General Equitation Optional Focus
Area Skills Checklist

Member’s Name: ____________________________________________________________

Mastering these General Equitation skills will provide a solid foundation upon which the member may build. To achieve success in many of the other Optional Focus Areas, it is essential that youth can perform these Equitation skills smoothly.

Level 1

1. Name at least 6 safety precautions everyone should use when working around horses, in the arena or on the trail.                  

2. Demonstrate these basic groundwork skills:
   
   a. Safely halter and tie your horse, using a quick-release knot.              
   b. Maintain proper position while leading your horse at a walk & trot; plus when turning and backing your horse.              
   c. Groom your horse, explaining proper use of various grooming tools.              
   d. Proper technique for safely picking up and cleaning a front hoof.              
   e. Safely saddle and bridle your horse (smaller members should be able to describe the processes, even if they are physically unable to do them).              

3. Demonstrate these basic riding skills:
   
   a. Properly mount and dismount (smaller members should be able to describe the processes, even if they are physically unable to do them correctly).              
   b. Maintain a proper seat and balance while mounted.              
   c. Appropriate use of reins for direct reining and neck reining.              
   d. Safe, basic control of your horse at the walk, trot, slow lope and stop. Be able to identify which lead your horse is on.              

Level 2 - Complete Level 1 before proceeding to Level 2

1. Study types of bits and hackamores; identify at least 3 different types and explain their differences.                  

2. Demonstrate these groundwork skills:
a. Properly/safely pick up and clean the front and hind feet.

b. Know their use and tie these common horseman’s knots: bowline, clove hitch, and honda.

3. Demonstrate these riding skills: *strive for perfection*
   a. Know and properly use the basic aids at the walk, trot and lope.
   b. Consistently pick-up and maintain the correct lead while circling both directions at the lope *{simple change (trot) permitted when changing leads and the direction of circle}.
   c. Balanced stop from the walk, trot and lope.
   d. Calmly back your horse 8 steps in a straight line, without resistance.

3. Explain and demonstrate what to do when “gathering” your horse.

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**Level 3** - *Complete Level 1 & 2 before proceeding to Level 3*

1. For each of the movements listed below (2.a-f), explain how the aids used influence the horse’s actions.

2. Demonstrate these riding skills: *strive for consistency & perfection*
   a. Forehand turn, one-half turn in both directions.
   b. Pivot on hindquarters, one-half turn in both directions.
   c. Side pass, at least 8 steps in both directions.
   d. Correct, balanced stop from walk, trot and lope on straight-a-way.
   e. Correct, balanced stop from a trot and lope in a circle.
   c. Flying change of leads (both directions) in a Figure 8.
   d. Flying change of leads (both directions) on the straight-a-way.
   e. From a standstill, instantly pick up a walk, trot and lope.
   f. Calmly back your horse without resistance 10 steps in a straight line, and also in a circle (either direction).

3. Explain and demonstrate what to do when “collecting” your horse.