



The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR TRADITIONAL RATINGS

(Revised January 1, 2009)

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc., establishes Standards of Proficiency within the framework of the international Pony Club movement as the curriculum for a program of instruction and evaluation of its members for ratings.

D Rating: The D Ratings are an introduction to the fun and challenge of riding, establishing a foundation of safety habits and knowledge of the daily care of a pony and tack. The D-1 through D-3 Pony Club member learns to ride independently and with control, maintaining a reasonably secure position at the walk, trot and canter and over low fences. All D ratings are awarded at the club level.

C-1 and C-2 Ratings: The C-1 and C-2 is a Pony Club member learning to become an active horseman, to care independently for pony and tack and to understand the reasons for what he or she is doing. The C-1 and C-2 show development towards a secure, independent seat and increasing control and confidence in all phases of riding. The C-1 and C-2 ratings are awarded at the club level.

The H-B, C-3, B, H/H-A and A Ratings are facilitated on a national basis and require a greater depth of knowledge and proficiency than the earlier ratings. Successful candidates are competent, all-around horsemen, active and contributing members of USPC, who participate in a variety of Pony Club activities. They are also thoughtful leaders who set an example for all levels.

The H-B Rating covers Horse Management knowledge that demonstrates increasing knowledge and competence in the care and handling of horses.

The H/H-A Rating requires the knowledge, experience and maturity to evaluate and care for a mount's needs efficiently and in a variety of circumstances, and to teach riding and horse care to others.

Pony Club members may choose to follow one or all of three riding tracks. They are: Traditional, Show Jumping or Dressage.

The C-3 Rating reflects a basis of competence in riding and horse care that will make possible a lifetime of pleasure with horses. If the C-3 riding test is passed before the H-B, the member becomes a C+.

The B Rating is for the active horseman and Pony Club member who is interested in acquiring further knowledge and proficiency in riding. The B is able to ride experienced mounts with confidence and control. The B should be able to ride and care for another person's experienced mount, maintaining proper mental and physical condition without undoing any of the mount's education. The B understands and is able to explain the reasons for what he or she is doing and to contribute to the education of younger Pony Club members.

The A Rating, the highest rating, is divided into two parts: the H/H-A, which covers horse management, teaching and training and the A, which tests the riding phase. The A is able to ride mounts at various levels of schooling with judgement, tact and effectiveness; to train young mounts; and to retrain spoiled mounts. Like the B, the A understands and is able to explain the reasons for what he or she is doing and to contribute to the education of younger Pony Club members.

NOTE: In addition to its instructional programs, USPC offers a variety of activities at club, regional, inter-regional and national levels for team and individual participation. These activities include Eventing, Dressage, Foxhunting, Quiz, Mounted Games, Show Jumping, Tetrathlon, and Polocrosse. **Achieving a rating does not necessarily qualify the Pony Club member for competition in any horse sport.** Further study and preparation for a particular activity, including working as a team member, may be necessary.

Definition of Eventing is a competition comprised of three phases. Dressage, Stadium Jumping and Cross Country. The emphasis and purpose of this competition is focused upon the achievement of a final score for the horse and rider. The Traditional Test at the C-3, B and A Pony Club National levels emphasizes the riding, training and vocabulary skills of the candidate. It utilizes the formats of the three phases for skill building, but does not necessarily duplicate them. The results reflect the candidate's skill, not that of the horse.

Dimensions of Fences D to A* for Traditional Levels:

Rating	Height	Width at Top		Width at Base	
		CC	SJ	CC	SJ
D-2	18"	1'	1'	1'6"	1'6"
D-3	2'6"	2'6"	2'6"	4'3"	4'3"
C-1	2'9"	2'9"	2'9"	4'3"	4'3"
C-2	3'0"	3'3"	3'3"	4'7"	4'11"
C-3	3'3"	3'11"	3'9"	5'3"	5'7"
B	3'7"	4'7"	4'3"	6'7"	6'3"
A	3'9"	5'3"	4'9"	7'10"	6'11"

*Based on USPC Eventing Rules and US Equestrian Eventing Rules. When a second height is required at any one level, use appropriate dimensions shown on the chart above.

Dressage Specialty Levels:

C-3 = First Level**
B = Second Level**
A = Third Level**

Dimensions of Fences for Show Jumping Specialty Levels:

Rating	Height up to	Width at Top up to	Triple Bar up to
C-3	3'6"	3'9"	4'3"
B	3'9"	4'3"	4'6"
A	4'3"	4'9"	5'3"

C-3=Level II-III** B=Level III-IV** A=Level V-VI**

**See USEF Level Descriptions

TRADITIONAL C-3 RIDING STANDARD

Riding Test Expectations: *The candidate should maintain a basic balanced position with a secure base of support. Rider should demonstrate the development of an independent seat and coordinated use of aids on the flat, over fences, and in the open. The candidate should initiate and maintain free forward movement with smooth transitions and a steady, light feel of the mount's mouth. The candidate should discuss and evaluate the aids used. The candidate should show confidence and control at all gaits on the flat, over fences, and in the open. Be familiar with the Training Pyramid.*

Presentation of Horse and Rider

Rider to be properly Formal or Informal. If dressed Informally, the rider must bring and demonstrate the proper tying of a stock tie, and placement of a stock pin.

Candidate should demonstrate effective presentation and control while standing facing and slightly to the side of, rather than directly in front of, the mount. The candidate will hold the reins, one in each hand, close to the bit. Thumbs should not be hooked into bit rings.

Mount should be well-groomed, reflecting daily care, including ears, nose, eyes, dock, sheath or udder, mane and tail (no dandruff).

Tack to be safe, clean, metal polished, reflecting consistent daily care.

Discuss the purpose and correct fit of mount's equipment used on the flat and over fences.

Riding on the Flat

Ride on the flat demonstrating Riding Test Expectations.

Demonstrate warm-up for flat work.

Be prepared to ride the current USEF Training Level Test A dressage test.

Ride schooling figures to include 15 and 20 meter circles, half circles, figure 8, serpentines, work on center or ¼ lines, and straight lines at each gait. Demonstrate free, working and medium walk, working trot and working canter. Ride a 20 meter circle at the rising trot allowing horse to stretch forward and down.

Demonstrate: leg yield; aids used for reinback; increase and decrease of speed at each gait.

Ride without stirrups at all gaits while demonstrating Riding Test Expectations.

Evaluate performance with Examiner, including accuracy of transitions and figures, and whether or not mount maintained free forward movement and correct bend.

Discuss difference between increase of speed and lengthening of stride.

Demonstrate ability to ride a different mount, initiating free forward movement at each gait, showing confidence and control.

Evaluate performance with Examiner, including ways in which the mount was different from own mount.

Riding Over Fences

Ride over fences demonstrating Riding Test Expectations.

Discuss reasons for different lengths of stirrups and the effect on position for different types of work.

Demonstrate warm up for jumping, using exercises appropriate for mount. Ride through a simple gymnastic grid that will progress in height to 3'3".

Ride without stirrups over simple gymnastic grid on own mount (not to exceed 3').

Evaluate warm up and grid work, including distances used in grid.

Ride over stadium course. The majority of fences should be set at, but not exceed, 3'3". Course will include 8-12 jump efforts with oxers, verticals, bending lines, related distances, and at least one combination.

Evaluate performance and ways ride could be improved, including distances of any combinations used.

Demonstrate ability to ride a different mount over stadium course, showing confidence and control, not to exceed 3'.

Evaluate performance and how mount differs from own.

Riding in the Open

Demonstrate a knowledge of pace while riding in a galloping position. Ride at 240 meters per minute, developing to 350-400 mpm.

Ride at a gallop in the open, alone, and in a group.

Ride over 5-8 cross-country obstacles at height and pace (350-400 mpm) appropriate to terrain. The majority of fences should be set at, but not exceed, 3'3", to include ditches, banks, drops, water and combinations, if available.

Evaluate performance, pace and ways ride could be improved.

Evaluate mount's condition, including measuring working pulse and respiration.

Longeing

Demonstrate proper fit and use of equipment, including bridle or cavesson, saddle or surcingle. (Side reins are allowed if appropriately used.)

Longe own mount, demonstrating safe longeing techniques and proper use of aids (voice, body position, etc.) at the walk, trot and/or canter, while initiating free forward movement and smooth transitions, making horse appropriate for the C-3 rider.

Bandaging

Independently apply a shipping bandage and a stable bandage.

TRADITIONAL B RIDING STANDARD

Riding Test Expectations: *Candidates should demonstrate an independent seat and effective tactful use of aids on the flat and over fences. Candidates should ride each mount forward while establishing and maintaining a regular pace with the mount accepting the aids; be confident in coping with disobedience; be able to explain the application and reasons for aids and to discuss the basic principles of dressage. Be prepared to discuss the Training Pyramid as related to the B Traditional Standard.*

Riding On The Flat

Evaluate and discuss warm-up.

Discuss the reasons for warm-up, the amount of time required for the mount being ridden, and why.

Be prepared to ride the current USEF Preliminary Test A dressage test.

Be prepared to ride the following movements, demonstrating accurate and smooth transitions and correct use of aids: serpentine 3 loops, sitting and/or posting at trot, change of rein across diagonal, 10 meter half circle, walk and/or trot, 20 meter circle, sitting trot and/or canter, canter change of lead through walk and/or trot, counter canter, leg yielding, walk and/or trot, reinback.

Evaluate and discuss performance as it relates to the Riding Test Expectations.

Ride on the flat without stirrups at all gaits.

Demonstrate ability to ride different mount(s) with confidence, tact and effectiveness at all gaits while performing basic schooling figures.

Discuss performance, including whether or not each mount was balanced, supple, and moving forward with rhythm and impulsion

Riding Over Fences

Discuss benefits of trotting poles, including distances in simple gymnastic grid.

Demonstrate warm-up for jumping, including trotting poles and gymnastic grid, not to exceed 3'7".

Ride without stirrups over a grid set at 3'3" while showing a secure and independent seat

Ride a stadium course of at least 10-12 obstacles including a triple combination. The majority of fences should be set at, but not exceed, 3'7".

Evaluate performance including ways ride could be improved.

Demonstrate ability to ride different mount over fences with tact and confidence.

Evaluate performance, showing an understanding of the causes of any disobediences.

Riding In The Open

Demonstrate a knowledge of pace, and galloping position (where appropriate), at the following paces: 240 mpm, 350 mpm and 450 mpm.

Ride safely in a group.

Ride mount over a variety of cross country fences. The majority of fences should be set at, but not exceed, 3'7", to include ditches, banks, drops, water and combinations.

Evaluate performances, showing understanding of causes of any disobediences.

Longeing

Discuss how to teach a mount to longe.

Discuss benefits and dangers of longeing the mount.

Discuss benefits and dangers of longeing the rider.

Discuss and demonstrate proper fit and use of equipment, to include side reins.

Longe own mount, appropriate to mount's ability, at the walk, trot and/or canter, at the discretion of the examiner; to include free forward movement and to establish regular rhythm. Be prepared to use side reins.

Bandaging

Present shipping, stable, and tail bandages; discuss materials used, reasons for wrapping, potential dangers.

TRADITIONAL A RIDING STANDARD

Riding Test Expectations: *The candidate should maintain a basic balanced position appropriate for dressage, jumping and cross-country riding, based upon the development of an independent seat and coordinated use of aids. Candidates must be able to competently ride different mounts (schooled, green or spoiled) at various stages of training displaying confident, consistent and effective performances. They should assess and demonstrate schooling techniques beneficial to each mount, and ride with tact and empathy for its capabilities, utilizing the training pyramid and its importance to each phase of Eventing. After each performance the candidate will evaluate the mount's stage of schooling (strengths and weaknesses) and discuss whether they, the rider/trainer, have been effective in achieving their goals.*

Riding on the Flat

Demonstrate effective warm-up appropriate for the level of the mount. Perform exercises and movements to improve each mount's rhythm, balance, engagement, suppleness, and ride the mount "on the aids" demonstrating an understanding of the training pyramid, with and without stirrups.

Be prepared to ride the current USEF Intermediate Test A dressage test.

Ride the following school figures and movements:

Free, medium and extended walk

Medium and collected trot

Medium and collected canter

Leg yield

Shoulder-in

10-meter trot and canter circles

Travers (haunches in)

Canter from walk

Change of lead through walk (simple change)

Counter canter

Reinback

Be able to evaluate and discuss any of the above

Riding over Fences

Set up and ride effectively over trotting poles, gymnastic and stadium fences at heights and distances required for test. The majority of fences should be set at, but not exceed, 3'9".

Ride through gymnastic grid without stirrups (not to exceed 3'6").

Riding in The Open

Ride at the gallop up to 520 meters per minute, demonstrating effective galloping position, pace and adaptation to varied terrain. The majority of fences should be set at, but not exceed, 3'7", to include ditches, banks, drops, water and combinations.

Training

Ride one or more assigned mounts on the flat and over fences, demonstrating schooling techniques.

Evaluate the performance of each mount, with comments on the level of schooling, showing an understanding of the training pyramid.

Handle difficult or refusing mount effectively and with understanding.

Discuss problems that were not apparent until candidate rode the mount and as a trainer offer a long-term plan to improve schooling of the mount.

Discuss and/or demonstrate effectiveness of trotting poles, gymnastic exercises, shape of fences, and distances as training aids.

TESTING INFORMATION FOR NATIONAL TESTINGS

Requirements for Candidates

- Be a Pony Club Member in Good Standing, as defined in club policy, having paid local, regional and National dues and fees for at least the current and preceding years.
- Have a record of regular attendance and participation.
- Be at least 13 years of age prior to January 1 of the year of application for the H-B and C-3, 14 for the B, 16 for the H/H-A and A.
- Be recommended by the District Commissioner and Regional Supervisor.
- Candidates may take the H-B or C-3 Riding test in whichever order they choose. If the C-3 Riding test is taken first, the C-3 Certificate is not awarded until completion of the H-B; candidate is recognized as a C+ until that time.
- Fulfill the active participation criteria set by the region.
- Compete in at least one mounted rally on a mounted or unmounted basis.
- Have a thorough knowledge of requirements for the ratings and be able to discuss and/or demonstrate any requirements from all previously attained standards.

Attire

Safe, working attire, including proper footwear, must be worn in the barn area and when working around mounts. Proper informal attire (boots and breeches) is required for teaching mounted lessons, longeing, and riding phases. Refer to USPC Horse Management Handbook, USPC discipline rules, and USPC Manuals of Horsemanship, Volume I, II and III.

ASTM/SEI approved headgear with full harness and with chin strap in place must be worn.

Equipment

Saddlery and biting for USPC Testings should comply with the Horse Management General Rule on Saddlery and Biting and with the USPC discipline rules for Saddlery and Biting. Be able to discuss equipment used on own mount. Whips, no longer than 43 inches including lash, will be allowed in the flat section of testings. Any discipline rule change following publication of the current Horse Management Handbook will supersede these rules.

General

There are no waiting periods between the H-B/C-3 through A ratings, as long as all applications are submitted by the Application Deadline (see below). However, candidates must successfully pass all sections of the H-B before obtaining the C-3 (if they pass the riding test first, they are called C+ members until they pass the H-B) and all sections of the H-A before taking the A.

Test dates are established by the National Testing Committee in response to Regional* requests. Candidate applications must be made through the District Commissioner and Regional Supervisor. Candidates may apply for the date of their choice, but those living within the host Region will be given priority. Information on testing dates, sites and equipment needed may be obtained from the District Commissioner, Regional Supervisor, the USPC Web site, or the National Office.

Testing applications, USPC medical release, and club check for the test fee, must be mailed by the DC to the RS. The RS must forward all completed application materials (with required signa-

tures) to USPC National Office postmarked by the Application Deadline (see below). Applications for the H/H-A must include proof of compliance with the First Aid requirement.

Application Deadlines

Applications for testings must be postmarked by the following deadlines: tests held between February 26th and May 31st must be postmarked by January 15th; tests held between June 1st and August 31st must be postmarked by April 15th; tests held between September 1st and November 25th must be postmarked by July 15th; tests held between November 26th and December 31st must be postmarked by October 15th. Any testing held before February 26th will have a six week prior deadline, as indicated on the Testing Schedule. Late applications will be handled by the National Office and National Testing Committee and a \$100 late fee will be charged to any late application that is accepted.

H/H-A applicants must provide proof of successful completion of a basic first aid certification course (typically a 4-hour course) with their testing application. Candidates planning to take their H/H-A should make plans early to get their certification done well before the testing application deadline in case their class is canceled or rescheduled. A copy (both sides) of their current First Aid card **MUST** accompany application or it will be considered incomplete and returned to their RS. Proof of enrollment in a course **is not** acceptable; candidate must have completed the course by the application deadline, and include a copy of the First Aid card with the H/H-A application. There are many different organizations offering first aid certification and any basic first aid course is acceptable.

Candidates may bring their own or a borrowed or rented mount to a testing.

Candidates who DNMS on no more than four sections of the H-B or two sections of the H/H-A can retest only those sections not passed. It will be the candidate's choice whether to retest at another scheduled H-B or H/H-A testing or arrange for a retest outside of a testing. If they choose the second option, it is the responsibility of the candidates to check the Examiners List provided by the National Office to find a qualified examiner who can retest them on the necessary section(s). If they wish to retest at another scheduled testing, they must contact the National Office within 4 weeks of their testing to make arrangements. Retests must take place within the calendar year. Any exceptions to that deadline must be approved by the National Office and the National Testing Committee. There is no charge for retesting.

To achieve the C-3, B and A ratings, candidates must pass all phases of the test. No riding phase can be retested.

Appropriate Horse

It is the responsibility of the candidate and his/her parent(s) or guardian to bring an appropriate horse(s) to the testing. The conditioned mount(s) must be capable of completing all required phases of the test. The mount(s) must also be available for change of riders. Embracing USPC's commitment to safety for all horses and riders is of utmost importance. Failing to follow these guidelines may make it difficult for the candidate to meet the standard on that given day.

Candidates should do outside reading and independent study in an effort to expand knowledge and understanding of all aspects of horsemastership. For the appropriate testing level, this in-depth study should develop sophistication in riding, maturity in training a mount or rider, and flexibility to adapt to horsemastership techniques that vary according to geographic area.

Candidates should also prepare themselves through practical experience in all requirements and possess a thorough understanding of the level tested. However, it is at the discretion of National Examiners as to what is covered during a test.

No candidate shall be allowed to take the test “just for the experience.”

The testing shall be a constructive working session. The candidate shall be required to demonstrate and maintain adequate ability in performance and knowledge for the level tested.

Candidates should discuss with the Examiner any problems with the mount being used, should ask questions, and request permission to repeat any performance if so desired.

The attitude and maturity of the candidate shall be considered throughout the testing. Respect for other people and handling of the mounts shall be considered a direct reflection of the candidate’s maturity level.

BASIC GYMNASTIC LINE TO BE USED FOR C-3 RATINGS *

(suitable for all levels during clinics - and a 4th jump may be added - @ 23' ±)

X-----X
X-----X (oxer)

^
21' ±
V

X-----X (vertical)

^
18' ±
V

X-----X (vertical or crossrail)

^
9'
V

_____ - 4 ½' (Use at least 4 poles or just one placing pole)

_____ - 4 ½'

_____ - 4 ½'

^
START

*Key for diagram(s) for all gymnastics for all ratings.

_____ poles

X-----X jumps (x = standards)

POSSIBLE GYMNASTIC LINE FOR B AND A-LEVEL RATINGS

X-----X
X-----X (oxer or vertical)

^
23' ± (1 stride)
or 33' ± (2 strides)
V

X-----X
X-----X (oxer or vertical)

^
21' ±
V

X-----X (vertical)

^
18' ±
V

X-----X (vertical)

^
10' ± (bounce)
V

X-----X (vertical or crossrail)

^
9'
V

----- - 4 ½' (Use at least 4 poles or just one placing pole)

----- - 4 ½'

----- - 4 ½'

^
START

©2009 The United States Pony Clubs, Inc.
Copying permitted for internal use only by members and volunteers of the United States Pony Clubs, Inc.

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc.
4041 Iron Works Parkway • Lexington, KY 40511
Phone (859) 254-7669 • Fax (859) 233-4652 • email uspc@ponyclub.org • website www.ponyclub.org