

LEVEL
Partnership

1

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Version: 11/1/2000



PNH Levels Program

LEVEL 1 - LIBERTY PHASE

Tools: Round Corral, Carrot Stick, Horseman's String

L1. Approach your horse from min. 10 feet away

LEVEL 1

- *Student has friendly look and body attitude, approaches confidently*
- *Holds halter and 12' line out in front, inviting horse to smell it*
- *Knows how to retreat and approach again if horse is reluctant to stand still*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Student is sneaking up on horse (moves very slowly, halter behind back, or not offered to horse)*
- *Approaches too fast and scares horse*
- *If horse runs away, student chases horse rather than backing off and yielding hindquarters*

L2. Rub him all over with the Halter & 12' Line

LEVEL 1

- *Horse stands still*
- *Horse is confident and seems to like the rubbing, shows no fear or skepticism of the equipment or intention*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Horse is scared*
- *Student obviously avoids areas, horse stiffens as they are approached*

L3. Pick up all four feet from one side

LEVEL 1

- *Halter is laid neatly onto ground, ready to be efficiently picked up again*
- *Student uses chestnuts on front legs and cap of hock on hind legs to get horse to lift his feet*
- *Horse stands quietly, willingly gives feet*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Student squeezes tendons or pulls on foot below the fetlock to lift feet*
- *Horse has opposition reflex to picking feet up or holding them up.*

L4. Put the halter on and tie knot correctly

LEVEL 1

- *Student lowers horse's head and turns it towards them*
- *Student puts arm over horse's neck and lifts halter onto the nose*
- *Knot is correctly tied, and efficiently done*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Horse's head is up or turned away*
- *Halter headpiece is thrown up over the neck from underneath*
- *Student uses wrong knot or is having trouble tying it*

ON LINE PHASE

Halter & 12' Line, Carrot Stick & Savvy String

OL1. Play the Friendly Game using Carrot Stick and Savvy String

LEVEL 1

- *Student moves confidently and with rhythm*
- *Handles Stick and String smoothly*
- *Shows that horse can accept Friendly Game all over, even around head, hindquarters and legs*
- *If horse moves, student shows savvy of being able to keep going and then stop at the right time*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *No rhythm*
- *Very awkward handling of tools*
- *Horse is scared, or can't stand still*
- *Student stops when horse is worried rather than at the right time*

OL2. Play the Porcupine Game: show backwards, HQ & FQ yields both sides.

LEVEL 1

- *Student can move horse without opposition reflex*
- *Good use of focus and position*
- *Rubs after release*
- *If opposition reflex is mild, student shows enough savvy of how to elevate phases and release at the right time*
- *Note that FQ and HQ yields do not need to show a pivot. As long as the horse is yielding and not pushing through the pressure this is a LEVEL 1 pass.*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Horse has opposition reflex*
- *Student gives up, horse pushes through them*
- *Horse does not back up, or does not turn hindquarters or forequarters, just walks forward.*

OL3. Play the Driving Game: show backwards, HQ & FQ yields both sides.

LEVEL 1

- *Horse yields without opposition*
- *Student is in the right position to effect the yields*
- *Rope is slack*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Horse does not yield, has opposition reflex, turns away, runs away*
- *Rope is tight, Student pulls on rope instead of driving hindquarters, etc.*

OL4. Play the Yo-Yo Game: show 2 complete Yo-Yo's

LEVEL 1

- *Student can send horse out and bring back without opposition reflex*
- *All phases are permitted, student must be effective*
- *Yo-Yo's are reasonably straight*
- *Student keeps feet still*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Horse has opposition reflex, won't back up, won't come in... student has trouble with it*
- *Horse is very crooked, backs up or comes forward in an arc*
- *No use of phases, phase 1 is missing or phase 4 is not used if necessary*
- *Going straight to phase 4*

OL5. Play the Circling Game: show 2 laps each way & bring back

LEVEL 1

- *Send is effective; student uses zone 1 or 2*
- *Allow is neutral; student stands relaxed, passes rope behind back, doesn't move feet*
- *Two laps are completed without coaxing or correcting horse*
- *Bring back is effective; drawing on zone 1, driving zone 4*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Incorrect use of zones*
- *No neutral, horse cannot maintain circles for min. 2 laps*
- *Difficult to bring horse back, takes more than one and a half circles*
- *Horse is scared, has opposition reflex*

OL6. Play the Sideways Game: using a fence, show both sides

LEVEL 1

- *Student uses most, if not all of the rope*
- *Rhythmic use of Carrot Stick or swinging tail of rope*
- *Effective driving of appropriate zones (especially 1 and 4)*
- *Student walks along next to fence, does not get pulled away*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Horse has opposition reflex*
- *Incorrect or ineffective use of zones*
- *Student is pulled away from fence*

OL7. Play the Squeeze Game: show both ways and over a jump

LEVEL 1

- *Student stands near fence, no more than 4 -5 feet away*
- *Sends horse in a "straight" line as opposed to off a circle*
- *Shows Squeeze both ways*
- *Releases rope and allows it to slide as horse goes by*
- *Student directs and drives horse over jump from a few feet away*
- *Student know what to do if horse refuses the jump on the first try*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Squeeze is more like a circling game, no disengagement to reverse direction*
- *No release of rope as horse goes through or over jump*
- *Too big a gap, is not enough of a squeeze*
- *Horse panics, goes through in right brain mode*
- *Horse refuses jump and student cannot fix the problem on his own*

OL8. Back your horse through a gate

LEVEL 1

- *Student uses good position, keeps feet still at first, then moves if necessary*
- *Horse backs through, no opposition reflex*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Student shuffles feet around, moves more than the horse!*
- *Horse has opposition reflex, doesn't want to go through gate, scared*

OL9. Run forwards with your horse, stop and back up without looking at him

LEVEL 1

- *Student gives plenty of rope to horse*
- *Horse follows without dragging*
- *When student stops and backs up, horse stops and backs up*
- *Student may flap arms or wiggle rope behind back to cause horse to back up*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Horse drags, does not lead well*
- *Rope is too short, student pulling horse onto his heels*
- *Horse does not stop, runs past or into student*
- *Horse doesn't back up, student runs into horse*

OL10. Trailer Load while standing outside the trailer. Close the gate, wait 10 seconds, open it and unload your horse.

LEVEL 1

- *Student stands outside of trailer*

- *Uses Squeeze Game technique to load horse*
- *Keeps feet still*
- *Throws rope over horse's back as it goes into trailer*
- *Horse stands in trailer calmly and patiently while gate is closed*
- *Horse unloads without resistance (student may ask horse out by rope or by tail)*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Horse resists entering trailer more than once*
- *Student enters trailer*
- *Horse cannot stay inside, runs out before asked or when asked to stand in there*
- *Horse gets scared when gate is closed*
- *Horse runs out when gate is opened, doesn't wait until asked out*
- *Horse won't come out when asked, or runs out, scared*

FREESTYLE RIDING PHASE

Saddle, Halter and 12' Line or Savvy String (one rein only)

FS1. Saddle your horse from the Indian side with lead rope over your arm

LEVEL 1

- *Horse stands quietly*
- *Rope is over student's arm, slack not taut*
- *Saddle is placed gently and politely, like a hug*
- *Cinches are adjusted in three phases, moving the horse in between*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Horse will not stand still, gets scared or aggressive when saddled or cinched*
- *Rope is taut or horse is tied up. If rope is on ground, don't ask for resubmit but advise student to know safe way to handle rope when saddling*
- *Rope is on the wrong arm*
- *Approaches with saddle like a grizzly bear*
- *Saddle is thrown up unpolitely, lands with a thud on horse*
- *Cinch is pulled tight too soon, student does not move horse around between cinchings*

FS2. Mount from both sides, stepping up and down 3 times

LEVEL 1

- *Horse stands still*
- *Student holds inside rein and mane, does not have horse's head bent around (lack of trust / respect)*
- *Holds mane in one hand, saddle horn / pommel or cantle in other*
- *Steps up and down three times, both sides*
- *Student looks horse in the eye during mounting, turns belly button toward eye*
- *Asks permission before forking leg over the horse's back, settles into saddle politely and with feeling*
- *Sits quietly once mounted*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Horse will not stand still (moves more than once, student does not know how to correct)*
- *Horse's head bent around (not trusting horse)*
- *Student cannot step up and down three times (medical problems notwithstanding)*
- *Student does not look horse in the eye, looking down, etc.*
- *Belly button is across saddle rather than pointing forward (unsafe)*
- *No permission, hurries up to put leg over, lands with a thud*
- *Student rides off immediately, horse walks off, no attention to horse knowing it's his responsibility to stand still*

FS3. Show lateral flexion to both sides

LEVEL 1

- *Horse bends without opposition reflex*
- *Correct rein position is used: student brings hand and rein to front of thigh*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Horse resists or fights bend, emotionally troubled*
- *Incorrect rein position: behind leg, up to belly button, etc.*
- *One side is markedly worse*

FS4. Disengage the hindquarters and lead the front end around

LEVEL 1

- *Correct rein position: indirect rein, belly button or opposite shoulder, fingernails up. direct rein, arm high and elbow straight with pinky finger on the outside*
- *Focus is over horse's tail for HQ and up and out for FQ*
- *Horse disengages hindquarters, hind legs stepping under as they cross and follows the feel of the direct rein moving his front legs more than his back legs.*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Incorrect rein position: to hip, thigh, etc. for indirect or too low with finger nails up for direct*
- *No focus*
- *Horse does not disengage, runs backwards, etc. or continues to move his hind more than his front with a direct rein.*

FS5. Back your horse up a few steps

LEVEL 1

- *Focus is straight ahead*
- *Back up is effected by bouncing the rein or steady pressure*
- *If horse turns head, student shows enough savvy to increase bouncing rhythm or to swing tail of rope to counteract*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Student looking at horse*
- *Horse resists backing up*
- *Pulls too hard on rein, causes head to turn*
- *Does not know how to correct head turning*

FS6. Ride 2 wide figures of 8 at the trot

LEVEL 1

- *Shows turns and counter turns*
- *Maintains the trot*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Turns are difficult or not made, counter turn shows resistance, head to outside*
- *Cannot maintain trot*

FS7. Canter and bend to a stop

LEVEL 1

- *Student unafraid to canter (even if only a few strides)*
- *Bends horse effectively, holds bend until horse is stopped and can stay stopped*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Cannot canter*
- *Difficult to bend, let's go before horse is stopped*

LEVEL 1

FINESSE RIDING PHASE

With Natural Hackamore, Saddled

F1. Put the Natural Hackamore on your horse from your knees

LEVEL 1

- *Horse will keep his head down with little or no help*
- *Student correctly fits and ties the hackamore with arm over the horse's neck*
- *Horse looks cooperative and relaxed*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Student forgets how to properly put a hackamore on a horse*
- *Horse looks afraid and tense*
- *Horse can't keep his head down without a lot of help*

F2. Ride sideways to the right and to the left

LEVEL 1

- *Student focuses well ahead, to the side they are going*
- *Opens leading leg, outside leg closed and pushing*
- *Horse goes sideways without opposition reflex*
- *Student knows how to correct horse's zones with rope or hand (swinging or tapping)*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Focus is straight out in front, rather than to the side, or looking down*
- *Leading leg is not open, pushing leg is not pushing*
- *Horse has too much opposition, sideways does not happen for more than a few steps*

F3. Trot around on a casual rein, come toward assessor and show a 9 step Back Up

LEVEL 1

- *9 Steps clearly shown*
- *Good focus*
- *Horse does not have opposition reflex*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *9 Steps not shown, hands too quick*
- *Looking down*
- *Horse has opposition reflex, head in the air, fighting reins, does not back up, very crooked*

F4. Controlled catastrophe

LEVEL 1

- *Student is able to bend the horse easily*
- *Able to keep the horse facing the catastrophe at least 90% of the time*
- *Can easily regain control if the horse gets really scared and turns or takes off.*
- *Maintains a strong focus no matter what*

PRE-LEVEL 1

- *Student loses control of horse for more than a couple of minutes*
- *Student keeps losing focus and allows the horse to turn away repeatedly*