

LESSON 1 BREEDS AND IDENTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

This course is an accumulation of information from biology, agricultural science and veterinary medicine. It looks to explore and explain the fundamentals of appropriate horse care aims and techniques and in doing so it will consider horsemanship as a combination of art and science. Working with horses is primarily about giving and receiving respect; often followed by the beginning of an ever-lasting bond. Undoubtedly, working with horses in such a way to develop positive and lasting relationships does not come easily and you must pay special attention to understanding horses as kind animals with much to give. They often have a willingness to please and find a special place in the hearts of their owners.

We most commonly consider horses to be domesticated animals. Their general physical and psychological characteristics make them a preferred animal for work and pleasure in the modern world. They have immense tameability; a dependence on us or other horses; a submissive and noble character; a highly developed digestive system enabling them to survive on the poorest of feed and a speed rivaled by few other land mammals. These traits make horses a favourite animal for humans to work with. Sadly, for the horse, these same traits often result in the mistreatment of these remarkable animals.

So as wonderful and rewarding horse ownership can be, it takes immense amounts of time and dedication – owners should prepare to spend more time caring for their horse than actually riding it. Horse care involves a sequence of repetitive tasks including feeding and watering; grooming and

the provision of health care; cleaning of their living environment and equipment and of course, exercise.



Standardbred

Suggested Tasks: ▼

Throughout this course you will be provided with suggested tasks and reading to aid with your understanding. These will appear in the right hand column. Remember: these tasks are optional. The more you complete, the more you will learn, but in order to complete the course in 20 hours you will need to manage your time well. We suggest you spend about 10 minutes on each task you attempt, and no more than 20 minutes.

LEARN MORE >>>

Suggested Tasks

Select two breeds and research their history. Aim to source online material from breed associations and gather links which are particularly useful in outlining the history of the breed.

BREEDS

Over many years, horses have been domesticated in different parts of the world, leading to a huge variety in breeds and types. Selective breeding for specific uses has formed 'modern' horses of four general types:

- Hotbloods (e.g. Arab and Thoroughbred)
- Warmbloods (e.g. Carriage and Sport horses)
- Coldbloods (e.g. heavy Draught horses)
- Ponies (e.g. Exmoor, Dartmoor, Icelandic)

These categories refer to the temperament and speed of the horse rather than anything to do with the actual temperature of the horse's blood. Hotblooded horses like Arabs and Thoroughbreds tend to be more quick-witted and 'sharp' and also possess great speed across the ground. Coldblooded horses tend to be of a more even, quiet temperament and are generally bigger built in stature and therefore incapable of achieving speeds similar to a Thoroughbred.

It is important to appreciate the difference in the terms 'breed' and 'type' when describing horses. For a horse to be a specific breed it must possess the appropriate parentage and physical characteristics to allow it to be registered in its specific breed stud book. A 'type' of horse can be of any breed but is bred for a specific purpose or job.

COMMON TYPES

Sports Horse

A Sports Horse is bred for the traditional Olympic disciplines of dressage, eventing and show jumping. They are specifically bred for their conformation, movement and trainable temperament. Warmbloods, Thoroughbreds and Thoroughbred crosses are common Sports Horse breeds.

Light Work Horse

Light work horses are generally used for a variety of activities including pleasure and recreational riding and lower level performance work. They may have Arabian, Thoroughbred, Quarter Horse, Standardbred or Pony blood lines and are commonly crosses of different breeds.



Young competitors

Draught Horse

A draught horse is bred to perform heavy work such as ploughing and farm and forestry laboring. Draught horses are strongly built and have particularly docile temperaments, which makes them ideal for the type of work that they perform. Clydesdale, Shire and Percheron are common draught breeds. Draught horses are also commonly used to cross breed with Thoroughbreds, to produce a more relaxed and versatile riding horse.

Driving Horse

Driving horses are used to pull a carriage or cart. They may be used for competitive driving disciplines, sulky racing or purely for recreational, pleasure driving. Horses may be driven individually or may form part of a driving team of two or more horses. Common breeds of driving horse include the Cleveland Bay, Friesian and the Hackney.

Common Horse Breeds (not including ponies)

ANDALUSIAN

Geographical Origins	Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) after Peninsula
Physical Characteristics	15–16.2hh Commonly grey in colour; sometimes also bay and black, long flowing mane and tail, strong, compact and elegant in build, intelligent and even temperament.
Common Uses	Excels in dressage and specific Spanish pursuits like ranch work and bull fighting.

AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE

Geographical Origins	U.S.A
Physical Characteristics	14-16hh Any colour – commonly bay, black, roan, buckskin, palomino. Spotted colours used to be excluded from the AQH stud book, but are now allowed as long as parentage is verified by DNA analysis and both parents are registered with AQH Association. Two main types – ‘stock’ type and ‘racing’ type. Stock type is more compact, sturdy and shorter; racing type taller and more similar to a thoroughbred in stature. Both types have very muscular hindquarters and broad powerful shoulders. Kind and co-operative temperament.

AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE

Common Uses	Racing, Western disciplines – reining, cutting etc., ranch work, pleasure riding.
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AMERICAN WARBLOOD

Geographical Origins	U.S.A.
Physical Characteristics	<p>15-17hh</p> <p>More of a type rather than a breed. Horses of any bloodline can be registered as an American Warmblood as long as they have the quality and talent to excel in a sports horse field.</p> <p>Any colour; solid colours are most common.</p> <p>Well-muscled topline, generally medium weight in build, well-proportioned in stature, elastic paces.</p> <p>Calm and trainable temperament.</p>
Common Uses	Sports horse disciplines (dressage, show-jumping and eventing) and driving.

APPALOOSA

Geographical Origins	U.S.A.
Physical Characteristics	<p>14-16hh</p> <p>Known for its distinctive 'leopard' or 'blanket' spotted coat, striped hooves, mottled skin around the nose, lips, muzzle, eyes and genitalia and eyes with a white sclera.</p> <p>Compact body with short straight back, sloping shoulders and strong legs. Commonly possess a sparse mane and tail.</p> <p>Calm and docile temperament.</p>
Common Uses	Sports horse disciplines (dressage, show-jumping and eventing), Western disciplines (cutting, reining), racing and endurance.