

**LESSON PLAN 1 – Teach the rider to mount and dismount a horse safely.**

**Pony Club Venue:**

**Date:**

**Rider:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

**Pony:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

**Topics and goals for session:**

1. To have riders mounting correctly from left side either from the ground or mounting block.
2. To have riders dismount correctly to the left side.
3. To have riders mount correctly being legged up.
4. To introduce a new school figure/arena language to riders.
5. To help riders start to ride correct corners.

**Equipment needed and layout:**

- Arena with letters and cones.
- 12 cones – 3 positioned on each corner of the arena as pictured below for riders to ride around so that they don't cut the corners. They could also be used for riders to do the following: 1<sup>st</sup> cone - check position ½ halt, 2<sup>nd</sup> cone - prepare for upward transition, 3<sup>rd</sup> cone – apply aids for upward transition.
- Cones or markers for the game using the B/E line.
- Handler/parent.



**Introduction to session (key points):**

- Introduce yourself and chat to riders about themselves and their mount (some combinations may be new; query what they have been working on since the last rally).
- Different ways to mount – ground, mounting block, legged up.
- Importance of mounting a pony/horse under control.
- Commonly made mistakes when mounting and dismounting.
- Talk about the consequences of not mounting / dismounting correctly – control, twist saddle, sore horse's back etc.

New School figure/arena language – line up on centre line facing B (or E – try not to have riders looking directly into the sun); how to correctly leave the centre line; what is the outer track; ride in open order (explain what to do if rider catches up and gets too close to the horse in front- circle away and find a gap around the arena).

**Gear Check ( List gear to be checked): As per Gear Checking Rules for Pony Club.**

- **Rider:** Clothing - Clean & correctly attired with appropriate Club uniform including safe boots & correctly numbered helmet;  
Hair - Long hair tied back;  
Jewellery - Check jewellery;  
Fitness - Age of rider; weight of rider in comparison to mount.
- **Horse:** Gear - clean; correctly fitted; approved; stitching OK; safe;  
Condition - clean/groomed (no bot eggs), including feet;  
Fitness - age; soundness; what work has mount been doing?  
(Are pony/horse and rider capable of doing planned lesson?)

**Warm up activities and rider exercises:**

Halt, walk and trot using upward and downward transitions, and large school figures, to ensure pony/horse is sound, attentive and listening to rider. (Canter could be included in the warm up but would depend on the rider's level of skill & ability.)

Select some rider exercises to complete on a 20 metre circle.

**New- Skill/s (name of skill):**

- Mount (from ground & mounting block, being legged up) and dismount;
- Line up on centre line facing E or B; leaving the centre line.
- Follow the outer track; riding in open order.
- Ride correct corners.

**Key teaching points and demonstration method:**

Demonstrate using one rider out in front of group (use different rider for each demonstration and ask riders questions to keep them alert and interested).

Explain the steps of mounting correctly from left side – demonstrate.

- Holding reins correctly, and using both hands, check girth and place stirrup irons down on saddle.
- Place reins correctly over pony/horse's head, collect reins and with whip in left hand, rider facing to rear of horse and standing shoulder to shoulder with mount, place left foot in stirrup iron.

Key teaching points and demonstration method (continued):

- **Placing your right hand on pommel of saddle, spring up and land softly in the saddle. (NOTE: Waist of saddle may be used in some circumstances but rider MUST NEVER hold on to the cantle.)**
- **Place right foot into stirrup iron.**

**Explain to handlers how to hold a pony when rider is mounting.**

- **Hold cheek piece of bridle on right side (off side) and hold right stirrup iron if required.**

**Explain the steps of dismounting correctly to the left side (near side) – demonstrate.**

- **Both feet out of stirrup irons. Reins and whip in left hand.**
- **Spring off to left side – bending knees when landing.**
- **Take reins over horses head and, using both hands, hold reins correctly, run stirrup irons up and loosen girth if finished riding.**
- **Lift back of saddle up to allow air flow (enabling horse to cool down more whilst walking back to float/tie up rail, and undo/loosen noseband on bridle (drop, hanovarian etc).**

**Explain the steps of mounting correctly using a mounting block - demonstrate.**

- **Make sure the mounting block is firm and steady (milk crates are not recommended as they can tip easily).**
- **Stand the horse with the shoulder beside the mounting block.**
- **Take the reins over the head in the usual way and mount as usual. but be careful not to dig your toe into your horse's ribs.**
- **It is important that the horse stands still until you are mounted.**

**Explain the steps of mounting being legged up – demonstrate & use handler/parent.**

- **Prepare to mount in the usual way.**
- **Rider standing squarely facing the saddle, lifts the left lower leg backwards from the knee.**
- **Helper stands just to the left of the rider, turns to face him, and then places his left hand under the rider's left knee and his right hand around and under the rider's left ankle.**
- **On the agreed signal, the rider jumps upwards off his right foot, keeping his back straight and shoulders square to the horse's flank. At the same time the helper raises the rider's left leg from the knee being careful to lift straight up rather than towards the horse.**
- **Rider passes his right leg clear over the horse's back, then turns the body to the front, and lowers their seat lightly into the saddle.**

**Use cones on the corners of the arena for riders to ride through so that they don't cut corners. It is very important to train riders to correctly ride accurate corners right from the start.**

**Make sure that when riders are requested to line up that they leave a safe distance between themselves and the rider beside them. Explain definition of outer track and riding in open order (they must know what to do if they catch up and get too close to the pony in front – ie: circle away and find a suitable gap around the arena).**

Key teaching points and demonstration method (continued):

**Don't demonstrate all methods at once – demonstrate one method and then work along line of riders getting them to individually have a go one at a time whilst being watched and checked by coach and/or parent helper. (Keeps riders more active throughout teaching process.)**

**Practice activities:**

- **Line up on centre line for demonstrations, (riders need to practice leaving a safe distance between themselves and the rider beside them and to have ponies standing straight with their heads level to each other in the line-up.**
- **Practice leaving the line-up correctly (stress importance of riders making their pony move straight forward towards the outer track before turning).**
- **Practice riding in open order on the outer track**
- **At markers dismount and mount using different methods (from ground, using mounting block, being legged up) – use parents to hold if necessary.**
- **Make a game by dividing group in two. Riders standing at end of arena. Parents standing next to cones placed on B / E line. Riders ride to cone, dismount, run to other end of arena and back to horse and parent. Riders re-mount and ride back to other end and change over. Can be done at walk or trot and can also involve leading a horse - PPMG rules.**

**Cool Down:**

**Long rein walk using school figures.**

**Session Evaluation and Summary:**

- **Riders to line up on centre line facing B or E.**
- **Discuss with riders what and how they felt - give them some more tips - something to take home to practice. All riders to be involved in this session using question techniques rather than dictating coach's thoughts.**
- **Evaluate the lesson – BE HONEST! - What did you as the coach like?  
- What worked well or didn't work?  
- What would you do differently?**