



HorseSense Riding Academy

A Progression of Horsemanship Skills

~ All riding requirements must be met with the student demonstrating a safe, basic balanced position: heels down, eyes up, quiet hands, and a line running from the head through the shoulder and hip to the heel. ~

Rising Riders Level - Rainbow

The Rainbow Level is an introductory level for young riders aged 4 through 7, who are not yet able to ride and care for a pony independently. Rainbow Level riders should always practice their skills with the supervision and assistance of an instructor!

- I take regular lessons - at least once a month - with a knowledgeable instructor.
- I always wear boots and an ASTM-SEI approved helmet when I am working around horses. I can put on my helmet myself and show you how it fits correctly.
- I can tell you how to dress safely for riding.
- I can show you how to correctly approach a pony, and how to move around a pony safely - including walking around behind.
- I can tell you why it is important to cool out my pony after hard work, and help take care of him after a ride.
- I can name at least ten parts of the pony, and at least three grooming tools.
- I can feed a treat to a quiet pony safely. I know why it can be dangerous to feed a pony too many treats, and always ask permission.
- I have filled out the "My Pony" worksheet with the name, color, markings, height, and breed of the pony I usually ride. It is okay if my instructor or another experienced horseperson helps me to find this information and write it down.
- I have helped an experienced horseperson clean out a stall. I know why it is important to clean out a pony's stall and water buckets every day.
- I can help to do a safety check on my tack and pony before I ride. I can pull down the stirrups, put the reins over my pony's head, and help check the girth.
- I can mount and dismount correctly and safely. Even if I have to use the mounting block, or have my instructor give me a leg up, I know it is important to get on and off a pony carefully.
- I can demonstrate a basic balanced position while my pony is walking and standing still. I know that a bad position is dangerous for me and uncomfortable for my pony, so I always work hard to keep my eyes up, heels down, and "building blocks" in place!
- I can tell you why you have to groom a pony and pick out his feet before every ride.
- I can help my instructor or an older, more experienced rider prepare for a ride. I help with the grooming, cleaning hooves, and putting on the saddle and bridle. When I am a little bit bigger, I will be able to tack up a pony without any help.
- I can show you the basic parts of a saddle and bridle, such as the bit, reins, stirrups and girth.
- I can lead a pony safely, both with a halter and lead rope and with the bridle reins.
- I can pick up the reins and hold them correctly, at a suitable length.
- I can perform basic stretches and warm-up exercises at the walk, on the leadline. (This means someone is holding onto my pony to help me steer him.)
- I can go Around the World.
- I can demonstrate how I use my aids (my seat, legs, hands and voice) to ask my pony to walk, halt, and turn.
- I can walk once all the way around the arena without a leadline.
- I can ride in a balanced two-point position at the halt and the walk.
- I can walk my pony over ground poles, showing a good jumping position, keeping my eyes up and riding straight over the middle of each pole.
- I can ride the trot on the leadline. I can ride both a sitting trot and a posting trot, holding on to the saddle if necessary. I can keep up a steady rhythm at the posting trot, so it is comfortable for both me and my pony.

Level One - Red

- Brush, pick hooves, saddle and bridle, with assistance only if necessary. Show awareness of basic horse safety techniques.
- Mount and dismount independently (with mounting block if needed).
- Perform an emergency dismount at the halt and walk.
- Demonstrate a pulley rein and a safety seat.
- Halt by disengaging pony's hips ("moving the tail") from walk, once on each rein.
- Perform warm-up stretches independently.
- Shorten and lengthen reins correctly.
- Drop stirrups and pick up again, without looking down, at the halt.
- Ride a round circle at the walk in both directions.
- Demonstrate three ways to change direction.
- Perform walk-halt transitions, maintaining balanced position.
- Ride in 2-point at the walk and over poles.
- Ride on the rail at a posting trot, once around in each direction.

Level Two - Yellow

- Tack and untack independently, in less than twenty minutes.
- Adjust stirrups and girth while mounted.
- Perform an emergency dismount at the trot.
- Halt by disengaging pony's hips from trot, once on each rein.
- Drop stirrups and pick up again, without looking down, at the walk.
- Ride a round circle, figure-8, and serpentine at the walk and trot.
- Ride on the rail and through changes of direction on the correct diagonal.
- Ride posting and sitting trot without stirrups, once around arena.
- Ride at the trot on the longe without stirrups and reins.
- Ride 7-7-7 exercise both along rail, in control, and on longe without reins.
- Ride smooth walk-trot transitions, maintaining balanced position.
- Ride USDF Intro Test A or B, showing knowledge of elementary dressage terms and figures.
- Ride in 2-point at the trot on the flat and over ground poles.

Level Three - Green

- Catch pony, tack and untack independently in less than fifteen minutes.
- Reinback three steps.
- Drop stirrups and pick up again, without looking down, at the trot.
- Rate pony's speed at the walk and trot.
- Ride at the trot for five minutes without stirrups, alternating posting and sitting.
- Ride at the canter on the rail in both directions, with an awareness of leads.
- Ride a large circle at the canter.
- Ride a figure-8 at the canter, demonstrating a simple change of lead through the trot.
- Ride in 2-point at the canter, on the flat and over a single ground pole.
- Ride ground pole course at the trot with correct circles at the start and finish, correct diagonals.
- Trot over a grid of trot poles with reins knotted and arms outstretched.
- Ride over trot pole grid, followed by small crossrail.
- Ride bareback comfortably at the walk and trot, without gripping with hands or knees.

Level Four - Blue

- Know and demonstrate four exercises that can be used to improve the seat.
- Demonstrate an effective use of disengagement and pulley rein by stopping pony from canter.
- Ride ring figures at the walk and trot, with correct diagonals, demonstrating a knowledge of aids and initiating bend.
- Ride accurate trot/canter transitions.
- Ride a 20m circle at the walk, trot, and canter, with correct diagonals and leads.
- Ride at the sitting trot, without bouncing.
- Ride at the walk, trot and canter without stirrups.
- Ride USDF Training Level Test 1 with accurate transitions and ring figures.
- Jump a course of 5-7 fences at 18", at the trot, with good approaches, developing the ability to plan a course.
- Ride basic gymnastic grid with solid jumping position, at 2'.
- Trot into a related distance and canter out.
- Ride in the open, up and down hills and over fences and natural obstacles at the walk and trot.

Level Five - Orange

- Demonstrate self-directed, progressive warm-up for flatwork and jumping.
- Maintain light contact on the flat, demonstrating long and loose rein when asked.
- Ride ring figures at walk, trot, sitting trot, and canter, with diagonals and leads, and pony correctly bending in each direction.
- Demonstrate knowledge of 20, 15 and 10m circles and half-circles.
- Ride ring figures at the walk, trot and canter without stirrups, with diagonals and leads.
- Be able to pick up stirrups at all gaits without looking down.
- Jump a course of 6 or more fences at 2', at the canter, with smooth turns, good approaches and correct leads.
- Ride small bounce grid, with and without reins and/or stirrups.
- Ride basic gymnastic with solid jumping position at 2'6".
- Ride in the open in a group, at walk, trot and canter, maintaining control.
- Demonstrate a galloping position at the walk, trot, and canter.
- Jump 2'-2'6" in the open at the trot and canter.
- Ride the hand gallop.

Level Six - Purple

- Ride on the longe at walk, trot and canter, without stirrups and reins, performing balancing and suppling exercises.
- Demonstrate a turn on the forehand.
- Demonstrate a leg yield from quarter line to rail, at walk and trot.
- Ride accurate trot/halt/trot transitions.
- Demonstrate a walk to canter transition, returning to walk with three or fewer steps of trot.
- Ride canter to halt in three or fewer steps.
- Identify diagonals and leads through feel.
- Ride accurate Novice Test A or B, showing rhythm, relaxation, balance and bend.
- Jump a course of 8 or more fences at 2'6"-2'9", to include spread and vertical fences, related distances, bending lines, and a combination.
- Ride a variety of gymnastic exercises up to 2'9", with and without stirrups and/or reins.
- Know distances for trot poles and basic gymnastic exercises.
- Maintain a galloping position at the walk, trot and canter, for a minimum of five minutes.
- Jump a variety of Beginner Novice level cross-country fences, to include a coop, water pass-through, bank, and ditch.
- Ride at the gallop in the open with control and a strong galloping position.

Level Seven - Teal

- Discuss basic dressage theory, showing knowledge of the training pyramid and use of natural aids.
- Discuss appropriate use of artificial aids and training devices.
- Demonstrate a self-directed, progressive warm-up for flatwork and jumping, with consideration of mount's strengths and weaknesses.
- Ride various ring figures on the aids (on a horse with the appropriate level of training).
- Ride accurate, balanced transitions, including halts and transitions between the walk and canter.
- Demonstrate a leg yield at the walk and trot.
- Demonstrate shoulder-in and haunches-in at the walk and trot.
- Ride a simple change of lead through the walk or a flying change of lead, appropriate to the horse.
- Demonstrate lengthening and shortening stride.
- Ride an accurate equitation pattern on an unfamiliar horse.
- Set up and ride over a variety of gymnastic exercises, with and without stirrups and/or reins.
- Jump a hunter course, an equitation course, and a show-jumping course at 3'-3'6".
- Jump a variety of Novice to Training Level cross-country obstacles, showing a strong cross-country position.
- Ride in a galloping position over varying terrain, showing a knowledge of pace up to 425mpm.