

## Glossary of Terms

**Aids** - Signals from the rider or driver to the horse that tell the animal what the handler wants it to do. Generally broken down into two varieties, natural and artificial. Other divisions are possible.<sup>[12]</sup>

[Natural aids](#) include the hands, seat, weight, legs and voice<sup>[13]</sup>

[Artificial aids](#), which extend, reinforce, or substitute the natural aids; include items such as [bits](#), [whips](#), [spurs](#), and [martingales](#).<sup>[14]</sup>

**Canter** - A three-beat [horse gait](#), with both front and rear legs on one side landing further forward than those on the other side – see [lead](#) below. The order in which the feet hit the ground varies depending on which legs are [leading](#), but the gait begins with the outside hind, followed by the simultaneous landing of the outside front and inside hind, finished by the inside front. There is a moment during a canter when all four hooves of the horse are off the ground, known as the *moment of suspension*. A similar gait is the *gallop* which is performed at a higher speed, when the second beat is broken into two footfalls, making it a four-beat gait.

**Counter Canter** - A form of the canter where the horse is deliberately asked to canter on a curve with the outside leg [leading](#), which is opposite of usual.

**Cross Canter (also called disunited)** – when the rear legs are not following the same lead as the front legs. Often seen when a lead change is not fully completed.

**Diagonal** - At a trot, the set of legs that move forward at the same are the "diagonal" pair. When a rider posts while riding at the trot, they can rise either matching when the left or the right foreleg and opposite hind leg hits the ground. If they sit when the left foreleg strikes, they are on the left diagonal, if they sit when the right foreleg strikes, it is the right diagonal. When riding clockwise, the rider is to post the left diagonal, when riding counter-clockwise the rider is to post the right diagonal. In other words, when riding a circle, the rider sits when the outside front and inside hind legs are on the ground.

**Equitation** “The Art of Riding on Horseback” Geoff Teall. It is all about a rider's ability, balance and form which in turn bring out the very best of a horse's ability.

**Gait** - The way a horse moves its legs is a gait. They are divided into natural gaits, which are those performed by most horses, and those that are either trained by humans or that are specific to a few breeds. The natural gaits are walk, [trot](#), [canter](#), and gallop.

**Hand gallop** - A controlled gallop, with a speed between that of a canter and a full gallop. Derives from the fact that the gallop is under control of the rider's hand. Often used to show a horse's ground-covering stride in horse show competition.

**Impulsion** - the powerful thrust from the hindquarters that propels the horse forward.

**Lead** - The leading legs of the horse at the [canter](#) and [Gallop](#). The front and hind legs on one side of the horse appear to land in front of the other set of front and hind legs when the horse travels. On a curve, a horse is generally asked to lead with the inside legs, though there are exceptions to the general rule, such as the [counter canter](#).

**Lead change** - The act of a horse changing from one lead to the other. When performed at a canter or gallop, it is a "flying change." When the horse is dropped to a slower gait and then asked to canter again but on the opposite lead, it is a "simple change."

**Martingale** - A piece of tack that is used on horses to control head carriage, used for both riding and driving.

**Medal Class** - is a specialty class judged solely on rider ability. Today's Medal will have three phases. The first will be an over fences phase with between 8 and 12 fences. This phase is to "test" rider ability to navigate certain types of fences. The course designer may also put in a trot jump, a roll back turn, or a hand gallop to a single oxer. From the best of the first phase a judge will bring back the top twelve riders for the second phase which is the flat phase. From that group, the judge will select the top four riders who will perform a "ride off" test of the judge's design. In testing the final top four, a judge is looking for outstanding ability, with attention to consistency in rhythm and pace. At the completion of the test, a judge might also ask each rider individually to answer an horsemanship related question.

**On the bit** - A horse who is flexed at the poll, moving forward well, holding the bit without fuss, and is responsive to the rider. Being on the bit comes from engagement and forward movement of the horse's hind end, not being pulled in to place by the reins.

**On the buckle** - Holding the reins very loose, literally only holding the reins by the buckle that joins the reins together.<sup>1</sup>

**Oxer** – a fence with two sets of rails, the back rails slightly higher than the front rails

**Pace** – the rate of speed at which the horse is moving

**Posting** – at the trot in which the rider rises from the saddle every second beat – to be done on the correct diagonal.

**Roll back** – turning between fences to get to the next fence

**Sitting trot** – sitting, as opposed to posting, during the trot

**Stride** – one full completion of the placement of feet during the canter.

**Tack** - The term for all the equipment that horses wear, such as saddles, bridles and halters.