



# Equine Showmanship

## Guidelines

*Showmanship is judged on the exhibitor's ability to fit and show an equine animal at halter with the animal merely being a prop to demonstrate the ability and preparation of the exhibitor. It is not a halter class and should not be judged as such. The ideal performance consists of a poised, confident, neatly attired exhibitor leading a well-groomed and conditioned animal that quickly and efficiently performs the pattern with promptness, smoothness and precision. Patterns are designed to test the showman's ability to effectively present a their animal to the judge.*

The showmanship patterns to be used each year for 4-H PEI Achievement Days and Exhibition Classes will be available on the 4-H PEI website in May.

### Dress Code:

- ⇒ **Shirt** - Must have a collar and be tucked in. Shirts can be short sleeved, but not sleeveless. Show jackets, vests, ties, and scarves are optional.
- ⇒ **Jewelry** - Is optional, but, if worn, should be conservative and safe.
- ⇒ **Pants** - Full length dress pants, jeans, breeches, or jodhpurs.
- ⇒ **Footwear** - Hard soled closed toed footwear are required for member's safety.
- ⇒ **Helmets** - Are recommended for showmanship classes but not mandatory.
- ⇒ **Belt & Gloves** - Are encouraged.
- ⇒ **Appearance** - Should be neat with long hair tied back.
- ⇒ **Halters/Bridles** - Halters and bridles should be clean, well fitted to the animal, and in good repair. Ideally Western equines will be shown in a leather halter (silver accents optional) with a leather lead (with or without chain). English equines are ideally shown in either a full bridle with reins, or a plain leather halter with leather lead (with or without chain). Nylon, biothane, or cotton halters, bridles, and/or leads are also acceptable but best to keep them to conservative colours such as black, brown, navy, dark green, etc. \*NOTE: Although gloves are optional it is highly recommended that they be worn if members is using a nylon lead to prevent rope burn on the hands in the event the animal were to pull the lead through the members hands.

**Helpful Tip:** Your attire should not upstage your animal. The purpose of showmanship is to test your ability to present your animal to its best. Your attire should not be so distracting as to pull focus from your beautiful animal, and it is a good idea to consider your animal's colour when selecting the colours of your own outfit. For suggestions see > [Horse Showing Tip: Matching Your Outfit to Your Horse](https://www.aqha.com/-/horse-showing-tip-matching-your-outfit-to-your-horse) (<https://www.aqha.com/-/horse-showing-tip-matching-your-outfit-to-your-horse>).



### Class Procedure:

Exhibitors may enter the ring as a group and then work individually, or may be worked from the gate. The following manoeuvres are acceptable: lead at a walk, jog, trot, extended trot or back in a straight or curved line, stop, turn 90° (1/4 turn), 180° (1/2 turn), 270° (3/4 turn), 360° (full turn) degrees, or any combination of these manoeuvres. Exhibitors must set the equine up squarely for inspection by the judge.

**Scoring:** Exhibitors to be scored from 0 to 20 with  $\frac{1}{2}$  point increments acceptable. Ten points should be toward overall appearance and ten points toward performance.

### Overall Appearance of Exhibitor and Equine (10 points)

#### ⇒ Overall poise, confidence, appearance and position of the exhibitor throughout the class:

Exhibitor should be dressed in adherence to the dress code on page one. Appearance should be neat and clean.

Exhibitor should be poised, confident, courteous and genuinely sportsmanlike at all times. Quickly recognize and correct positioning of the animal. Continue showing until the class has been placed and they have been excused. Appear businesslike and avoid excessive or unnatural body positions.

Exhibitor to lead on the animal's left side positioned between the animal's eye and shoulder and holding the lead or reins in the right hand near the halter or bit with the excess lead/reins held safely coiled or folded in the left hand. Arms should be bent at the elbow with the elbows close to the sides and in a natural position.

Exhibitor's position while turning to the right is same as leading but facing toward the animal and having the animal move away. Backing - turn toward rear of animal with right hand extended across chest and walk forward as animal moves backward.

When setting up angle toward animal and preferably use the Quarter Method when presenting the animal (Note: miniature horse and donkey exhibitors do not use the Quarter Method because of the animal's small size; the handler simply has to be on the opposite side of the animal as the judge). Do not obstruct the judge's view or crowd other exhibitors. Change sides with minimal steps and assume the same angled position towards animal.

Handling should be done from the left side of the animal. Do not stand directly in front of the animal or touch it with hands or feet, or visibly cue the animal by pointing their feet at the animal during the set-up.

#### ⇒ Appearance of the animal:

Body condition and fitness should be assessed.

Coat to be clean and hair brushed. Mane, tail, and forelock may not contain ornaments but may be braided or banded for English or Western. Length of mane or tail may vary, but must be neat, clean and free of tangles. Mane may be roached. Bridle path and long hair on legs should be clipped (unless a feathered breed such as Friesians, Clydesdales, Gypsy Vanners, etc.). Sensory hairs located around the mouth, nose, eyes and inner ears are an important sensory organ for equines and should not be removed for cosmetic purposes, but members will not lose points for choosing to do so.



Hooves should be properly trimmed. If shod, shoes should fit correctly. Must be clean and may be painted black or with hoof dressings, or shown naturally.

Tack should fit properly and be neat, clean and in good repair.

### Performance (10 points)

Perform the work accurately, precisely, smoothly and with a reasonable amount of speed. The equine should lead, stop, back, turn and set up willingly, briskly and readily with minimal visible or audible cuing. Failure to follow pattern, knocking over or working on the wrong side of cones, or severe disobedience will not result in disqualification, but should be penalized severely and the exhibitor should not place above an exhibitor that completes the pattern correctly. Excessive schooling/training, willful abuse, or loss of control of the equine by the exhibitor shall be cause for disqualification.

The equine should be lead directly to and away from the judge in a straight or curved line and track briskly and freely at the gait instructed. The equine's head and neck should be straight and in line with its body.

The stop should be straight, prompt, smooth, and responsive with the body remaining straight.

## **Performance (continued)...**

The backup should be willing with the head, neck and body aligned in a straight or curved line as instructed.

When turning 90 degrees or less, the equine should be turned to the left. On turns of more than 90 degrees, the equine should be turned to the right, pivoting on the right hind leg while stepping across and in front of the right leg with the left front leg.

The equine should set up quickly with the feet squarely underneath the body. Exhibitor does not have to reset a equine that stops square.



## **Faults - Can be minor, major or severe as determined by the judge**

Deductions are: minor > ½ to 4 points; major > 4-1/2 or more; severe > avoids elimination, but should be placed below all other exhibitors who completed the pattern correctly. A minor fault can become a major fault, or a major fault become severe when the degree and/or frequency of the infraction(s) merits, (i.e. continuously jerking on the lead).

### **Faults of Appearance of Exhibitor and Equine:**

- ⇒ Poorly groomed or conditioned animal.
- ⇒ Dirty, ragged or poorly fitted halter/bridle or lead.
- ⇒ Poor or improper position of exhibitor.
- ⇒ Excessively stiff, artificial or unnatural movement around equine or when leading.
- ⇒ Continuous hold of chain portion of lead or shank coiled tightly around hand or dragging on ground.
- ⇒ Changing hands or placing both hands on lead, except when preparing to show equine's teeth.

### **Faults of Performance:**

- ⇒ Equine drifting when being lead, stopping crooked or dropping a hip when standing.
- ⇒ Backing, leading or turning sluggishly or crooked.
- ⇒ Not set up squarely or excessive time require to set up.
- ⇒ Failure to maintain pivot foot, stepping behind right front leg with left front leg when turning to the right.
- ⇒ Equine holding head/neck crooked when leading, stopping or backing.
- ⇒ Failure to perform manoeuvres at designated markers, but equine is on pattern.

### **Severe Faults of Overall Appearance (avoids disqualification but should be placed below other exhibitors that do not incur a severe fault):**

- ⇒ Leading on the off or right side of the equine
- ⇒ Complete failure to move around equine and obstructing judge's view
- ⇒ Exhibitor touching equine or kicking or pointing their feet at the equine's feet during set up
- ⇒ Standing directly in front of the equine
- ⇒ Exhibitor wearing spurs or chaps

### **Severe Fault of Performance (avoids disqualification but should be placed below other exhibitors that do not incur a severe fault):**

- ⇒ Omission or addition of manoeuvres.
- ⇒ Knocking over a cone.
- ⇒ Working on the wrong side of cones.
- ⇒ Severe disobedience - including rearing, pawing, kicking at another equine, exhibitor or judge, equine continuously circling the exhibitor.

### **Disqualification (should not be placed):**

- ⇒ Loss of control of equine that endangers exhibitor, other equines or exhibitors, or judge - including the equine escaping from the exhibitor.
- ⇒ Willful abuse.
- ⇒ Excessive schooling or training, use of artificial aids.

# Showmanship - The Quarter System

An easy way to remember the quarter system is to understand that it is based on two aims:

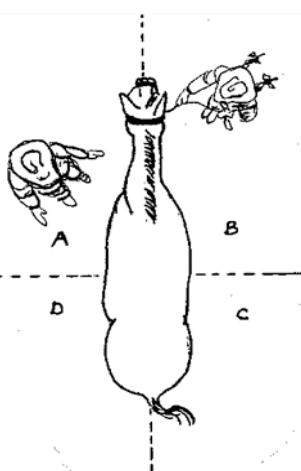
- ⇒ For the handler to never block the judges view of the animal.
- ⇒ For the handler to be able to keep eye contact with the judge.

The quarter system of showmanship is easy to remember:

- ⇒ When the judge is viewing the front half of the equine, the exhibitor should be on the opposite side.
- ⇒ When the judge is viewing the rear half, the exhibitor should be on the same side.
- ⇒ Divide the equine into four. A, B, C and D.

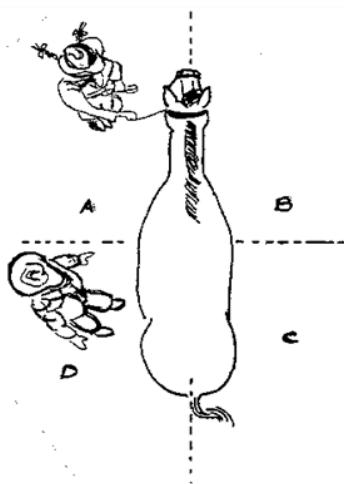
**Diagram #1**

When the judge is viewing the front of the equine in section A or B, the exhibitor should be on the opposite side. This gives the judge a clear view of the equine.



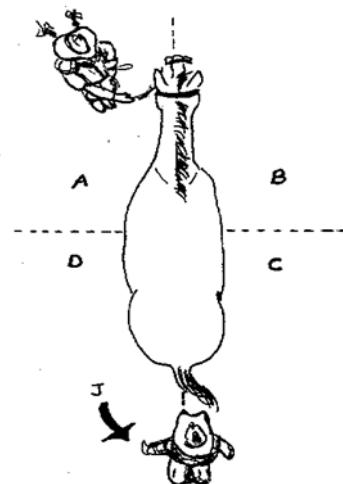
**Diagram #2**

The judge is now viewing the rear of the equine, section D. The exhibitor moves to the same side as the judge.



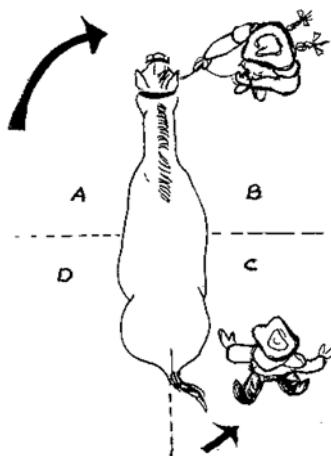
**Diagram #3**

While the judge is viewing the equine from the direct rear, the exhibitor maintains his position.



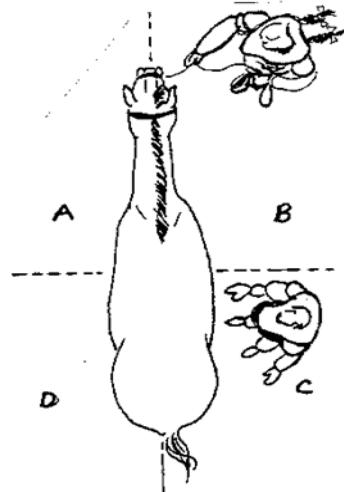
**Diagram #4**

When the judge moves into section C, crossing over the imaginary line directly behind the equine, the exhibitor moves to the same side of the equine as the judge.



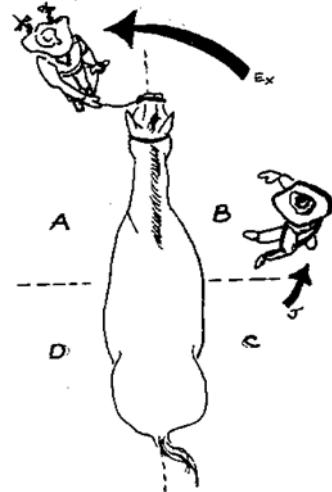
**Diagram #5**

Until the judge crosses over the imaginary line, the exhibitor remains on the same side of the equine as the judge.



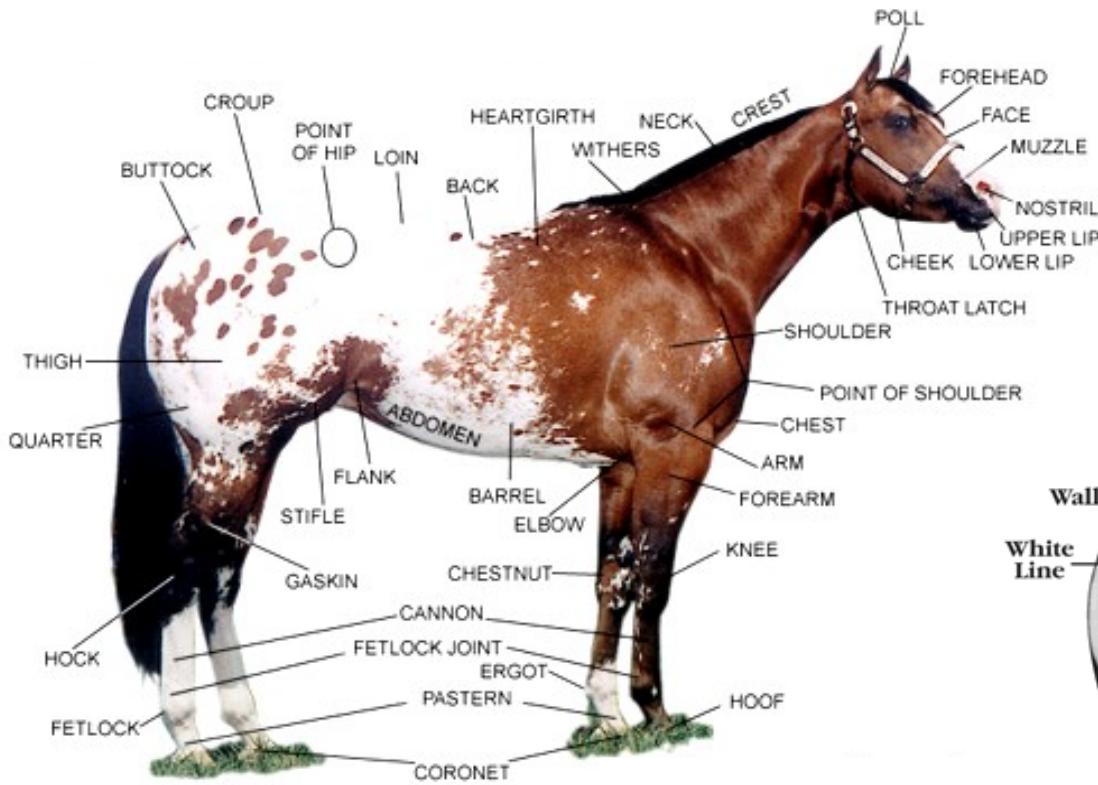
**Diagram #6**

As the judge move into section B, the exhibitor moves to the opposite side to avoid obstructing the view of the judge.



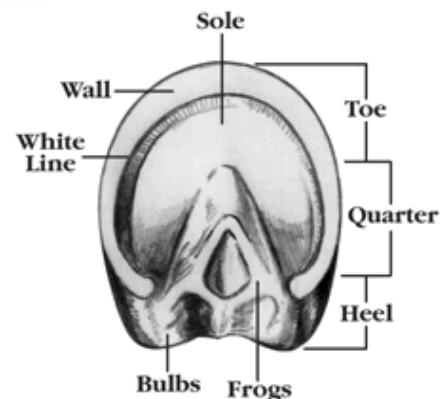
**Note:** Miniature horses do not use the four quarter system of showmanship because of their small size. The handler simply has to be on the opposite side of the horse as the judge.

In a showmanship class be prepared for the judge to ask you questions about your animal (i.e. age, sex, breed, etc.), and/or to identify parts of an equine.



## TEST YOURSELF WITH THIS FUN ONLINE QUIZ:

[https://ihearhorses.com/  
quiz-can-you-identify-these  
-parts-of-the-horse/](https://ihearhorses.com/quiz-can-you-identify-these-parts-of-the-horse/)



## Helpful Videos & Articles About Showmanship

- ⇒ Showmanship Tips—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuUp-UnDA8g>
- ⇒ A Judge's Perspective—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8RUmn5axI0>
- ⇒ Raising Your Showmanship Score: Common Mistakes in Showmanship—[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O\\_7ns9LisaA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_7ns9LisaA)
- ⇒ Showmanship Tune-Up—<https://horseandrider.com/how-to/horse-showmanship-tuneup>
- ⇒ Train Your Horse for Showmanship—<https://horseandrider.com/video/train-your-horse-for-showmanship-13167>
- ⇒ Showmanship Series Part 2!—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cphMVnS2X84>
- ⇒ Showmanship Series Pt. 3, The Pivot!—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9TuteyFHRY>
- ⇒ Showmanship: The Pivot—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kRTTVsXHtRI>
- ⇒ Quartering System for Horse Showmanship—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFZBdvnbekY>
- ⇒ 11 Showmanship Patterns for Practice—<https://www.aqua.com/-/11-showmanship-patterns-for-practice>

