

Lesson levels

Level 1

At level 1 everyone has a leader to assist them. Level 1 lessons cover the following topics: -

- Mounting and dismounting.
- How to hold the reins.
- Exercises and games to help with posture, balance, suppleness and confidence.
- How to use basic aids i.e. hands legs and seat to stop, start and steer.
- Establishing balance in trot, both sitting and rising.
- Simple school movements i.e. circles, changes of rein.
- Basic points of the pony i.e. shoulder, withers, back etc.
- Basic parts of the saddle and bridle i.e. reins, stirrups, bit etc.
- Simple equestrian terms i.e. 'Halt', 'change the rein' etc.

Level 2

At level 2 riders are working towards riding independently with less assistance from their leader. Lessons will cover the following topics: -

- Preparing the horse for mounting i.e. helping to check the girth and stirrup length before getting on.
- Dismounting whilst keeping control of the pony.
- Mounting using the mounting block and from a 'leg up'.
- Exercises to help with posture, balance, suppleness and confidence.
- Riding simple exercises in walk without assistance from the leader.
- Improving balance in the trot. The rider should be working towards maintaining balance in the rising trot without holding the saddle or neck strap. The rising trot should be becoming more rhythmic and the sitting trot more secure.
- Slightly more complex school movements are introduced at this level i.e. serpentines, different sized circles etc.
- Ground pole work in walk and trot.
- More equestrian terms are taught at this level.
- The ultimate aim at level 2 is to be able to ride a suitable pony off the lead rein in walk and trot.

Level 3

At level 3 riders may have a leader for canter if they wish but are expected to be able to ride independently in the walk and trot. Topics covered at this level include:-

- Help to prepare the horse for mounting including tightening the girth and pulling down the stirrups.
- Adjusting the stirrups when mounted without assistance.
- Walk and trot in balance.
- Controlling the horse or pony through simple school movements in walk and trot.
- Exercises to help with posture, balance, suppleness and confidence.
- Clearer applications of the aids. Appropriate use of riding crop.
- Totting over small jumps.
- Working in canter.
- Start to recognise and describe differences in various horses' way of going.
- Working as a ride, taking turns at being lead file.
- Understanding more complex equestrian terms.
- Develop 'feel' for how the rider's balance and aids influence the horse and the horse's way of going.

Lesson levels

Level 4

At level 4 riders should be capable of riding a suitable horse or pony completely independently at all times. Topic covered at this level include: -

- Preparing the horse and mount without assistance.
- Altering stirrups and girth before the instructor's check.
- Riding more challenging horses.
- Walking, trotting and cantering unaided and in balance.
- Working on variations within a pace.
- Beginning lateral movements.
- Improving transitions.
- Clearer applications of the aids.
- Exercises to help with posture, balance, suppleness and confidence.
- Jumping small fences from trot and canter.
- Hacking out including hill work, galloping and small x country fences.
- Establishing a secure and effective sitting trot.
- Increasing awareness of the rider's influence through seat, weight and legs.
- Appropriate use of a schooling whip.
- Riding more complex school movements and understanding the benefit to horse and rider.
- Working in open order

Level 5

At this level riders are expected to be able to ride a variety of different horses. Topics covered at this level include: -

- Mounting unaided from both sides of the horse.
- Walk, trot and canter without stirrups.
- Riding with one hand.
- Riding more complex lateral movements i.e. leg yield, turn on the forehand.
- Developing a seat completely independent of the reins.
- Working independently in open order.
- Jumping simple courses.
- Riding in balance across country, jumping small fences and ditches.
- Assessing a horse's way of going and understanding how to improve it.
- Working towards extension and collection.

Level 5 elite

At this level riders should be capable of riding any horse or a suitable size provided. In addition to all topics covered at level 5, this level also includes:-

- Counter canter
- More lateral movements i.e. turn on haunches
- Developing a soft and balanced sitting trot
- Riding new or young horses.
- Use of spurs as an artificial aid.
- Jumping larger courses, x country fences including ditches and combinations.
- Describing a horse's way of going and suggesting exercises to improve it.