



Horse Showmanship

Horse showmanship is all about how you execute a pattern with your horse. This requires you to work as a team with your horse. You will be judged on your appearance and poise, as well as how you interact with the horse you are showing. Find fellow exhibitors and leaders enrolled in the horse project to help you learn the proper way to handle a horse. Although you may not be asked questions, it is important to review the information below to help you become more familiar with horses and the horse industry, which will only help you in showmanship. You will be required to perform a pattern with your horse with a halter and lead. Remember to try your best, smile, and do not forget your horse is working hard for you!

Handling, Posing & Examination of Horses

Horse showmanship will require a halter, lead, and positive attitude. Make sure when holding the lead you do not touch the chain. Each horse may respond to different commands so be sure to review all commands with the owner of the horse. Once you have reviewed the pattern and are ready for show, follow the steps and guidelines below:

- Hold your lead rope with your right hand next to the chain but still on the leather. Left hand has the excess leather folded in it.
- Enter the ring with your horse on your right side.
- Follow with one horse length (app. 8 ft.) between your horse and the one ahead of you.
- Line up with at least 10 ft. between and the other horses.
- Always walk, trot, turn, or back on the left side of your horse. You should be about at the middle of the neck. Look where you are going, not at the horse or the ground. Walk at a brisk pace. Your hand needs to be quiet and gentle, do not jerk or pull on the halter.
- To stop your horse you need to stop walking, lift your hands slightly and say “whoa”.
- Set up your horse while keeping a close watch on the judge, moving out of the line of vision as she walks around your horse. To set up your horse take your right hand, with the lead, and gently push towards the hoof you want the horse to move. The horse’s legs should look like a table when it is set up.
- Keep your horse set up and alert, but do not draw attention to yourself.
- When instructed, walk your horse directly to the judge and stop 5 to 10 feet in front of her/him.
- Expect to be asked some questions.

To contact an expert in your area, visit msue.anr.msu.edu/experts or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464)

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- The judge will walk around for an inspection. You need to move to the other side when the judge is at the nose, withers, tail, and withers again. When the judge is at the nose you are on the opposite side, otherwise you are on the same side. The easiest way to remember which side you're supposed to be on is to ask yourself these questions; if the judge took a picture of you and your horse, would it look nice? Also, are you in the judge's way?
- To turn your horse, you only need to raise your hand slightly and walk towards the horse's face and they will move away from you.
- When instructed, pivot your horse on the hind legs to the right and trot away from the judge.
- To trot a horse, remain on the left side, and break into a slow jog and your horse will trot alongside you. Do not look at the horse, look where you are going and at your judge.
- Trot through the line of horses, pivot and set your horse up again.
- Keep showing your horse until you leave the ring!
- Congratulate yourself and thank your horse for a job well done.

Showmanship Questions and Answers

Questions:

1. What is the temperature of a horse?
2. What color is your horse?
3. What is colic?
4. What is a mare?
5. What is a stallion?
6. What breed is the horse?
7. What is the gestation period of a horse?

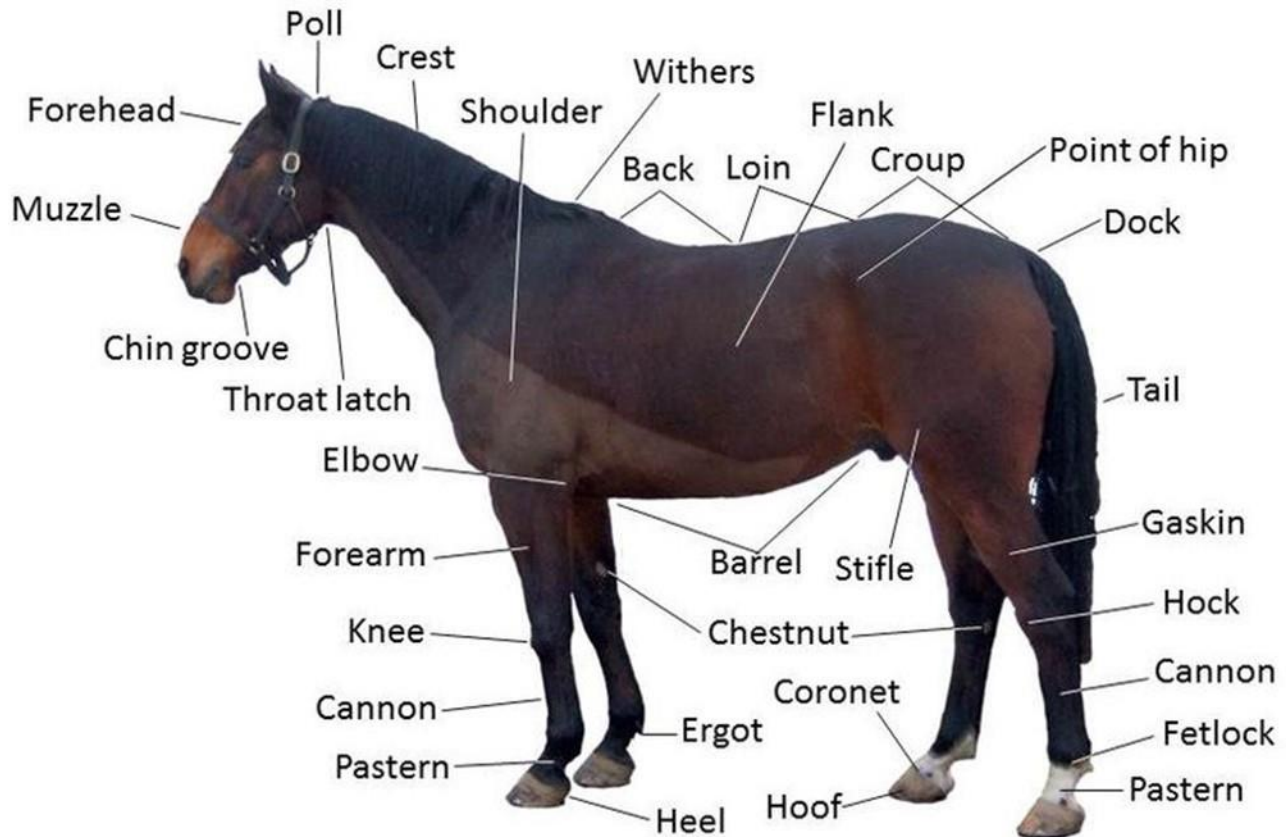
Answers:

1. Approximately 101°F.
2. Answers will vary. Review names of colors and be prepared to demonstrate your knowledge on this topic.
3. Colic is a stomachache. It can be caused from feed, water when they are too hot, heat, and medicine. When they are colicky they need to be kept from rolling.
4. A female horse.
5. An intact horse.
6. Answers will vary. Be sure to ask the owner of the horse and be able to answer any breed questions on horses.
7. About 11 months.

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