

CHAPTER 17: 4-H ADVANCEMENT LEVELS PROGRAM



What are Advancement Levels?

The levels program is a supplement to the 4-H horse project in Colorado. It is an excellent teaching and learning tool for 4-H leaders and members. The Advancement Level program is a logical, step-by-step guide to teach youngsters horsemanship and horse care. It is a voluntary program. It should be recognized that not every youth will want to master all levels. However, the first two levels teach the basics of horse safety, riding and care for general pleasure and performance, and all members are encouraged to participate in at least Levels I and II. Level III is for the very serious horseman, and Level IV is for the youth that is interested in a career in the equine industry or very serious about his or her riding and training. Level IV is not for everyone.

There are four levels that 4-H members may advance through. These levels are:

- Novice Horseman, Level 1
- Intermediate Horseman, Level 2
- Performer, Level 3
- Advanced Horse Master, Level 4

Level I is divided into Novice western or English. Level 2, Intermediate is also divided into western or English. Level III, Performer and Level IV, Horse Master are divided into four divisions; western, saddle seat, dressage and hunt seat.

Safety and proper basics are stressed throughout the levels program. The skills learned in the beginning levels are reflected in properly mastering the more advanced levels. A solid and consistent foundation is extremely important. Passing the Level II test is required by Colorado State Fair to show in the Colorado 4-H Horse Show.

What is involved?

The Advancement Level program is a teaching guide which combines many aspects of horsemanship and horse care. Reference material for the Advancement Level program include:

- *4-H Horse Project Members Manual*
- *4-H Horse Rulebook (LA1500F)*
- *4-H Horse Judging Guide (M00000G)*
- *The Horse*, by Evans, Borton, Hintz and Van Vleck (used for Levels III & IV)

The program is designed to apply to both English (hunt seat, saddle seat and dressage) and western riding style.



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The levels program involves a *written* and *riding test* in each level. A 4-H member must pass the written test with a score of 80 percent or better *before* taking the riding test. You must also pass the riding test with a score of 80 percent or better on each of the riding test performance maneuvers or requirements.

There is not a time or age limit for passing the levels other than those established for eligibility in the county 4-H program.

For safety reasons in Levels I and II, it is suggested that 4-H members use an older, well-broke horse for their project and the levels tests. It is also suggested that only horses four years of age and over may be used for Levels III and IV, since the requirements are quite advanced. There are no rider age limits. However, those trying the two upper levels need to be old enough to understand the technicalities of advanced horse care and advanced procedures of training.

Changing divisions

Members completing a level in one division (English or Western), may decide to perfect the skills in a different division. For example, if a member completed Level III in Western, but then wishes to train in Dressage, he or she must begin with Level II in English and proceed through the Dressage subdivision. A member may not move laterally from one division to another.

Tests

The written test for each level are identical for English and Western. It is not necessary for 4-H members to retake the written test once he or she has passed it for a certain level.

Ridden tests may be English or Western. A rider does not have to use the same horse all the way through the program; however, this would be most desirable. If you pass all four levels, you may take a second horse through if desired and will receive recognition for the levels passed. Take time to get the basics down properly and do not hurry through the levels.

Proper tack and attire (English or Western) for tests should meet showing standards. Wear appropriate riding attire (boots, hat or helmet, long sleeved shirt, long pants, long hair tied back, etc.).

The following pages are sample score sheets that a 4-H Levels judge would use when scoring a rider. Contact your county Cooperative Extension agent for copies of levels III and IV test for all other divisions.



It is recommended that a 4-H member reach at least Level II, therefore if you want copies of the Levels III and IV test, contact your county Cooperative Extension office.

**WESTERN and ENGLISH NOVICE
Level I
Riding Test — Sample Score Sheet**

Rider's Name: _____ Age: _____ Rater(s): _____
 Address: _____
 Club: _____ County: _____ Date: _____

Directions: To pass this level, the 4-H member must score 8 points out of 10 for each section of the test. Level I emphasizes correct and safe principles of handling and riding.

	Maximum Points	Rating Score	Judge's Comments
*Basic Handling			
A. Properly halter, lead, and tie horse	10		
B. Simple grooming; correct use of tools; pick up feet and clean properly	10		
C. *Bridling and saddling; proper adjustment of equipment	10		
D. Safety around the horse	10		
Riding			
A. *Mount, dismount, mount (mounting block may be used, if necessary)	10		
B. Correct seat, body position, and balance at walk, jog/trot and lope/canter	10		
C. Proper use of reins; hand position and action.	10		
D. Control at the walk; both directions	10		
E. Control at the jog/trot; both directions.	10		
F. Control at the lope/canter; both directions; demonstrating correct leads.	10		
G. Demonstrate balanced, gradual stop from all gaits on a straightaway.	10		
H. Equipment, dress and overall attitude.	10		

* If the size or physical strength prevents the 4-H member from actually performing the skill, verbal explanation will suffice.



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ENGLISH Level II Riding Test — Sample Score Sheet

Rider's Name: _____ Age: _____ Rater(s): _____

Address: _____

Club: _____ County: _____ Date: _____

Directions: To pass this level, the 4-H member must score 8 points out of 10 for each section of the test. Level II asks the rider to show confidence, control and more advanced horsemanship skills.

	Maximum Points	Rating Score	Judge's Comments
*Basic Handling			
A. Properly halter, lead, and tie horse	10		
B. Fitting, grooming, clipping; use of tools on mane, tail, body, legs and feet	10		
C. *Bridling and saddling; proper adjustment of equipment	10		
D. Showmanship skills; walk, trot, stop, turn on hindquarter, back and set ups	10		
Riding			
A. *Mount, dismount, mount (mounting block may be used, if necessary)	10		
B. Demonstrate aids for the following upward transitions: 1) walk to posting trot correct diagonal; 2) walk to sitting trot; 3) posting trot to canter; 4) sitting trot to canter; 5) walk to canter	10		
C. Demonstrate aids for the following downward transitions: 1) canter to sitting trot; 2) canter to posting trot; 3) canter to walk; 4) posting trot to walk; 5) sitting trot to walk.	10		
D. Show a figure 8 at the canter consisting of two large circles showing correct lead changes in both directions through the trot starting from a walk or halt.	10		
E. Show a balanced halt from all gaits on the straightaway.	10		
F. Rein back 3 to 4 steps in a straight line.	10		
G. Show simple changes of lead on the straightaway. Do a minimum of 3 changes, through the trot	10		
H. Turn on the forehand; 90 and 180 degrees in both directions	10		
I. Turn on the hindquarter; 90 and 180 degrees in both directions	10		
J. Overall riding ability: body position, hands and legs, knowledge of diagonals and leads	10		
K. Poise and attitude.	10		

* If size or physical strength prevents the 4-H member from actually performing the skills, a verbal explanation will suffice.



**WESTERN
Level II
Riding Test — Sample Score Sheet**

Rider's Name: _____ Age: _____ Rater(s): _____

Address: _____

Club: _____ County: _____ Date: _____

Directions: To pass this level, the 4-H member must score 8 points out of 10 for each section of the test. Level II asks the rider to show confidence, control and more advanced horsemanship skills.

	Maximum Points	Rating Score	Judge's Comments
*Basic Handling			
A. Properly halter, lead, and tie horse	10		
B. Fitting, grooming, clipping; use of tools on mane, tail, body, legs and feet	10		
C. *Bridling and saddling; proper adjustment of equipment	10		
D. Showmanship skills; walk, trot, stop, turn on hindquarter, back and set ups	10		
Riding			
A. *Mount, dismount, mount (mounting block may be used, if necessary)	10		
B. Demonstrate aid for the following upward transitions: 1) walk to jog; 2)lope to walk; 3) walk to lope.	10		
C. Demonstrate aids for the following downward transitions: 1) lope to jog; 2)lope to walk; 3) jog to walk.	10		
D. Show a balanced stop from all gaits on a straightaway.	10		
E. Back 3 to 4 steps in a straight line.	10		
F. Show a figure 8 at the canter consisting of two large circles with lead changes through the jog in both directions. Begin maneuver from stop or walk.	10		
G. Show simple changes of lead on the straightaway. Do a minimum of 3 changes, each dropping to a jog.	10		
H. Turn on the forehand; 90 and 180 degrees in both directions	10		
I. Turn on the hindquarter; 90 and 180 degrees in both directions	10		
J. Overall riding ability: body position, hands and legs, knowledge of diagonals and leads	10		
K. Poise and attitude.	10		

* If size or physical strength prevents the 4-H member from actually performing the skills, a verbal explanation will suffice.