

HorseSense Learning Levels
HORSESENSE CURRICULUM:

RED LEVEL

The **Red HorseSense Level** is designed to introduce unmounted horse handling and care to beginner riders and non-riding horse enthusiasts.

This Level emphasizes **safety for both horse and human** while teaching important **ground handling skills, equine terminology and basic horsekeeping**.

WHO IS RED LEVEL FOR?

-  **Adults and children (typically age 8 and up).** *Younger children (or students who cannot handle a horse independently) should start with our age-appropriate **Rainbow Level** instead.*
-  **Beginners with ZERO horse experience** - especially students just starting to ride.
-  **Beginners with previous unstructured horse experience**, or those with "gaps" in their equine knowledge.
-  **Parents of young riders** interested in learning basic horse knowledge.
-  **Volunteers** assisting with therapeutic programs or equine rescue organizations.
-  **Anyone who wants to help** you with barn chores!

WHAT DOES RED LEVEL TEACH?

-  **Important safety practices** and rules for behavior in the barn, pasture and arena.
-  **Equine body language** and communication.
-  **Ground handling skills** including haltering, leading, hoof handling and tying.
-  **Basic grooming and hoof care.**
-  **Parts of the horse** and important equine terminology.
-  **Parts of the saddle and bridle** along with the names, functions and care of simple pieces of tack.
-  **Rules for safe feeding** and how to identify horse-quality hay, grain and water sources.
-  **The importance of stable management** and how to muck out a stall.

We consider Red HorseSense Level to be the most important Level in our curriculum.

This level of knowledge is necessary for *everyone* who wishes to safely spend time at the barn. You may wish to teach **Red Level** as:

-  **A prerequisite** or introductory course before students start mounted lessons.
-  **A rainy-day supplement** to your regular mounted lessons.
-  **An unmounted course of study**, separate from your regular lesson program, offered to homeschoolers and other groups.
-  **Part of unmounted group activities** in a beginner day camp or clinic program.



HORSESENSE CURRICULUM:

YELLOW LEVEL

The **Yellow HorseSense Level** is the second Level in the HorseSense curriculum, designed to build on **Red Level** knowledge while giving students the skills necessary to pitch in around the barn.

This Level introduces more **horsey terminology** along with some **basic horse care skills** – and helps students understand just how much there is to learn about keeping horses safe and healthy!

WHO IS YELLOW LEVEL FOR?

- 🐾 Students who have **completed Red HorseSense Level**.
- 🐾 **Riding lesson students** who may be expected to assist with routine barn chores such as blanketing and feeding.
- 🐾 **Volunteers, working students**, or anyone you want to trust to handle and care for your horses independently.
- 🐾 **Students and parents** interested in learning more about horsekeeping and the realities of horse ownership.
- 🐾 **Students** interested in leasing a lesson horse in the future.
- 🐾 **Anyone who cleans school horse tack** on a regular basis!

WHAT DOES YELLOW LEVEL TEACH?

- 🐾 **How to safely put on and remove** horse blankets and protective boots.
- 🐾 **Tack cleaning** and assembly.
- 🐾 **Essential horse identification terms** including coat colors, markings, basic breeds and breed types.
- 🐾 **Understanding of the equine digestive process** and the “reasons for the rules” related to feeding.
- 🐾 **Normal TPR ranges** and reasons for taking vital signs.
- 🐾 **Signs of colic** along with common causes - and consequences.
- 🐾 **How to identify a veterinary emergency**, including injury, illness and lameness.

It takes HorseSense to be helpful around the barn.

This Level is designed to create confident, trustworthy volunteers, full of skills and concepts that we found necessary for students working in the barn. (Including the ability to recognize a situation where they should ask for help!)

Students enrolled in traditional mounted lessons can complete **Yellow Level** through regular horse care chores, pre-ride skill demonstrations and discussion breaks.

However, a few objectives - such as bridle assembly - will be easier with dedicated unmounted lesson and practice time. A small amount of independent study and review may be required for students to master all of the terminology in this Level.



HorseSense Learning Levels
HORSESENSE CURRICULUM:

GREEN LEVEL

The **Green HorseSense Level** expands students' knowledge of equine health and safety while broadening their horsey horizons.

This Level covers **basic first aid and stable management practices** along with the knowledge necessary for ethical equestrian activities, such as **tack fitting** and **fitness for horse and rider**.

WHO IS GREEN LEVEL FOR?

-  Students who have **completed the Red and Yellow HorseSense Levels**.
-  **Students and parents** interested in learning more about horsekeeping and the realities of horse ownership.
-  **Students** interested in leasing a lesson horse in the future.
-  **Students** who are interested in trail riding, competing, exercising horses, etc. - outside of your direct supervision.
-  **Volunteers, working students**, or anyone you want to trust to handle and care for your horses independently.
-  **Enthusiastic, self-directed learners** eager to discover more about horses and horse care.

WHAT DOES GREEN LEVEL TEACH?

-  **The importance of evaluating tack fit** along with basic guidelines for assessing saddles, halters and bridles.
-  **Parts of an equine first aid kit** and the intended purpose of each item.
-  **Basic bandaging skills**, including the uses and application of a stable wrap.
-  **Preventative care** required to maintain a horse's health throughout the year.
-  **How to administer dewormer** and **estimate the horse's weight**.
-  **Horse sports** and breeds that excel at various disciplines.
-  **Equine fitness timelines** and the importance of preparation for activities such as trail riding.

All serious equestrians need Green HorseSense knowledge and skills.

We use this Level as a prerequisite for many opportunities within our program, including the ability to lease and compete. As our students gain independence, they also gain responsibility, whether they own their own horse or work with a lesson mount. This Level is particularly important for riders interested in trail riding or equestrian sport as it emphasizes the importance of preparation.

Expect that your students will need some dedicated unmounted practice to master **Green Level** barn skills! Independent study may also be required for learning about breeds and disciplines.



HorseSense Learning Levels
HORSESENSE CURRICULUM:

BLUE LEVEL

The **Blue HorseSense Level** challenges students to deepen their understanding of horse care, tack and anatomy, helping them become knowledgeable and responsible horsey caretakers.

This Level explores more **complex topics such as conformation, soundness, and biting** along with practical skills such as **trailer loading** and **longeing**.

WHO IS BLUE LEVEL FOR?

-  Students who have **completed the Red through Green HorseSense Levels**.
-  **Students and parents** interested in learning more about horsekeeping and the realities of horse ownership. (Whether they intend to keep the horse at home or not!)
-  **Students** who wish to be qualified to compete or travel off-property, with lesson horses or their own horses.
-  **Staff members, volunteers, working students**, or anyone who may be expected to handle and care for your horses independently.
-  **Backyard horse owners** interested in continuing their education or checking for gaps in their knowledge.

WHAT DOES BLUE LEVEL TEACH?

-  **The intended purpose and fit of different tack pieces** such as nosebands, martingales, breastplates, etc.
-  **How to apply a polo wrap** and awareness of potential dangers.
-  **Simple first aid skills** and methods of controlling **parasites**.
-  **Basic biomechanics of horse gaits** and how to detect faulty movement or lameness.
-  **How to evaluate conformation** and the relationship between a horse's structure, posture, and soundness.
-  **Equine travel safety** including loading techniques and routine trailer inspections.
-  **Guidelines for safe longeing** and how to handle longeing equipment.

Blue HorseSense Level should be a minimum goal for aspiring horse owners.

It takes knowledge and experience to make educated decisions about horses. **This Level encourages critical thinking skills** by exploring more nuanced topics - and by taking a hard look at the consequences of uninformed riding, training and horse care practices.

Blue Level students are no longer beginners and may need to Level Up their commitment in order to complete these more challenging objectives. While it is technically possible to work **Blue Level HorseSense** into mounted lessons, most students will need dedicated unmounted lesson time to feel confident in their knowledge and abilities.



HorseSense Learning Levels
HORSESENSE CURRICULUM:

ORANGE LEVEL

In **Orange HorseSense Level**, students begin to look at the big picture of equine management, learning to think like a horse and consider the long-term effects of feeding, training and health care practices.

This Level revisits some topics from previous Levels, expanding them to include greater detail, allowing students to make informed riding and horse care decisions.

WHO IS ORANGE LEVEL FOR?

-  Students who have **completed all previous HorseSense Levels**.
-  **Students and parents** interested in learning more about horsekeeping and the realities of horse ownership - especially if they plan to care for a horse on their own someday.
-  **Students** who regularly ride or care for horses independently.
-  **Students** who need to learn more about equine fitness for mounted activities.
-  **Assistant instructors, working students or volunteers** who may be asked to help set poles, jumps or obstacles in the arena.
-  **Barn staff** or anyone else who may be required to make decisions about your horses' care.

WHAT DOES ORANGE LEVEL TEACH?

-  **Equine behavior theory** and the importance of species-appropriate riding and stable management practices.
-  **Distances for ground poles** and other discipline-specific arena setups.
-  **How to longe a horse** for exercise safely.
-  **Preventative health care routines** including specific immunizations and dental care.
-  **Hoof wrapping** techniques.
-  **Conformation judging** and the influence of posture and breed type.
-  **Equine nutrition concepts** including the digestive process and how to calculate rations.
-  **How to create a conditioning plan** for a strenuous activity.

Orange HorseSense allows students to make educated decisions that keep horses happy and healthy.

Students who earn an Orange HorseSense ribbon begin to grasp how all aspects of horsemanship are connected, including equine psychology, anatomy, stable management, and training practices. While they should still ride and care for a horse with experienced mentorship, they will gain confidence in their own abilities through expanded knowledge and experience with a variety of horsemanship skills.

This is an intermediate Level and will require dedicated hours of study and supervised practice. Basic math skills are necessary for calculating striding and feed rations.



HorseSense Learning Levels
HORSESENSE CURRICULUM:

PURPLE LEVEL

Purple HorseSense students begin to study different facets of equine management in depth, resulting in a foundation of knowledge that can be used to become a responsible rider, trainer or horse owner.

This Level includes practical skills common to horse ownership and emphasizes the importance of prevention as well as recognizing and addressing horsekeeping challenges.

WHO IS PURPLE LEVEL FOR?

-  Students who have **completed all previous HorseSense Levels.**
-  **Students and parents** who plan to own and care for horses independently, at home or in a self-care boarding facility.
-  **Anyone interested in working at a barn** or pursuing an equestrian career.
-  **Students who compete** and are interested in learning more about grooming and turnout.
-  **Staff members, volunteers, working students,** or anyone who may be expected to handle and care for your horses on a regular basis.
-  **Backyard horse owners** interested in continuing their education or checking for gaps in their knowledge.

WHAT DOES PURPLE LEVEL TEACH?

-  **More advanced grooming skills** such as braiding, sheath cleaning, and mane care.
-  **How to evaluate a horse's movement** on the longe line.
-  **Bandaging techniques** used for shipping bandages and tail wraps.
-  **Symptoms, causes, treatment options and prevention** of equine diseases and ailments.
-  **Identification of toxic plants, unsoundnesses and horseshoes.**
-  **Stable management routines** designed to maintain a horse's health and create a safe, species-appropriate environment.
-  **The economic realities of horse ownership** and how to construct a budget.

PurpleSense Level is for dedicated, responsible equestrians.

To earn a **Purple Level** ribbon, students must show **a depth of understanding that would allow them to teach a subject or put it into practice.** They should demonstrate a genuine desire to become informed in all aspects of horse management, putting the horse's welfare first and foremost.

Not all recreational students will achieve this Level. Mastering **Purple HorseSense** requirements can require hours of study, critical thinking, and hands-on practice. **Students should be prepared to supplement unmounted lesson time and demonstrate active learning** through repeated practice, discussion, and outside study from books, videos and credible online sources.



HorseSense Learning Levels
HORSESENSE CURRICULUM:

TEAL LEVEL

Teal Level is the most advanced Level in the HorseSense curriculum, designed for dedicated equestrians ready to deepen their understanding of all aspects of horsemanship.

This Level challenges students to make educated decisions and take on increased responsibility while demonstrating thorough knowledge of anatomy, training and horse care practices.

WHO IS TEAL LEVEL FOR?

-  Students who have **completed all previous HorseSense Levels.**
-  **Students and parents** who plan to own and care for horses independently, at home or in a self-care boarding facility.
-  **Anyone interested in working at a barn,** studying veterinary medicine or pursuing an equestrian career.
-  **Competitive equestrians** ready to expand their knowledge of equine fitness, course design and judging.
-  **Staff members, volunteers, working students,** or lessees who may be expected to make horse care decisions in your absence.
-  **Aspiring or apprentice instructors.**

WHAT DOES TEAL LEVEL TEACH?

-  **Progressive training techniques** used to start a horse under saddle along with **basic dressage principles.**
-  Safe, logical **course design.**
-  **Equine anatomy** including skeletomuscular structure and systems of the horse.
-  **The role of alternative therapies** in horse care and the responsible use of **equine medications.**
-  **Conditioning programs and conformation** related to various disciplines.
-  **Equine nutrition** and how to balance a horse's diet.
-  **Facility design principles** and the importance of equine disaster planning.

Teal Level is not the end of the journey, but the beginning.

Students with Teal Level knowledge will be well prepared to pursue equine higher learning or work in the horse industry. They should demonstrate initiative by actively seeking out knowledge, allowing them to manage their own horses ethically and effectively and pursue career or competitive goals.

Teal Level students can mentor and inspire younger students and often make excellent apprentice instructors - but while it includes a teaching objective, this Level is focused on general horsemanship and should not be considered an instructor's training course!

