



GLOSSARY OF HORSE TERMS

Above The Bit: When a horse raises its head and stretches forward so that its mouth and the bit are above the rider's hand.

Ass: The correct term for the donkey, burrow, or jack stock.

Back at The Knee: A conformational fault in which the foreleg is bowed backwards at the knee.

Bascule: The arc the horse forms with its head neck, and back while clearing an obstacle.

Bay: A color of horse. Black mane and tail, black lower legs, and reddish brown over the rest of the body.

Bedding: Wood shavings, shredded newspaper, straw, sand or other materials used to line the floor of a stall.

Bell Boots: Protective boots that cover the hooves.

Bit: Metal bar on a bridle that goes in the horses mouth and is used to control the horse while riding.

Blaze: A broad white stripe down the face.

Bowed Hocks: A conformational fault in which the hocks on the hind legs are turned too far outwards. See also "Cow Hocks"

Bowed Tendon: A permanently swollen tendon. Does not result in lameness but tendon will not be as strong.

Breed: A distinct genetic entity. Recognized members of a breed are entered in an official stud book.

Brown: A color of horse, with a mixture of black and brown hairs on the body and black points.

Burro: Spanish for common donkey.

Canter: One of the four natural gaits of a horse. Slower than a gallop, this is a three beat gait.

Chestnut: A color of horse, reddish brown with a similar colored mane and tail, or the bony protrusion on the inside of forearm of each foreleg.

Cob: A small, strong horse descended from draft horses. About 15 hands high.

Colt: A male horse under 3 years old.

Conformation: The build of a horse, the way he is put together. A horse with good conformation will look proportional. Each breed has its own conformation, for example an Arabian is dish-faced, and an Oldenburg is heavily muscled.

Coronet: Surface of the hoof.

Cow Hocks: A conformational fault in which the hocks on the hind legs are turned inward towards each other.

Cribbing: A vice in which the horse grabs onto a horizontal object, stretches his esophagus and sucks wind. This behavior is learned and can range from occasional to obsessive.

Crop: A stick, sometimes with a leather loop at the end, used by hunter/jumper riders.

Curb: Thickening of the ligament on the back of the hind leg. May or may not result in lameness.

Curb Bit: A single-bar mouthpiece that is attached at each end to upright bars (as compared to rings on a snaffle bit). These bits give more control but are not as gentle on a horse's mouth as a snaffle bit. They are usually used in Polo and Western riding disciplines.

Curry Comb: A plastic or rubber comb with several rows of short flexible bristles. Used for removing loose hair and dirt.

Dam : The mother of a horse.

Dock: The area at the top of the tail.

Donkey: English word meaning "a little dun animal".

Dorsal Stripe: A dark stripe along a horse's back. Common on early horses and seen today on some buck skin or other dark skinned horses. See horse colors.

Dressage: French word that means training. A discipline of riding that is sometimes referred to as ballet on horseback. The best example during our Regency period would have been the Austrian Lippizaner horses. Involves subtle control and compulsory movements. The Grand Prix level is the Olympic level and is the highest level of dressage a horse and rider can achieve.

Dun: A color of horse. Light to medium sand colored with dark skin. Usually has dark points (mane, tail and lower legs.)

Eohippus: Small (14"), earliest (prehistoric) ancestor of the modern day horse.

Farrier: A professional who shoes horses.

Farriery: The practice of shoeing horses.

Feathers: The long hairs of the fetlock that cover the hooves of some draft horses. Clydesdales have the thickest and most beautiful feathers.

Fetlock: The "ankle" joint of each leg.

Filly: A female horse under 3-4 years old.

Foal: A male or female under a year old. The female is a 'filly foal,' the male a 'colt foal.' In the West, all foals may be called 'colts,' so the female is a 'filly colt' and the male a 'horse colt.'

Frog: The fleshy triangular underside of the hoof.

Gait: The repetitive limb coordination pattern used in locomotion. The different ways a horse can move. The standard natural gaits are: walk, trot, canter and gallop. There are also bred or trained additional gaits: pacing, ambling, running walk---describe precise and different ways in which a horse moves its legs. In England, gaits are known as "paces." A horse can only do one pace at a time.

Asymmetrical gait - gait in which the limb movements on one side are not exactly repeated on the other side. Example: Canter, Gallop.

Symmetrical gait - gait in which limb movements on one side are repeated on the opposite side half a stride later. Example: trot, pace.

Stance Phase - when at least one foot is in contact with the ground.

Swing Phase - when the hoof is lifted and brought forward.

Suspension Phase - when no hooves are on the ground.

Overlap Time - the longer the limbs are off the ground (stride suspension phase) relative to the time on the ground (stride stance phase) the smaller the overlap.

Walk - 4 beats symmetrical gait

Trot - 2 beat diagonal symmetrical gait

Pace - 2 beat lateral symmetrical gait

Canter - 3 beat asymmetrical gait

Gallop - 4 beat asymmetrical gait

Running Walk - 4 beat gait characteristic of Tennessee Walking Horse

Paso Fino - slowest 4 beat gait of the Paso Fino (A Latin American bred horse)

Paso Corto - medium speed 4 beat gait of the Paso Fino

Paso Largo - fastest 4 beat gait of the Paso Fino

Slow Gait - slow 4 beat gait performed by the American Saddlebred. Very tiring gait for the horse and somewhat rough to ride.

Rack - fastest 4 beat gait performed by the American Saddlebred. Very smooth gait to ride.

Gallop: The fastest of the four natural gaits of a horse. This is a four beat gait.

Gelding: A male horse that has been castrated.

Girth: The strap around the horse's belly which secures the saddle to the horses back.

Gray : A color of horse that ranges from white to dark gray. Includes dapple. All grays have black skin.

Green: Used to describe a horse that has had a rider but is in the early stages of training. Can also describe a beginning rider.

Grooming: Maintenance of a horse's coat, including clipping, brushing, washing, trimming mane and tail, and any preparation of the coat for showing such as braiding mane and tail.

Hackamore: A bitless bridle used as reins. Pressure on the nose and jaw are used to control the horse.

Halter: A harness of leather or rope that fits over a horse's head. This is much like a bridle without the bit or reins. It is used for leading a horse.

Hand: A hand is 4 inches. Height is measured at the withers, the highest point on a horse's back just before his mane starts.

Height: Horses are measured from the ground to the top of the **withers** in 'hands.' One hand is four inches. The average horse is 15 to 16 hands. 17 hands is very tall and only unusual specimens reach 18 hands. Some horses, especially in the West, are smaller. Ponies are usually less than 14 hands, two inches, though the words 'horse' and 'pony' can be used in variable ways in different contexts.

Hinny: The hybrid animal produced when a female ass (jennet) is crossed to an older smaller stallion.

Hock: The "knee" of the hind legs.

Hoof Pick: A metal or strong plastic tool with a pointed end for picking debris out of the underside of hooves.

Horn: The surface of the hoof. Horns can be pale, dark or mixed, and all colors are similar in hardness.

Jack: Male of the ass species.

Jennet: Female of the ass species.

Jog: A slow trot, mostly in Western disciplines.

Lame: A condition in which a horse does not carry weight equally on all four legs, due to disease or injury.

Laminitis: Inflammation of the laminae (the inside lining of the hoof)

Lead Change: The "lead" is the foreleg of the horse that is farthest in front during a canter. A good rider can signal the horse to change his lead.

Lope: A slow canter, used mostly in Western disciplines.

Mare: An adult female horse or pony over age four.

Martingale: A leather strap that goes from the girth to the bridle underneath the chin which prevents a horse from throwing his head up.

Mucking A Stall: Cleaning out the manure and soiled bedding in a stall.

Mule: The hybrid animal produced when a male ass (Jack) is crossed with a female horse (mare). A Saddle Mule is bred from mares of riding horse breeding. A Pack or Work Mule is bred from mares with some draft blood. A Draft Mule is the largest mule, bred from draft mares such as Belgian, Percheron, Clydesdale, and Shire.

Navicular Disease: A disease of the navicular bone (a small bone at the end of the leg) which leads to lameness. Caused by improper shoeing and excess stress on the hooves.

Neck Rein: A method of guiding the horse by placing the rein against its neck, moving the horse in the opposite direction. Both reins are held in one hand.

Over at The Knee: A conformational fault in which the foreleg is bowed forward at the knee.

Oxer: A single fence composed of two or three parts to produce a spread, or width, effect. A "square" oxer is equal in height in both the front element of the spread and the back.

Palomino: A gold colored horse with blond or white mane and tail.

Pastern: The area between the hoof and fetlock joint on all four legs.

Pelham Bit: A bit that includes a chain that goes under the chin. Two sets of reins are used with this bit.

Pigeon-toed: A conformational fault in which the hooves are turned in towards each other.

Pinto: A color of horse. Large patches of brown or black and white. Also called a paint, but paints are often thought of as a breed unto themselves.

Points: Mane, tail, and lower legs. Sometimes includes the muzzle.

Pommel: The foremost section of a saddle that fits over the withers. In a Western saddle, this is the "horn" which the rider can rest his hands on.

Pony: A full grown horse that is 14.2 hands or under.

Rack: A single-footed, extremely rapid and smooth four-beat gait unique to the American Saddlebred and the National Show Horse.

Ratcatcher: The riding shirt worn under the hunt coat or jacket.

Rearing: A vice in which the horse stands on his hind legs with both forelegs in the air, usually to unsettle a rider or rid himself of irritating tack.

Reining: A Western style of riding demonstrating tremendous agility in turning, stopping, lead changing and more.

Roach: A shaved mane. Usually found on the Three-Gaited American Saddlebred and Western horses.

Roan: A color of horse that has white hairs mixed with black (blue roan), bay (red roan), or chestnut (strawberry roan).

Slow Gait: A single-footed gait performed by the American Saddlebred and the National Show Horse. Similar to the rack, it is performed at a much slower speed with great collection.

Snaffle Bit: A simple bit, consisting of one bar or two bars linked in the middle. Rings at each end attach to the reins. Usually used in English riding styles.

Snip: A white marking between the nostrils.

Sock: White extending up to the fetlock

Spavin: A bone enlargement of the hock resulting in lameness in one or two hind legs.

Splay-footed: A conformational fault in which the hooves are turned away from each other.

Stallion: A male horse that has not been gelded (castrated). Also called 'entire' and in the West, a 'stud' horse.

Star: Any white marking above or between the eyes.

Stocking: White extending up to the cannon.

Stride: The amount of ground the horse covers in one "step."

Stripe: A narrow white stripe down the face.

Stud: A stallion that is kept for breeding purposes.

Tack: The equipment worn by the horse including saddle and bridle.

Thoroughbred: These days 'Thoroughbred' is a distinct breed of horse, (first studbook published: 1791), said to be descended from 3 Arab stallions brought to Britain in the 17th century. Thoroughbreds average 16 hands. Most racehorses are thoroughbreds. Thoroughbreds make excellent hunter/jumpers. Many breeds are quite modern, so shouldn't be used in a historic context.

Trot: One of the four gaits of a horse. One foreleg and the opposite hind leg are on the ground as the other foreleg and opposite hind leg are moving forward. This is faster than a walk but slower than a canter or gallop.

Twitch: A metal clasper applied to the top lip that is used to temporarily restrain a horse, usually for medical treatment.

Walleye: An eye that has no pigment or a blue tint. Vision is not affected by the color of the iris.

Warmblood: A horse type, often also referred to as sport horses. They are the result from crossing heavier draft-horse ("cold bloods") breeds with lighter Thoroughbred or Arabian "hot-bloods". They became an entire class of horse as well as breeds, such as the Swedish Warmblood and Hanoverian. All coach horses

are warmbloods, draft horses are too slow, and even for a small coach, an Arabian or Thoroughbred is too light.

Withers: The slight ridge in a horse's back just before the mane starts. This is where height is measured on a horse.

Yearling: In the year after the birth year. Incidentally, a yearling is too young to ride! Most saddle horses aren't worked hard until they're at least four years old, though breaking and training may start earlier.

THERE ARE FIVE BASIC BODY COLORS OF HORSES.

BROWN: A brown horse has a mixture of black and brown in his coat. In Europe, a "bay" is considered to be a brown horse.

BAY: A bay horse can be any shade of brown (which is a mixture of red and yellow), with points such as tail, mane, muzzle and lower legs being black. The brown can range from a light, almost tan or chestnut to a dark, seal color.

BLACK: A black horse is completely black, including muzzle and flanks. Most horses that look black are actually a very dark bay.

CHESTNUT: A chestnut horse has brown skin and the hairs are actually red. The shades vary from a light yellowy color to dark liver. The mane and tail are usually the same color as the body but can be lighter. The lighter coloring is called flaxen. Lighter colored horses are called sorrel; very dark chestnut is called "liver chestnut."

WHITE: A truly white horse is born white and remains white. His hair is snowy; he has pink skin and blue eyes. Cream horses are a variation, also having unpigmented skin and pink or blue eyes, with a pale colored coat. Most "white horses" are actually light gray.

THERE ARE ALSO THREE MAJOR COLOR VARIATIONS IN HORSES.

DUN: Duns have black skin with an evenly distributed coat color and a black mane and tail, similar to bay coloring. The coat color can range from a pale yellowish color to the color of a dirty canvas. Dun horses usually have a dorsal stripe down their backs and some have stripes on their forearms. The lighter shades are called buckskin.

GRAY: A gray coat is actually a mixture of black and white hairs on black skin. A foal may be born a solid color with a few white hairs sprinkled in his coat, but more white hairs will appear in the coat until he is gray at maturity. "Dappled gray" looks mottled, while grays with clusters of darker hair which sometimes include a reddish brown, are called "flea bitten."

ROAN: Roan is a mixture of white and colored hairs. White with brown is called red roan; white with red is strawberry roan; white with black is called blue roan.

MARKINGS

Variegated colors on a horse are referred to as markings, and are most common on their faces and legs. The following describes the more common markings.

BLAZE: A white mark spread over the forehead and the length of the face. If the blaze is exaggerated to cover the entire front of the face, the term "bald face" or "war bonnet" might be used.

STRIPE: A white mark down the face, similar to a blaze but narrower.

STRIP: A white mark running partway down the face.

STAR: A patch of white on the forehead.

SNIP: A white or pink patch on the nose or lip.

SOCK: White hair on a leg, looking like human ankle socks.

STOCKING: White hair on a leg, extending from hoof to hock or knee.