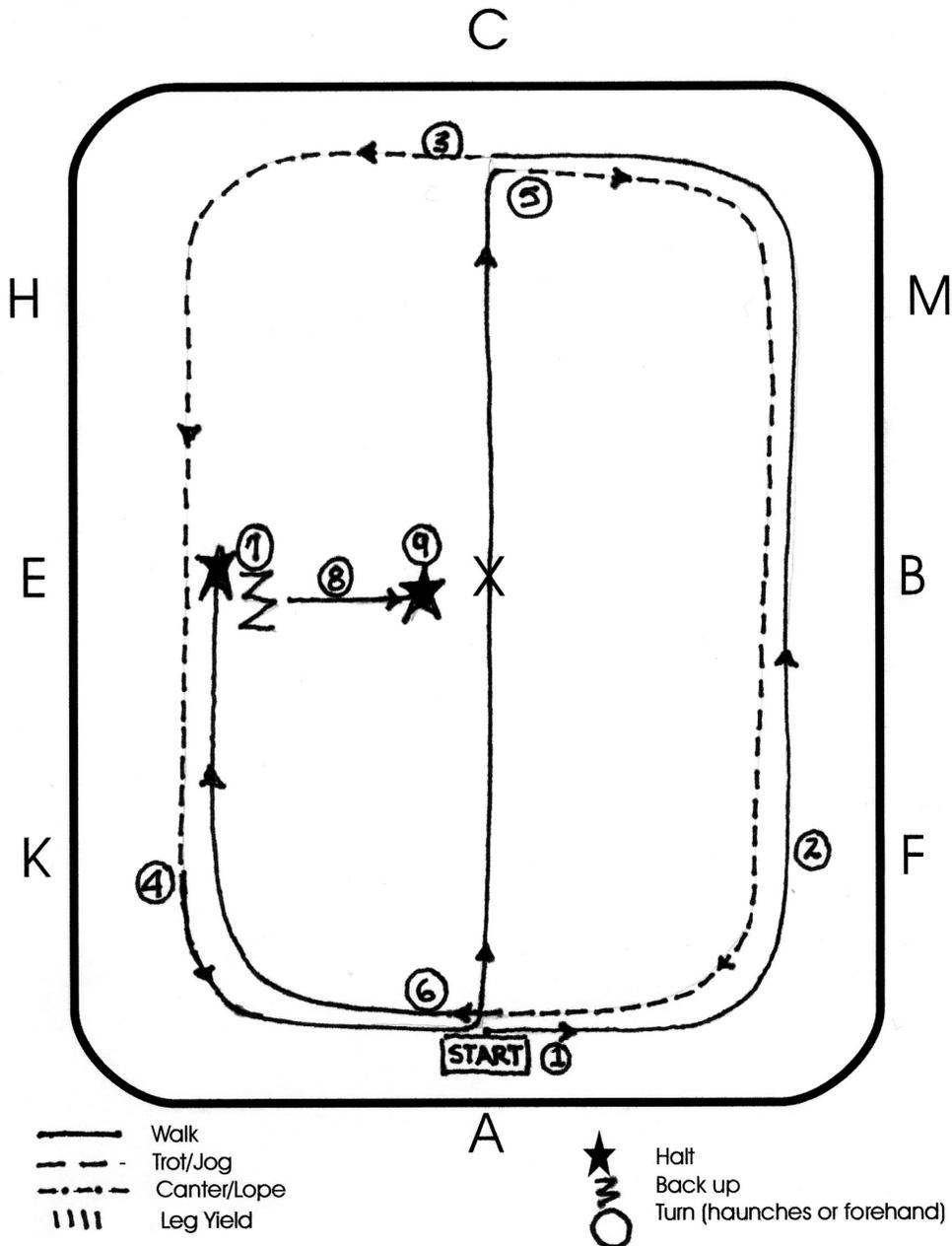
Date

LEVEL ONE: PATTERN 1

Rider may have a reader for all patterns.

1. Mount near A (block and help optional).
2. Walk A-F-B-M-C.
3. Jog/trot C-H-E-K.
4. Walk K-A-X-C.
5. Jog/trot C-M-B-F-A.
6. Walk A-K-E.
7. Halt at E, back at least 2 steps.
8. Turn and walk toward X.
9. Halt, dismount and lead out.

Level - One: It is not necessary to use the whole arena. Modify the size of the riding area to maximize safety!



LEVEL TWO: **DISMOUNTED SKILLS**

- Explain, demonstrate and thoroughly groom your horse including cleaning at least two feet (Someone else may hold the feet).
- Demonstrate leading at the walk, trot, right turn, emergency left turn, halt and more fluid back up.
- Demonstrate how your horse moves sideways away from pressure by cueing with your hand while you are holding him.
- Identify at least six external parts of the horse.
- Explain where a horse's blind spots are and why it is important to know this.
- Show how to measure the height and weight of your horse.
- Demonstrate how to take your horse's heart rate and respiration rate and know what is normal.
- Describe three signs that indicate a horse is unhealthy.
- Explain how much and how often you feed your horse each day.
- Explain four feeding rules.
- Explain how a horse would use his body language to show that he is happy, angry, nervous and curious. Give two clues for each emotion.
- Describe three signs that other horses in your group may show if they are going to buck, bite, bolt or kick.
- Why does your horse want to return to the group?
- Identify any five colours and five markings that a horse may have.
- Name five breeds of horses.
- List three ways to keep your barn or pasture safe.

- List three things your horse's pen or pasture should have in it.
- Demonstrate with your own hands and feet the footfall sequence of the walk, jog/trot, lope/canter and back.
- Saddle and Bridle your horse. (Smaller members should be able to explain correct methods even if they are not able to do it entirely and may need some help).
- Identify five parts of the saddle and three parts of the bridle.
- While watching a horse being trotted, identify which diagonal the rider is on.
- While watching a horse being ridden at a lope/canter, recognize which lead the horse is on.
- Describe the cues you would give your horse to ask him to lope. Also describe the cues you would give to ask for the correct lead.

Evaluator's signature

Date

LEVEL TWO: MOUNTED SKILLS

To assess the rider levels: Before you can assess, we must make sure that we are using a progressive format in lesson planning. That means the riding instructor should include a warm-up with each lesson and a review of previously taught skills so both rider and horse can progress. At every skill taught, we need to reinforce basic position, balance, suppleness, focus, timing and appropriate aids. We suggest that the individual skills be assessed first and only those who are successful at these skills be invited to ride the pattern. At all rider levels, the skills may be performed with two hands on the reins unless there is a reference to neck reining. Our preference would be that snaffle bits be used, but because safety is our number one concern, any humane bit may be used or refer to the standard set by your regional committee. To help the riders with pattern accuracy, please place $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ markers down the sides of the riding area and one at the middle of each end.

- Warm-up** - While standing still, **flex** your horse's neck to turn his nose to 11, 10 and 9 o'clock and then 1, 2, and 3 o'clock. Do dismounted, then **mount** correctly and repeat the exercise.
- Do 3 arm and 3 leg **exercises** at a walk. Explain what the **2 point** position is. Demonstrate at least 6 steps of walking in a 2 point position (basic position with your seat raised off the saddle and your heels down).
- Show how you would use an **open rein** to circle down to an **emergency stop**. Show how you can use the same exercise without stopping to get your horse to follow his nose and give to the bit.
- Explain what a **direct rein** is. Use it to **demonstrate 3 turns** in each direction at arena markers at a walk and jog/trot. Explain what each of your hands and legs are doing.
- Explain what your horse should do if you apply 2 **direct reins**. What are the 3 aids to produce the **stop**. Demonstrate the aids in the correct order 3 times.
- Walk your horse forward 4 steps, **stop** using the correct aids, hesitate and **back** up 4 steps.
- Ride** the center **line (A-C)** and both diagonal lines of the arena at the walk and jog/trot. Try not to let you or your horse lean at either end of the diagonal lines.

- Ride a small (10 m) **circle** marked with cones at a walk, then a larger (20 m) circle marked with cones at a jog/trot. In both circles the horse's nose should be tipped slightly to the inside (11 and 1 o'clock). Go both directions. You can use an open or direct rein aid or both.
- Demonstrate a **jog/trot** all the way around the arena without clinging to your horse, breaking gait or bolting. Riders choosing to **post** should be rising on the correct **diagonal** and riders choosing to **sit** should demonstrate the **2 beat rhythm** by exaggerating the motion of their hips for at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of the ring.
- Explain what body parts are used to **post**. Explain why we post. Sit trot from marker 1 to marker 2 or 3 in a circle, then start to rise trot. Rise trot all the way around the circle. Do this 3 times in each direction. English riders should be on the **correct diagonal**. Western riders are encouraged to be.
- What is the rhythm of the **lope/canter**? What are the aids to lope/canter? Demonstrate a lope/canter for at least ten strides in each direction. Correct leads are encouraged but not required.
- Move from a **walk** to a **jog/trot** to a **lope/canter**, back to a jog/trot and then a walk in both directions of the arena. The rider should appear relaxed and comfortable. Do this as an individual and in a group.
- Demonstrate how to **safely move** to another area of the arena to **avoid crowding**.
- Show that you can **control** your horse by halting as the rest of the group rides on and then ride on while the rest of the group stops. Be prepared to do an **emergency stop** if your horse will not stand still.
- Ride the attached **pattern**. Include a **tack check**, correct **mount** and correct **dismount**. A mounting block (when mounting) or helper to hold your horse (when mounting or dismounting) may be used.

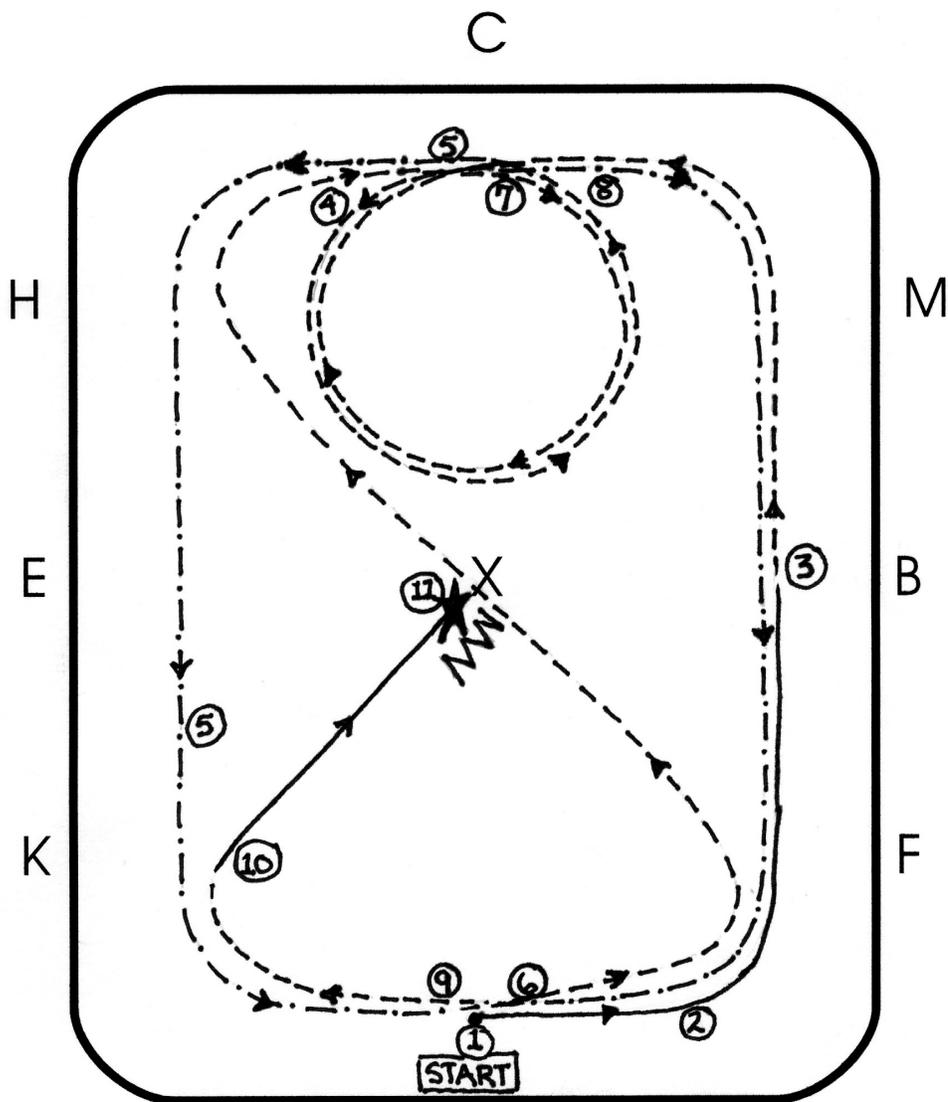
Evaluator's signature

Date

LEVEL TWO: PATTERN 2

Rider may have a reader for all patterns.

1. Mount near A.
2. Walk A-F-B.
3. Jog/trot B-M-C.
4. At C, jog/trot a large circle (20 m).
5. At C, lope/canter C-H-E-K-A.
6. At A, jog/trot A-F-X-H-C.
7. At C jog/trot a large circle.
8. At C lope/canter C-M-B-F-A.
9. At A jog/trot to K.
10. At K, walk to X.
11. Halt at X, back at least 4 steps.
Dismount and lead out.



- Walk
- - - Trot/Jog
- · - · - Canter/Lope
- ||||| Leg Yield

- ★ Halt
- Ⓜ Back up
- Turn (haunches or forehand)

LEVEL THREE: **DISMOUNTED SKILLS**

- Demonstrate where to stand when holding your horse when someone else is working with it (de-worming, hoof trim). Explain safety for yourself AND the other person (farrier, vet).
- Demonstrate how to trot out, square and pose for conformation analysis or vet inspection.
- Demonstrate how to pick up and clean all four feet of your horse (smaller members may have some assistance).
- Explain and demonstrate extra safety precautions you take while cleaning your horse's hind feet.
- Explain basic foot care and give three signs that your horse needs his hooves trimmed.
- Explain how to clip a bridle path on a quiet horse.
- Identify all the parts of the horse's body and feet.
- Identify three horses in your group by colour and markings.
- Explain and demonstrate how to take the horse's temperature, test for dehydration, and capillary refill and know what is normal.
- Explain what you do to prevent and control parasites in your horse.
- Describe three signs of a wormy horse.
- Name three things that determine what your horse needs to eat (feed by need).
- Describe three feeding problems that could make your horse sick.
- Identify and describe good quality hay and poor quality hay.
- How does a horse's body language show that he is herd bound, claustrophobic, or sour? Give two clues for each.

- Explain how horses work out the pecking order and how you can tell which one is the boss in the group.
- Name five things that would make your barn or pasture unsafe.
- If a pasture-kept horse must be stalled, name three things you could do to make it comfortable and safe.
- If a horse is kept in a stall, describe and demonstrate how to clean a stall. (not strip it).
- Demonstrate with your own hands and feet the footfall sequence of the walk, jog/trot, lope/canter, gallop and back.
- Identify all the parts of a saddle and bridle.
- Explain and demonstrate the proper cleaning and care of tack.
- Describe a snaffle bit and how it works and when to use it. Describe a leverage bit, how it works and when to use it.

Evaluator's signature

Date

LEVEL THREE: MOUNTED SKILLS

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- Warm-up:** a) Explain how you know that your stirrups are correctly adjusted. b) At the walk or jog/trot demonstrate how you could **regain** your horse's attention by riding at least 3 tiny circles with an **open rein** and stopping your horse with his head at both 3 and 9 o'clock. Explain how you know when you've got his attention back. Remember to use correct **body position, balance, suppleness, focus** and **quiet hands**.
- Demonstrate your ability to follow markers and **ride a circle** and a straight **line** without stirrups at a walk and at a jog/trot. Demonstrate the two beat **rhythm** of the jog/trot with your hand or hips.
- Using one end of the arena, jog/sit trot a slower smaller **circle**, then rise trot a larger longer strided circle. Both circles start and end at the same spot (A or C). The rider should be on the **correct diagonal**. Go both ways.
- Explain the aids for upward and downward **transitions**. By using specific markers on the rail, move from a walk to a jog/trot, then to a lope/canter, back to a trot/jog, and then a walk. Go both ways.
- Review the **lope/canter** aids. At a specific marker on the rail or on the circle, pick up a lope/canter from the jog/sit trot. As soon as possible, tell the evaluator whether you are on the **correct lead**. Do 3 times in each direction.

- Explain and demonstrate:
- a) A **rising trot** showing **correct diagonals** in each direction. Jog/sit trot to a specific marker on the rail or circle and pick up and hold the diagonal for at least 3 strides. If incorrect, sit for at least 10 strides before trying again. Do 3 times in each direction.
 - b) How to **change diagonals** 3 times to the left and 3 times to the right. Emphasis should be on feeling the diagonal (accuracy), not speed in changing.
- Rein effects:**
- a) Explain and demonstrate one instance in which the **direct rein** cannot be effective unless we use a support rein.
 - b) Explain and demonstrate how we can move or block our horse's shoulders by using a **rein of opposition**. Include what both hands and both legs are doing in your explanation.
- Explain and demonstrate how to **bend** your horse at a walk and jog/trot on a circle. The evaluator will watch to see you use a **direct rein** and **support rein**, and correct **leg aids**. If you are having trouble, show how a rein of opposition will help.
- Define a **leg yield**. Explain the aids and demonstrate how to do a leg yield of at least 3 strides in each direction. The wall may be used as an aid. Include what both hands and both legs are doing in your explanation.
- Explain what a **figure 8** looks like. Explain and demonstrate what **aids** you will use to ride a figure 8 at a walk and a jog/trot. You may use at least 8 markers to help you ride the correct shape.
- Lope/canter** all the way around the arena in both directions. **Basic position, balance, suppleness, quiet hands, focus and rhythm** are necessary. If you are on the wrong lead, show the evaluator that you know by breaking back to a jog/trot and trying again.
- Ride at least 2 large **circles** demonstrating control and accuracy in keeping the circle round. Include all 3 gaits using only 2 markers (12 and 6 o'clock). Go both ways.

- Zigzag back and forth across the arena making at least 6 **turns** with an **indirect rein** (reins in 2 hands). What is the job of the hand not holding the indirect rein? Tell the evaluator if your horse's nose is correctly tipped toward each turn. Western riders will repeat using correct **neck reining** techniques (1 hand).

- Walk your horse forward 6 steps, **stop** using the 3 aids in the correct order, hesitate, try to flex your horse at the poll and jaw, then **back** your horse at least 6 steps in a straight line.

- Define a **turn on the forehand**. Explain the aids and demonstrate at least 2 hind crossovers in each direction. The wall may be used as an aid.

- Demonstrate how to **pass** another horse that you meet **head on**.

- Ride in a group at all three gaits showing **control** and **safe spacing**.

- Ride the **pattern** including a **tack check**, and a proper **mount** and **dismount**.

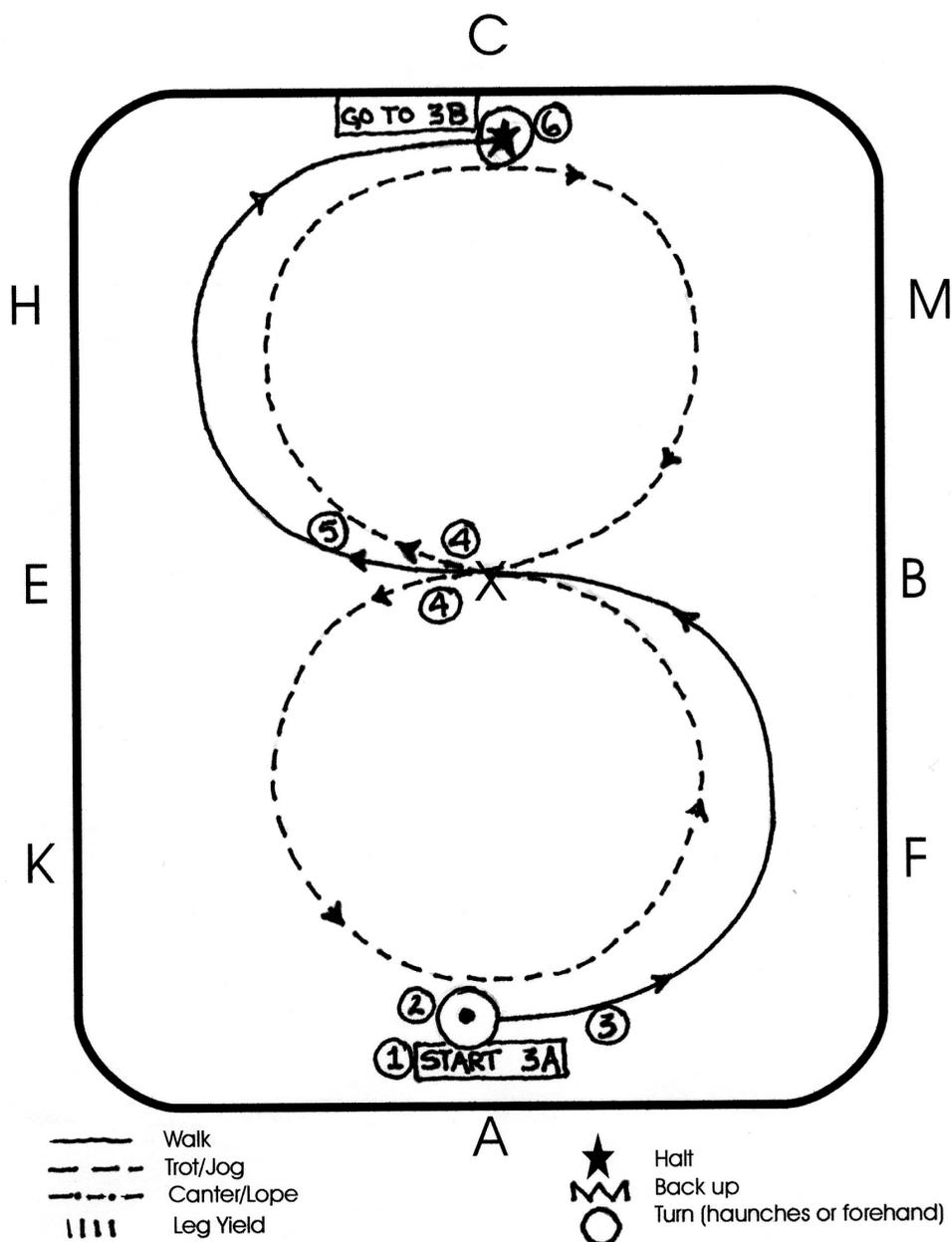
Evaluator's signature

Date

LEVEL THREE: PATTERN 3A

This pattern is broken down into three parts for easier reading, but is intended to be read as one pattern for evaluation. Rider may have a reader for all patterns. All long patterns are intended to be ridden with two hands regardless of bit type.

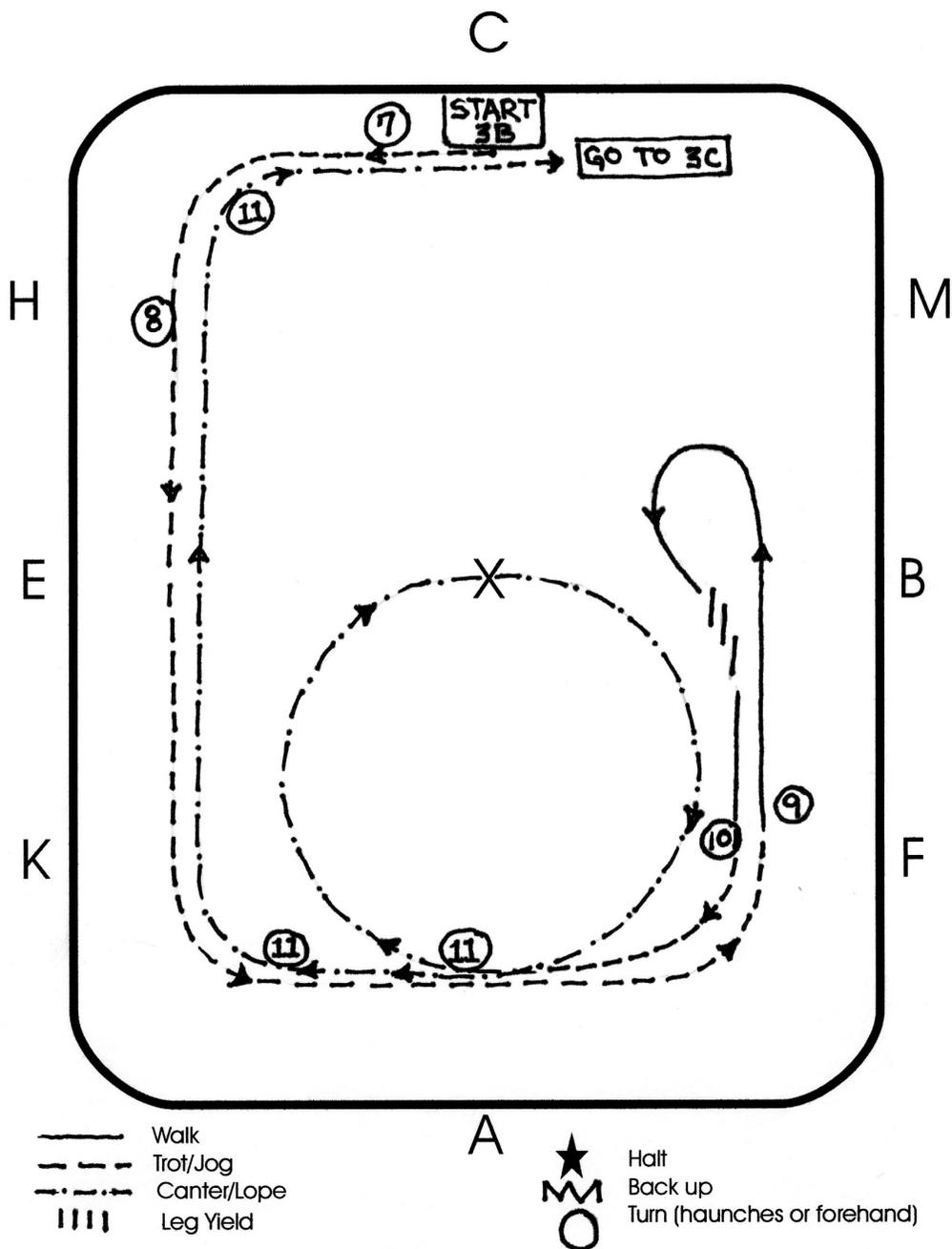
1. Mount correctly near A facing K.
2. 90° right turn on forehand (pivot on left front). Hesitate, repeat 90° turn in same direction.
3. Walk a large half circle to X.
4. At X, jog/trot a figure 8 starting on the right circle, keeping X in one spot and both circles equal size.
5. From X walk a large half circle to C.
6. Halt. 90° turn on forehand left (right leg). Hesitate, repeat 90° turn in same direction. *Continue on pattern 3B*



LEVEL THREE: PATTERN 3B

Rider may have a reader for all patterns. All long patterns are intended to be ridden with two hands regardless of bit type.

7. Walk no more than 4 steps, then jog/sit trot C to H.
8. Rise trot H-E-K-A-F.
9. At F walk to B, start walking a reverse and leg yield back toward F (2-3 strides).
10. Jog/sit trot F-A.
11. At A lope/canter a large circle and continue lope/canter A-K-E-H-C.
Continue on pattern 3C.



LEVEL THREE: PATTERN 3C

Rider may have a reader for all patterns. All long patterns are intended to be ridden with two hands regardless of bit type.

12. At C, jog/trot to M.
13. At M, walk to B then walk a reverse leg and yield back toward M for two or three strides.
14. Jog/sit trot M to C.
15. At C, lope/canter a large circle and continue lope/canter C-H-E-K-A.
16. Jog/trot A to F. Walk F-B-X.
17. Halt at X. Back at least 6 steps. Dismount correctly, lead out. End of Pattern 3.

