



THE PONY CLUB STANDARDS OF EFFICIENCY TEST SHEET 2016 AH TEST

The Pony Club 'AH' Test stands alone as the highest Test of Horsemastership available in The Pony Club. It is a pre-requisite for the 'A' Test Riding, replacing the Horsemastership section of that Test. It is recommended that where possible, candidates should take the two tests within a year of each other.

Candidates must be 16 years or over although at least 17 years is recommended. They must hold the 'B' Test Horse and Pony Care and the Lungeing Test, before applying for the 'AH' Test. Those candidates who have only attained 'B' Test Horse and Pony Care and the Lungeing Test will be allowed to attempt 'AH' subject to a satisfactory riding assessment being carried out by an 'AH' Test Examiner appointed by the Area Representative.

OBJECTIVES

The candidates should:

- Show a wide experience of caring for and handling different types of horses and ponies.
- Have the experience and knowledge to be able to look after two fit competition horses, a fit competition pony, a recuperating horse, an elderly retired horse and a mare and foal turned out.
- Be able to ride and lead for exercise.
- Support practical work shown with logical theory relevant to the individual horses.
- Carry out practical work swiftly and safely showing familiarity with the tasks.
- Be able to lunge fresh, fit, and possibly naughty horses as a form of exercise.
- Understand how the systems of the horse affect daily care in fit and resting horses.
- Recognise the symptoms of ailments and the problems that may arise from these, and be able to undertake suitable action.
- Understand the implications when breeding from a mare.
- Be aware of modern practices; all theory must be grounded, and candidates must be able to apply their knowledge to the horses supplied during the exam.
- The assessor will expect the candidate to show normal daily competence in their answers, but also the ability to observe any unusual behaviour or problem and to suggest a sensible solution.

SECTION A - Part I

Requirements:

Two horses tacked up; saddles, two snaffle bridles, breastplates, boots, rugs (if inclement weather). Mounting block (if possible).

Ride and Lead and Leg Up

A1. Take two horses out of the stables; mount, ride and lead unaided using snaffle bridles. Lead horse may be tied up outside. Highway Code.

A2. 'Put up' a person on a horse by giving a leg up.

A3. Discuss compatibility of the two horses, and the advantages and disadvantages of riding and leading.

SECTION A - Part II

Requirements:

- One shod horse in stable yard
- Farrier's tools and remedial shoes, varying studs if possible
- Grooming kit, including a strapping pad or wisp
- Clipping and trimming tools
- Well equipped tack room

Stable Yard

- A4. Consider the practical planning of a stable yard to enhance the welfare of the horses. What different building materials could be considered? What labour-saving devices could be useful?
- A5. Explain how yards can be maintained, and how to create teamwork within family and friends so tasks can be completed effectively.
- A6. Discuss some of the types of bedding available, including storage, muck heap and disposal.
- A7. Precautions to be taken against fire and burglary, in and around the stables and yard. Legal requirements for fire extinguishers and electrics. Discuss some security systems available for yards.
- A8. What current legislation is it advisable to consider when owning a horse?
- A9. Having considered the current Health and Safety Legislation, what do you need to consider in the way you run your yard?
- A10. Explain how to purchase, store and ensure the quality of feed, both economically and safely, using efficient practice for feeding regimes. Include rodent control.
- A11. State the advantages of Pony Club insurance. Discuss what other forms of insurance may be advisable when keeping horses at home or in a commercial yard.
- A12. Describe why it is important to record accidents and incidents; where would these be recorded? What do the acronyms COSHH and RIDDOR stand for, and why is it important to know about them?
- A13. Outline actions to be taken in the event of an accident to a person on a stable yard.
- A14. Explain the importance of communication with farrier, vet, and other yard users.

Foot and Shoeing

- A15. Discuss the structure of this horse's foot and lower leg.
- A16. Discuss the balance of this foot. Identify a well shod foot.
- A17. Notice and discuss remedial or corrective shoeing, pads, wear of shoes and relate to movement or possible unsoundness.
- A18. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the use of studs.
- A19. Show how to remove a loose shoe. Tools to use, either farrier's or substitutes if these are not available.
- A20. Evaluate the prognosis for diseases and ailments related to the foot, bearing in mind the future plans for the horse.

Grooming

- A21. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of classical and modern methods of grooming fit horses.
- A22. Demonstrate and discuss the reasons for strapping and modern alternatives.
- A23. Explain why it is important to wash a sheath, and how it is done.
- A24. Discuss current methods of cooling horses and ponies after hard work.

A25. Explain the care of horses' teeth, and show how to examine for sharp or wolf teeth.

A26. Show basic knowledge of the nervous system; discuss how the sensory systems affect our handling of horses.

Clipping, Trimming and Plaiting

A27. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of the different ways of pulling manes and tails.

A28. Show how to trim the horse's legs and heels.

A29. Show how to plait manes and tails.

A30. Discuss clipping a nervous or difficult horse, consider the safety of the person clipping, preparation of horse, the environment and the care of clippers.

A31. Types of clip and their uses. Marking the horse for clipping.

SECTION B - Part I

Requirements:

Lunge area - Horse to be lunged (tacked up), lunge whip and lunge line.

Lungeing

B1. Checking the horse's equipment.

B2. Work the fit horse for exercise on the lunge in a safe, efficient, effective and practical way.

B3. Recognise the quality of work shown.

B4. All work must demonstrate care to maintain the safety and welfare of horse and handler.

SECTION B - Part II

Requirements:

A nearby field to discuss

One mare in a stable

Paddock Management

B5. Estimate the acreage of a field shown to you and discuss how many horses you keep on it.

B6. Know how to avoid worm infestation.

B7. Explain various pasture routines, including how grassland quality can be improved.

B8. Discuss the identification and eradication of poisonous plants.

B9. Know the precautions necessary during and after use of sprays, fertilisers, lime, etc.

B10. Describe advantageous and disadvantageous grasses.

Care and Handling of Mares, Foals and Young Stock

B11. Discuss what factors may influence the choice of broodmare or stallion.

B12. Discuss whether you would choose natural covering, AI or embryo transplant, and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

B13. Explain the veterinary procedures required before a mare can go to stud.

- B14. Recognise when a mare is in season.
- B15. Know the factors behind the choice of service date - basic outline of covering programme.
- B16. Discuss foaling environments, facilities and equipment; selection, preparations and procedures.
- B17. Describe care of the in-foal mare, including feeding, worming and testing routines.
- B18. Describe the inoculations required for the brood mare and foal.
- B19. Determine whether or not to foal at home.
- B20. Be able to recognise the signs of a mare about to foal.
- B21. Compare a normal birth to a situation requiring veterinary attention.
- B22. Discuss problems and solutions that may arise with mares, foals and young stock.
- B23. Discuss deciding factors on whether to return a mare to stud.
- B24. Explain how to travel mares and foals safely.
- B25. Discuss the timing and procedure of weaning foals.
- B26. Compare the advantages and disadvantages and timing of gelding colts.
- B27. Outline the care of young stock up to the age of three years.

SECTION C - Part I

Requirements:

A horse in a stable, a snaffle bridle

A flat, hard surface suitable for trotting up in hand

Conformation

- C1. Describe a horse fully, including sex, colour, size, age, markings, and type.
- C2. Consider the conformation of this horse and the effect that it might have on its way of going and the type of work it may be suited to.
- C3. Discuss expressions used in describing strengths and weaknesses of a horse's confirmation. For example herring gutted, run up light etc.
- C4. Evaluate the advantages or disadvantages of the different types of procedure for vetting horses before purchase.

Lameness

- C5. Run a horse up for veterinary inspection and evaluating the action.
- C6. Explain the value of trotting up a horse for veterinary inspection and evaluation of its action.
- C7. Discuss how to identify lameness.
- C8. Be able to detect heat and swelling in a horse's leg, including the possibility of tendon or ligament damage, and be able to interpret and discuss findings.
- C9. Be able to indicate seats of lameness, know what these conditions are, and be able to discuss the causes and treatments.
- C10. Recognition and treatment of diseases and ailments of the foot.

Health and Condition

- C11. Assess some observations that might make you take action when checking horses first thing in the morning or last thing at night.

C12. Know about getting a tired horse to urinate. Recognising and dealing with the causes and symptoms of exhaustion, stress or dehydration. Describe how these conditions can be prevented.

C13. Consider the urinary system as related to practical problems.

C14. Demonstrate taking a temperature, pulse and respiration. Explain why these are important.

C15. Discuss the aims of societies and associations connected with the care of horses and ponies.

SECTION C - PART II

Requirements:

One horse in a stable

Feed room with adequate feed samples, hay barn and haylage if possible

Feeding, Exercise and Fitness

C16. Know how to recognition of good and poor condition and reasons for them. Explain condition scoring.

C17. Explain the nutrients in the horse's diet.

C18. Discuss how the digestive system affects the way horses are fed, and the problems arising from a poor/unbalanced diet.

C19. Evaluate feeding hay or alternatives.

C20. Contrast the difference in feeding traditional feeds and mixes; consider quality, quantity, and evaluate the nutritional components.

C21. Consider if there is a place in a modern feeding system for boiled feeds.

C22. Discuss the value of some feed additives on the market; discuss the vitamin and mineral content of feedstuffs.

C23. Compare fibre-based with fibre and concentrate diets, include grass.

C24. Know how to tempt a difficult feeder, relating to a young, old or sick horse.

C25. Discuss the work and feed requirements for different levels of activity or rest.

C26. Discuss getting horses fit for various disciplines. Interval training - distance and speed. Compare the fitness levels required, and how fitness may affect the horse's behaviour.

C27. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of horse-walkers.

C28. Recognise how to relate feeding to work and condition. Discuss diets for horses in different types of work.

C29. Evaluate how to judge fitness following, during training or competition.

C30. Discuss considerations to be made in the care of a competition horse to ensure maximum performance.

C31. Identify how the respiratory system relates to fitness.

C32. Discuss problems of the respiratory system, such as whistling, roaring and allergies and how to deal with them.

C33. Understand the lymphatic, and endocrine systems as they relate to practical problems, such as lymphangitis.

SECTION D - Part I

Requirements:

Two horses in two stables, preferably adjacent

A choice of tack for cross country, boots and exercise bandages
Dressage saddle, double bridle, and working bandages
The bridles must be adjustable to fit the horses provided. The saddles should not fit perfectly.

All work to demonstrate safe procedures to maintain the welfare and safety of horse and candidate.

Handling

- D1. Define the importance of good stable manners for the horse.
- D2. Explain stereotypical behaviours and how to minimise them.
- D3. Demonstrate how to hold horses or lead horses that are being awkward, possibly during wound cleaning, or when very fresh.
- D4. Be able to handle difficult horses in and out of stables. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of twitching, how a twitch works, and different types of restraint.
- D5. How to prevent horses from becoming cast, dealing with a horse during and after being cast.

Tacking Up

- D6. Stable and work area to be kept clean and tidy.
- D7. Compare types and uses of bandages, materials and padding. Discuss current thinking on the effect of heat on tendons.
- D8. Put on working and or exercise bandages. Discuss the consequences of poorly applied bandages or boots.
- D9. Select and put on suitable equipment to ride this horse around a cross country course.
- D10. Discuss the consequences of poorly fitting equipment.
- D11. Fit a saddle and a double bridle. Explain the action of the double bridle.
- D12. Recognition of various normal types of bit and saddlery; their uses, advantages, disadvantages and actions.

SECTION D - PART II

Requirements:

- One horse in stable
- Access to first aid equipment and bandages
- Examples of two different wormers

Common Ailments, Nursing, First Aid

- D13. Be able to recognise good and ill health.
- D14. Explain simple medical and veterinary terms.
- D15. Summarise precautions against infection and contagion.
- D16. Discuss care of ill, contagious or infectious horses. Discuss how to prevent problems from occurring in horses on long-term box rest.
- D17. Understand the use of support bandages, vet wrap and current veterinary bandaging. This may include applying knee and hock bandages.
- D18. Specify how to prevent sores and galls in fit horses during long working seasons.
- D19. Compare hot and cold poultices, types and uses.

- D20. Identify and discuss the circulatory system and symptoms of when it malfunctions, explain how to deal with severe bleeding.
- D21. Summarise inoculations - types and timing.
- D22. Evaluate precautions against flies on horses and around stables and in the field.
- D23. Explain treatment of coughs, colds, flu and strangles.
- D24. Discuss current thinking on causes, treatment and preventative measures of laminitis, tying up and atypical myopathy.
- D25. Evaluate modern methods of reducing horses' worm burdens.
- D26. Explain the functions of the horses' skin, and how to recognise and treat skin diseases.
- D27. Have a basic knowledge of the skeletal and muscular systems and their effect on performance and movement. Know the functions of the different muscle groups. Identify the locations of and know the difference between muscles, tendons and ligaments.
- D28. Discuss the development of the muscular system required to support ridden work.
- D29. Explain how to recognise eye problems, and the action to be taken.
- D30. Be able to judge when a wound is simple to deal with and when veterinary attention is required.

THE FORM OF THE TEST

There are eight phases of the test; four in the morning and four in the afternoon. The phases are generally forty five minutes long, allowing for variations in the layout of different establishments and number of candidates. Usually there are eight candidates each day.

Section A - Part I

This is the ride and lead section. You will take two horses out of the stables. You will be asked to mount, ride and lead, and dismount unaided. The lead horse may be tied up outside. Depending on the venue there may be a mounting block available. The assessor will be taking into account the practical approach to the job, whether the horses are worked as a pair that would be safe on the road and how the candidate deals with a problem if it arises.

They watch whether the candidate looks behind them, gives hand signals and shows knowledge of how they would ride on the road. You will also have to give and receive a leg up; the assessor will look for cooperation between the candidates and a performance that could be suitable to get a rider on to a fresh horse on a cold day. Some assessors allow candidates to be legged up onto the ridden horse of the ride and lead.

Section A - Part II

In this section the assessor is looking for a practical approach to clipping and trimming and may ask about hairy cobs, ticklish thoroughbreds or any other type of horse or pony. There will be a discussion on the nervous system.

The candidate will show a hands-on approach to strapping and how to remove a loose shoe and be able to discuss the viability of various shoes. There will be discussion on problems of the foot and the candidate should be able to relate this to the potential of the individual horse.

Candidates will be forthcoming in discussion of stable yards and tack rooms. Theoretical knowledge alone will not be sufficient, as an assessor it is always easy to identify candidates who have done no more than read about a subject as they are almost always impractical.

Section B - Part I

This is the lungeing section. The horse will be tacked up, but the equipment must be checked. Candidates will be expected to be able to lunge a fit horse that may, or may not behave, and to be effective in ensuring that this horse is exercised. Side reins will be available and if appropriate the horse may be cantered. Rhythm and balance should be observed, and the horse must have worked. The lungeing will take approximately twenty minutes and the candidate will be asked to discuss the equipment, the effects of lungeing on the horse and how the horse went in this session.

Section B - Part II

The candidate will, in most cases, be shown a paddock and asked to discuss various management aspects of that field.

The section on mares and foals may cover the subject from the angle of a family's mare, rather than from commercial aspect. Candidates will be expected to discuss the pros and cons of breeding, how they might choose a stallion, how to promote the well being of their mare and foal and how to look after the foal through its first three years.

Section C - Part I

This section covers health, lameness and conformation. The candidate will be observant of the presented horse's health and should recognise if that horse has any lameness. They should know the seats of lameness and be able to comment on the particular horse in front of them. Other health subjects will be raised, and theoretical knowledge must either be supported by practical experience or underpinned by an obvious understanding of the subject.

Conformation will be discussed in depth; comments must relate to the horse in question. The movement of the horse will be considered.

Section C - Part II

This section covers feeding and fittening. Feeding is a large subject; candidates will show in discussion that they have understood how to feed to the best advantage of the horse, and be able to relate that to the horse presented. They should be flexible and be able to discuss different ways of feeding, and feeding for different disciplines. The candidate must be able to explain quantities of food in either pounds or kilos; scoops show a lack of experience.

When discussing fittening the candidate will show a wide knowledge of how to fitten different types of horses and ponies, and how to change them from one discipline to another. Various systems will be considered, and whilst an understanding of the anatomy is required, emphasis will be placed on how the systems affect the practical care of the horse.

Section D - Part I

This section has a large practical section on tacking up and bandaging. These tasks should be performed quickly, appropriate equipment selected and fitted, including altering if necessary.

The part of the section that is referred to as Handling will require the candidate to talk about how to deal with difficult horses in moments of stress.

Section D - Part II

The final section covers common ailments. Only a few headings have a single answer. The candidate will be asked to explain, compare, evaluate and discuss various subjects, to show that the knowledge is not just theoretical, but can be applied in different ways for individual horses and situations.

READ

Pony Club Publications:

- The Manual of Horsemanship
- Breeding, Backing and Bringing on Young Horses – Nicola Parsler
- Endurance Riding and Trekking – Maggie Raynor
- USPC Guide to Lungeing and Ground Training
- The Pony Club Guide to Pasture Management – Elizabeth O’Beirne-Ranelagh
- Vital Statistics: A Guide to Conformation - Maggie Raynor
- Body Basics: A Guide to Anatomy of the Horse - Maggie Raynor
- Fit for the Bit: A Guide to Care of the Horse’s Mouth – Antony de Csernatony & Maggie Raynor
- All Systems Go!: A Guide to the Horse’s Fitness - David Marlin & Maggie Raynor
- Wallcharts: The Muscular system; Look up four: Clipping, Trimming&Plaiting;Horse and Human Common Parts.

Other publications:

- A Working Notebook of AH Test Horse and Pony Care - Mrs T Adams (available from www.equineworkingnotebooks.com)
- The Horse Nutrition Bible - Ruth Bishop
- The Horse Shoeing Book - Martin Humphrey AWCF
- Horse Anatomy Workbook - Maggie Raynor
- The Horse: From Conception to Maturity - Peter Rossdale
- BHS Veterinary Manual - M. Stewart Hastie MRCVS
- The Complete Book of Bits and Biting - E. Hartley Edwards
- Saddle Fitting - Kay Humphries

Suggested further reading:

- Horse Nutrition & Feeding - Sarah Pilliner BHSII
- Veterinary Notes for Horse Owners – M. H. Hayes (2002)
- No Foot No Horse: Foot Balance, the key to soundness and performance -Mac Head FWCF, Gail Williams & Martin Deacon FWCF
- Horsemaster’s Notebook - Mary Rose & Islay Auty FBHS
- BHS Horse and Stable Management - Josephine Batty-Smith BHSI
- Horse Anatomy: A Pictorial Approach to Equine Structure - Peter Goody

- Equine Injury, Therapy and Rehabilitation - Mary Bromiley
- Mares, Foals and Foaling – Freidrich Andrist
- Posture and Performance: Principles of Training Horses from the Anatomical Perspective – Gillian Higgins.
- Introduction to Horse Biology – Zoe Davies
- Your Horse's Health: Lameness – Oliver Days

VIEW

- When to call the Vet.
- Handling and Leading
- Health and Condition
- Under the Horse's Skin (CDROM) available from the BHS www.bhs.org.uk.

Felt Colour - Orange Honours – Salmon Pink

WORKING FOR THE AH TEST 2016

Preparation

- The preparation for 'A' Test should be progressive and continuous.
- The years between 'B' Test and 'A' Test must be spent in conscious preparation. Intensive or 'crash' courses are rarely successful.
- Candidates must have had practical experience with horses as well as ponies.

To pass the AH Test you must:

- Have a genuine desire for knowledge and a need to understand the reasons behind what you do.
- Be physically fit enough to perform the tasks without strain.
- Be competent and brave enough to handle young and awkward horses.
- Have a correct, safe way of working which has become natural, so that you will not drop back into bad habits under stress.
- Be practical; theoretical knowledge alone is not enough. It must be accepted by the assessors that you are practised and at ease with the tasks you have been given.
- Know and understand the reasoning and logic behind the facts.
- Show the ability to achieve an effective performance out of horses that you work.

Suggested Programme of Training

- On passing 'B' Test and whilst working for 'AH', read the syllabus; make sure you fully understand all it implies.
- Work first on the areas that were weak in your 'B' Test.
- Remember that lungeing and ride and lead are a major part of the Test, so continuous practice on a variety of horses is essential to develop confidence and fluency.
- Try to spend time helping in a good yard where there are plenty of horses at different levels of training including untrained horses which may be awkward to handle.
- Find someone who is an experienced trainer and who uses and accepts correct Pony Club and BHS methods, and offer your services as an assistant when they are handling different types of horses.

- Veterinary surgeons and farriers may be willing to take interested and responsible candidates on their rounds, which provide invaluable experience.
- Be observant when looking at horses, so that you train your eye to recognise faults.
- Visit horse sales and shows, with someone knowledgeable if you can, and make assessments of conformation.
- Candidates should be thoroughly familiar with all practical requirements of the Test so that they are able to carry them out with speed and efficiency even under examination conditions.
- Candidates should try to read widely, as methods of feeding and veterinary treatment, in particular, are constantly changing and developing. Whilst having a firm grasp of traditional methods, they should be able to discuss modern thinking on these subjects, and have seen them in practice.
- Read the list of publications mentioned on the Test Sheet.

Hints about taking the Test

- Arrive at the Test location in plenty of time, having allowed time to locate an unfamiliar address.
- Dress tidily and cleanly, usually in jackets for the briefing and then in Pony Club sweatshirts to work on the yard.
- Bring hat, whip and gloves.
- Bring warm working jackets suitable for yard work; it may be very cold.
- Ask if you would like a question clarified.
- Don't worry if you do not know an answer, no exam requires 100% to pass.
- Do not panic if you have a partner who appears to be a professor! You are judged against the criteria, not against each other.
- Candidates are expected to show common sense, be forward thinking, confident and positive in all they do. Tasks should be carried out in a safe, efficient, effective and practical way.
- Bring lunch and snacks; no one performs well without fuel for their body.