

A
GLOSSARY
OF
HORSE WORDS



Words printed in italics within a definition can also be found in this glossary.

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A

aged: a horse that is four years or older (also called senior).

aid: a signal that a rider gives a horse to ask him to do something, such as *walk* or *stop*. *Western riders* use the word *cue* to mean the same thing.

alfalfa (al-FAL-fa): a kind of grass that's made into *hay*.

amateur (AM-a-chur): a person who rides or works with horses without being paid for it. The opposite of an amateur is a *professional*.

American Quarter Horse Youth Association: a part of the *American Quarter Horse Association* for young people under the age of eighteen. It's also called AQHYA, the letters that start each word.

AQHA: These four letters are another way of saying *American Quarter Horse Association*.

American Quarter Horse Association: the group that helps American Quarter Horses and the people who own them. It's also called *AQHA*, the letters that start each word.

arena: another word for a large riding ring, especially one at a horse show.

B

back cinch: the rear *girth* on a *Western saddle*.

bald face: a wide white *marking* on a horse's face from above the eyes to the bottom of the nose.

bale: a heavy block of *hay*.

barley: a grain that's used as *feed* for horses.

barrel: the middle part of a horse's body, between the front legs and the *hind* legs.

barrel racing: a horse-show event where, one at a time, riders *gallop* their horses around three barrels. The fastest time from start to finish wins.

bars: the spaces between a horse's front and back teeth where the *bit* goes.

bay: the color of a horse that has a brown body and a black *mane* and tail.

bedding: wood shavings, sawdust, or *straw* that covers the floor of a stall. Bedding makes standing or lying down more comfortable for the horse.

billet (BILL-it): the strap on a *saddle* that the *girth* or the *cinch* buckles to.

bit: the metal part of a *bridle* that goes in the horse's mouth. One end of the *reins* is attached to the bit, and the rider gives the horse *cues* to stop or turn by pulling on the reins.

blacksmith: a person who puts shoes on horses. Blacksmith is another word for *farrier*.

black: the color of a horse that has a black body and black *mane* and tail.

blaze: a wide white *marking* that goes all the way down the horse's face. A blaze is narrower than a *bald face*.

blue roan: the color of a horse that has a body of white and black hairs and a black *mane*, tail and legs.

board: the money paid to keep a horse at someone else's stable.

body brush: a brush with thick hair that's used to clean a horse's body.

bosal (bo-SAL): the part of the *hackamore* that goes around the horse's nose.

bounce pad: a foam rubber pad that goes between the *saddle* and the horse's back.

box stall: a square stall in a barn. A box stall is wider and more comfortable for a horse than a straight stall.

bran: a horse *feed* made of the outside part of *oats* or wheat.

breast-collar: straps that go around a horse's chest and keep the *saddle* from sliding back.

breed: a group of animals from the same family that look alike. The American Quarter Horse is a breed.

bridle: the *tack* that a horse wears on his head to hold the *bit* in his mouth.

brow-band the part of the *bridle* that goes across the horse's forehead.

brown: the color of a horse that has a brown or black body. His nose is brown, and his *mane* and tail are black.

buckskin: the color of a horse that has a dark yellow or gold body and a black *mane* and tail.

C

calf roping: a horse-show *class* where a horse is judged on how well he moves to help the rider rope a calf.

cannon: the lower part of a horse's leg, from the *knee* or the *hock* down to the *fetlock*.

canter: the three-beat *gait* known in *Western riding* as *lope*.

cantle (CAN-til): the back of a *saddle*.

cavesson (CAV-a-son): the part of an English *bridle* that goes around the horse's nose.

Certificate of Registration (sur-TIFF-a-kit of rej-is-TRAY-shun): a paper from AQHA that proves that a horse is really an American Quarter Horse. The paper gives the horse's name, the year he was born and the name of his owner.

champion: the horse or dier that gets the highest score in a horse-show *division*.

chaps (also said as if spelled "shaps"): a kind of leather pants that cover just the rider's legs. Chaps are often worn in certain Western horse-show *classes*.

chariot: a small wagon with two wheels used in *chariot racing*.

chariot racing: races where teams of two horses pull a *chariot*. The person who drives the chariot is called a *cutter*.

cheeks: the arms on the rings of some *snaffle* bits. They keep the rings from slipping into the horse's mouth.

cheek-piece: the straps on a *bridle* that hold the *bit* in the horse's mouth.

chestnut (CHEST-nut): the color of a horse that has a light brown body, *mane* and tail. The chestnut color is very close to the *sorrel* color.

chip: to take an extra little step in front of a jump. A horse that chips in a *hunter* class will lose points for not jumping smoothly.

cinch: the strap on a Western *saddle* that goes under the horse's stomach and keeps the saddle in place.

claiming race: a type of horse race. Horses that run in a claiming race are for sale.

class: each event of a horse show.

clear round: in *jumper* classes, a *go-round* in which the horse doesn't knock down any fences. Also called a clean round.

clover: a kind of grass that made into *hay*.

colic: the word for a horse's stomach-ache.

colt: a male horse under the age of four.

combination: two or three fences in a *hunter* or *jumper* class that are close to each other.

conformation (con-for-MAY-shun): how a horse compares to the way a perfect horse should look. A horse that looks like a perfect horse is said to have good conformation. Horses in *halter* classes in horse shows are judged on their conformation.

cooler: a light blanket that keeps the horse from catching a chill.

corn: the same food that people eat that is also fed to horses.

coronet: the part of the foot right above the *hoof*. Also, a white *marking* around the top of the hoof.

corral (kor-AL): another word for a riding ring or *arena*, or a fenced place where horses are herded together.

course: all the fences in a *hunter* or *jumper* class. If they are jumped out of order, the rider is off course and will receive no score.

cow: the word that cowboys call any kind of cow, steer or calf.

cow sense: a horse's being able to figure out the next move that a cow, calf or steer is going to make.

cow work: the second part of a *working cow horse* class, where the horse and rider try to control the cow. See also *dry work*.

crest: the top part of a horse's neck, on either side of the *mane*.

crop: a riding whip that has a wrist strap.

cross-canter: when the front legs *canter* on one *lead* and the *hind* legs canter on the other lead. It's also called cross firing.

cross tie: to tie a horse with two ropes, one on each side of his *halter*.

croup (croop): the top of the horse's back from behind the *saddle* to the tail.

crown-piece (KROWN-peece): the part of the *bridle* that goes over the horse's head, behind his ears.

cue: a Western word for the signals a rider gives the horse. Also called *aid*.

curb: the type of *bit* that has arms called *shanks*. The shanks act as levers and press the bit against the horse's mouth and head. A curb bit almost always has a *port*. Curb bits are usually worn by Western horses.

curb chain or *curb strap*: a chain or strap that goes behind the horse's chin. It is used with a *curb* bit.

curry comb: a metal or hard rubber brush used to scrape dried dirt off a horse's body.

cutter: the person who rides a *cutting* horse. Also, the person who drives the horses in a *chariot race*.

cutting: a horse-show *class* where a horse is judged on how well he moves one cow away from a *herd*, then keeps the cow from running back to the herd. The word cut means to move a cow away from the herd.

D

dally: to wrap a rope around the saddle *horn* after a steer or calf has been roped. The word comes from the Spanish phrase *de la vuelta* (deh la voo-WELL-ta), meaning to turn the rope.

dally team roping: a horse-show event where a horse is judged on how well he helps his rider tope the head or the *hind* feet of a steer. See the words *header* and *heeler*.

dam: the mother of a horse.

diagonal (di-AGG-uh-null): when a rider *posts* the *trot* and circles to the right, the rider rises out of the *saddle* when the horse's right front leg hits the ground. The rider is then on the left diagonal. Circling to the left, the rider rises when the left front leg hits the ground. The rider is then on the right diagonal. Those are the correct diagonals to be on when trotting in those directions.

division: a group of horse-show *classes* that all have the same event. For example, the *halter* division, or the *trail* horse division.

dock: the thick top part of the tail.

dressage (dre-SAHJ): a French word that means training.

driver: the persons who holds the *reins* in a *pleasure-driving* class.

dry work: the first part of a *working cow horse* class, where the horse and rider do a pattern of circles, rundowns and other movements. The dry work comes before the horse and rider *work* the cow.

dun: a horse with a yellowish or gold body, a black or brown mane and tail, a dark stripe along his back and stripes on his legs.

E

earpiece: the part of a Western *bridle* that goes over the horse's ear. It keeps the bridle from slipping off.

English: a style of riding based on jumping. The word is also used to describe the equipment used in this style of riding, such as an English *saddle*.

enter: to sign up for a horse show or race.

entry: a horse that takes part in a horse show or runs in a race.

equine (EE-kwine): another word for horse.

equitation (eh-kwe-TAY-shun): another word for *horsemanship*.

equitation over fences: a horse-show *class* where *amateur* or youth riders are judged on how well their horses jump over a *course* of fences.

E

farrier (FAH-ree-yer): a person who puts shoes on horses. A farrier is sometimes called a *blacksmith*.

fault: a score in a *jumper* class for knocking down a fence or not jumping a fence or going too slowly. The horse that has the fewest faults is the winner.

feed: grain and other kinds of food that make a horse strong.

fence work: the second part of a *working cow horse* class, when the horse and rider *work* a cow. See also *dry work*.

fender: the wide pieces of leather on the stirrup *leathers* of a Western *saddle*. Fenders keep the stirrup leathers from rubbing against the rider's legs.

fetlock: the part of the horse's lower leg above the foot, where the *pastern* and the *cannon* meet.

field keeping: keeping a horse in a field or a *pasture* instead of in a barn. Also called *pasture keeping*.

filly: a female horse under the age of four.

flake: a slice of *hay* from a *bale*.

flake cinch: some Western *saddles* have two *cinches*. The one in back is called the flank cinch or *back cinch*.

float: to smooth down the sharp edges of a tooth.

flying change of lead: at the *lope* or *canter*, going from one *lead* to the other without *trotting* in between. See also *simple change of lead*.

foal: a *colt* or a *filly* that has not yet been taken away from its mother.

forearm (FOR-arm): the upper part of a horse's front leg, between his body and his *knee*.

forehand: the part of the horse's body that's in front of where the *saddle* goes.

foreleg (FOR-leg): another word for front leg.

forelock (FOR-lock): the part of the *mane* that grows down between the horse's ears.

fork: the front part of a Western *saddle*.

forward seat: a style of *English* riding used for jumping. The name comes from the rider leaning his or her upper body forward to stay in balance with a jumping horse.

frog: the soft, V-shaped part of the bottom of the horse's foot.

G

gait (gate): the order that a horse's feet hit the ground (see pages 11-13). The American Quarter Horse moves at four gaits: the *walk*, the *jog* (also called the *trot*), the *lope* (also called the *canter*), and the *gallop*.

gallop: the four-beat *gait* a horse does when he's running fast.

gaskin (GAS-kin): the top part of the hind leg, between the body and the *hock*.

girth: the strap on an English *saddle* that goes under the horse's belly and keeps the saddle in place.

go-round: each rider's turn in a horse-show *class*.

grade: a horse that doesn't belong to any *breed*.

gray: the color of a horse whose body, *mane* and tail are a mixture of white and dark hairs.

graze: to eat grass.

grazing bit: a *curb* bit that has *shanks* that curve backward. This allows the horse to put his mouth close to the ground to eat grass.

green: a horse that's not yet trained or a horse that's just starting to be trained.

green working hunter: a horse-show *class* for *hunters* that are in their first year of jumping.

grooming: the word for cleaning a horse.

grullo (GROO-lo): the color of a horse that has a light gray body and a black *mane* and tail. The grullo often has a black stripe down his back.

gullet (GULL-et): the open part of a Western *saddle* below the *horn*.

H

hackamore (HACK-a-more): a kind of *bridle* that has not *bit*. Pulling on its *reins* puts pressure on the horse's nose and *cues* the horse to stop.

halt: to stand still

halter: the piece of *tack* that goes on a horse's head, for leading or holding the horse. A halter *class* is also another term for a *conformation* class.

hand: a horse's height is measured in hands. One hand is four inches; a horse that is fifteen hands is sixty inches, or five feet, tall. Horses are measured from their *withers* to the ground.

handicap (HAN-dee-cap): a kind of race in which the faster horses carry more weight than the other horses. This gives the slower horses a better chance to win.

handler: the person who shows a horse to the *judge* in a *halter* class.

hay: dry grass that is fed to horses.

header: in *dally team roping*, the rider who ropes the head of the steer. In *chariot racing*, the header is the person who makes sure the horses are facing straight ahead at the start of the race.

headstall (HEAD-stall): the part of the Western *bridle* that goes over the horse's head and holds the *bit* in the horse's mouth.

heel: the back part of the foot.

heeler: in *dally team roping*, the rider who ropes the steer's back legs.

herd: a group of horses or cows.

hind (HIGHnd): another word for back, used to refer to back legs and feet.

hip: the widest part of the horse's hindquarters, above the hind legs.

hock: the part of *hind* leg where the *gaskin* and the *cannon* come together. The hock works like a person's elbow or knee.

hoof: the hard part of the horse's foot.

hoof pick: a metal tool that's used to clean rocks and dirt out of a horse's foot.

horn: the high piece on the front of a Western *saddle*. It's also called the saddle horn.

horsemanship (HORSE-man-ship): the skill to ride well.

hunt-seat equitation: a horse-show *class* where riders are judged on their *English-style horsemanship*.

hunter: a horse-show *division* where horses are judged on how smoothly they jump over fences.

hunter hack: a horse-show *class* in which horses are judged two ways: first on how they jump, then on how smoothly they move at the *walk, trot* and *canter*.

hunter under saddle: a horse-show *class* in which horses are judged on how smoothly they move at the *walk, trot* and *canter*.

I

irons: another word for the *stirrups* on an English *saddle* or a racing saddle.

J

jockey (JOCK-ee): the person who rides a horse in a race.

jog: the Western word for *trot*, especially a slow trot.

judge: the person who chooses the winners at a horse show.

jump-off: if two or more horses in a *junior* class finish the first *go-round* with the best score, they do another go-round called the jump-off. The horse with the fewest *faults* in the fastest time is the winner.

junior: a horse-show *division* where horses are scored on how many fences they jump without knocking them down.

K

keeper: the little leather circle on a *bridle* that holds the end of a strap so that the strap doesn't flap around.

knee: the part of the front leg where the *forearm* and *cannon* come together.

knee roll: the part of some English *saddles* where the rider's knees rest.

L

lame: having trouble moving because of a sore leg or foot.

latigo (LAT-a-go): the strap that holds the *cinch* on a Western *saddle*.

lead: the leading front foot at the *lope* or *canter*. A horse lopes or canters on either his right or his left lead. When he circles to the left, he should be on his left lead; going to the right, he should be on his right lead.

lead shank: a strap or rope that snaps to the *halter*. A person holds the other end to lead a horse.

leather: the strap that holds the *stirrup*.

leather dressing: a cleaner that puts oil back in dry or dirty leather.

loin (loyne): the part of the horse's back between the *barrel* and the *hip*.

lope: the three-beat *gait* of a horse. In *English*-style riding, the lope is called the *canter*.

M

maiden race: a race for horses that have never won a race.

mane: the hair that grows along a horse's neck.

mare: a female horse that's older than three years old.

marking: a white patch or stripe on a horse's face or leg. See *bald face*, *blaze*, *coronet*, *pastern*, *snip*, *sock*, *star* and *stocking*.

martingale (MAR-tin-gale): the strap that goes from the girth to the bridle and passes between the horse's front legs. A martingale keeps a horse from lifting his head up in the air.

mouthpiece (MOUTH-piece): the part of the *bit* that goes in the horse's mouth.

muck out: to clean manure out of a stall.

mustang (MUSS-tang): the wild (meaning not owned and not tamed) horse of the American West.

N

near: the left side of a horse.

neck-rein: to lay a *rein* on the horse's neck as a signal to turn. for example, to turn to the left, you lay your right rein against his neck.

neigh (nay): the sound a horse makes when he's talking. Also called *whinny*.

O

oats: a kind of grain used as *feed*.

off: the right side of a horse.

overreaching: when a horse's *hind* feet hit the back of his front feet, usually while *trotting*. In some parts of the country, it's called *forging (FOR-jing)*.

oxbow (OKS-bo): a kind of Western *stirrup* that has round bottom.

oxer (OCK-sir): a wide jump in a *hunter* or *jumper* class.

P

palomino (pal-a-MEE-no): the color of a horse that has a golden yellow body and a white *mane* and tail.

park gait: in *pleasure-driving* classes, the *trot* that is slower than the *road gait*.

pastern (PASS-turn): the part of the lower leg between the fetlock and the foot. Also, a white *marking* around the pastern.

pasture (PASS-chur): a fenced-in field where horses can live.

pasture keeping: keeping a horse in a *pasture* or field. Also known as *pasturing* or *field keeping*.

pattern: the order in which horses do required movements in certain horse-show *classes*.

pleasure driving: a horse-show *class* where horses pull two-wheeled carts. The horses are judged on how well they move at the *walk*, *road gait* and *park gait*.

pole bending: a horse-show *class* in which horses and riders race around six poles and try not to knock any over. The fastest time wins.

poll (pole): the part of the head between the ears. The poll is the highest part of a horse.

pommel (POM-el): the front part of the *saddle*.

port: the raised part of the *mouthpiece* of a *curb* bit. The port often looks like an upside-down letter U.

post: to move up and down in the *saddle* when the horse *trots*. Posting makes trotting more comfortable.

professional (pro-FESH-in-el): a person who is paid to work with horses and riders.

program: a book that lists the horses and riders that are taking part in a horse show or horse race.

pulling: making a *mane* and tailing shorter and thinner by removing hairs.

purse: the prize money in a horse-show *class* or horse race.

Q – R

rail: (1) the outer edge of the inside of an *arena*; (2) one of the poles across the top of fences that *hunters* and *jumpers* try to jump over.

rasp: a file used to *float* teeth.

rate: in *working cow horse* and roping *classes*, to speed up or slow down to keep up with a cow.

red dun: the color of a horse that has a light yellow body, a red stripe down his back, and a red or white *mane* and tail.

redtop (also called redtip): a kind of grass used as *hay*.

red roan: the color of a horse that has a body of white and red hairs.

registry (REJ-is-tree): a special list of horses that belong to the same *breed*. The AQHA keeps the registry of American Quarter Horses.

reins: the straps that go from the *bridle* to the rider's hands. Reins are used to turn and stop the horse.

reining: a horse-show *class* where horses are judged on how well they do *patterns* of circles, spins, stops and other movements.

reserve (ree-ZURVE)): the horse or rider that gets the second-highest score in a horse-show *division*.

rigging: the position of a *cinch* on a Western *saddle*.

road gait: in *pleasure-driving* classes, the *trot* that is faster than the *park gait*.

rollback: a movement in *reining* where the horse stops, turns back and then moves off, all without stopping.

romal (ro-MAL): a kind of Western *rein* that has two straps that come together to become one rein.

rundown: a *reining* movement where the horse runs from one end of the ring to the other.

S

saddle: the piece of *tack* that the rider sits on.

saddle soap: a special soap for cleaning *tack* and other leather.

saddlery shop (SAD-le-ree): see *tack shop*.

seat: the part of the *saddle* where a rider sits. Also, how well a rider rides a horse, as in the saying, "he has a good seat."

shank: the long metal arms of a *curb* bit that hold the *reins*. Also, a strap or rope for leading a horse that's wearing a *halter* (also called *lead shank*).

shoulder: the part of the horse's body between his neck and where the saddle goes.

showmanship (SHOW-man-ship): a kind of *halter* class where youth and *amateur* exhibitors are judged on how well they show their horses to the judge.

side-check: a strap or rope that runs from the *saddle* to the *bridle*. It keeps the horse from putting his head down to *graze*.

silks: the shirt and cap worn by *jockeys*. Owners or racehorses have silks in different colors and patterns that help people watching a race tell the horses apart.

simple change of lead: when a horse *trots* or *walks* while changing *leads* at the *lope* or *canter*, he's doing a simple change of lead. (If he changes without trotting or walking, he's doing a *flying change of lead*).

skirt: the part underneath the *cantle* on a Western *saddle* or over the stirrup *bars* on an English saddle.

snaffle (SNAFF-ul): a *bit* that has no *shanks*. A snaffle can have a straight *mouthpiece* or a mouthpiece that bends in the middle.

snip: a white *marking* near the horse's nose.

sock: a white *marking* from the foot to about halfway up the horse's lower leg. See *stocking*.

sole: the bottom of a horse's foot.

sorrel (SOR-ul): the color of a horse that has a red-brown body, *mane* and tail. More American Quarter Horses are sorrel than any other color.

sound: another word for healthy.

spin: a *reining* movement where the horse turns completely around one or more times while keeping one *hind* foot on the ground.

split reins: *reins* that are not tied together. Most Western-style reins are this type.

stallion: a male horse that's three years or older.

star: a white *marking* above a horse's eyes.

stifle: the part of the horse where the *gaskin* meets the body.

stirrup: a metal or wood loop attached to the *saddle* for the rider's foot.

stocking: a white *marking* from the foot up to the *knee* or the *hock*. A stocking is longer than a *sock*.

stop: in *reining* and *working cow horse* classes, the movement where the horse slides to a halt.

straw: dry grass that's used as stall *bedding*.

stretch: the straight part of the racetrack that ends at the finish line.

stride: each of the steps a horse takes at a *gait*.

strip: a narrow white *marking* that runs from above a horse's eyes to his nose.

sweat scraper: a long and thin metal tool that's used to wipe away water after a horse has had his bath.

sweet feed: grain that's mixed with a sugar product.

I

tack: a store that sells things for horses and riders. Also called a tack store or *saddlery shop*.

tapadaros (tap-a-DARE-ohs): also known as taps. The part of some Western *stirrups* that covers the front of the stirrup.

team penning: a horse-show event for teams of three riders. Each team moves three cows from a *herd* into a pen at the far end of the ring. The team that moves its cows the fastest is the winner.

Thoroughbred: a *breed* of horse that is good at racing long distances.

throat latch: the strap on the *bridle* that goes under a horse's throat.

thrush: a disease of the *frog* of the horse's foot.

tie-down: a Western word for *martingale*.

time fault: horses in *jumper* classes must finish the *course* within a certain number of seconds. If they take longer, they are given time *faults* as part of their score.

timothy (TIM-o-thee): a kind of grass used as *hay*.

toe: the front part of the horse's *hoof*.

trail: a horse-show *class* where horses are judged on what they'd be like if ridden on a real trail ride.

trainer: the person who gets horses ready for racing or horse shows. Some trainers teach people to ride.

tree: the frame of a *saddle*.

trot: the two-beat *gait* that's also known as the *jog*.

tush: one of the four extra teeth of a male horse.

U - V - W - X - Y - Z

vaquero (va-CARE-o): the Spanish word for cowboy.

vertical (VERT-a-keel): a narrow fence in a *hunter* or *jumper* class.

veterinarian (veh-tuh-ruh-NAIR-ee-in): a doctor who helps animals. Often called a vet.

Visalia (vis-a-LEE-a): a Western *stirrup* that's shaped like a bell.

walk: the four-beat *gait* that's the slowest of all a horse's gaits.

Western horsemanship: a horse-show *class* where horses are judged on how comfortable they are to ride.

Western pleasure: a horse-show *class* where horses are judged on how comfortable they are to ride.

Western riding: a horse-show *class* where horses are judged on their *gaits* and how well they change *leads*.

whinny (Win-ee): the sound a horse makes when he's "talking." Also called *neigh*.

withers (WITH-ers): the highest part of a horse's back, in front of where the *saddle* goes.

work: to move a cow around the *arena*, as the word is used in Western horse shows.

working cow horse: a horse-show *class* where horses are judged first *reining* movements and then on how well they *work* a cow.

working hunter: a horse-show *class* where horses are judge on how smoothly they jump fences.

worming: giving a horse medicine to get ride of any worms or insects he might have eaten by mistake.

yearling: a horse between the ages of one and two years.