



HORSE SPORT
IRELAND
Carriage Driving

CARRIAGE DRIVING ASSESSMENT FOR YOUNG DRIVERS



Introduction

Each age group must undergo a pre-booked Assessment ([Level 1](#) for 8-11 years old and [Level 2](#) for 12-14 years old) and pass their test before they can drive competitively. Assessment approximately lasts 2 hours with two Assessors present. First all candidates must complete a quiz about basic horse care, harness and carriage parts/fitting. Second part of their test starts with harnessing their own pony (safe to drive) then they will proceed with driving the BC Pre-Novice dressage test. After a short break and course walking, they will drive a course up to 15 sets of cones. Level 1 candidates will drive one very simple marathon obstacle with gates A-D, Level 2 candidates will drive two marathon obstacles with gates A-D right after their completed cones course. Candidates must wear safety gear (body protector and helmet up to current safety standard, gloves), carry a whip through their driving test and groom (aged over 18) must be on the carriage all the time. Apron is compulsory for dressage. At least one parent/guardian must be present during the assessment. Assessment result (pass or fail) should be available immediately after last phase.

Assessment fee of €40 apply and must be paid at booking!

Assessors have the right to fail any candidates regardless of their passing at each phase if they feel the driver is not ready to compete safely.

LEVEL 1

For 8-11 years old

Requirements:

Driver must be aged between 8 years old on the year of their assessment and not be older than 11 years. Must be capable of driving their own pony and be able to prove a basic knowledge about horses/harness/carriage. Must wear all the safety gears listed in the rules for young drivers.

Quiz

- Maximum of 5 questions about basic horse care (example: horse's body parts, feeding, illnesses)
- Maximum of 5 questions about carriage driving (example: harness/carriage parts, competition rules)

List of questions and answers can be found at the end.

Dressage test

- Harnessing pony up in front of Assessors (points 1/poor/-10/excellent/ will be given for correctness)
- **BC PRE-NOVICE** test to be driven
- Assessors will sit at C and score test as on a competition
- Test can be called out by groom
- Competition rules apply

Cones Course

- Maximum of 15 sets numbered cones to be driven in correct order
- Competition rules apply

- Minimum allowed time apply

Marathon obstacle

- Simple obstacle with gates A-D
- Gates to be driven in alphabetical order
- Competition rules apply

LEVEL 2

For 12-14 years old

Requirements:

Driver must be aged between 12 years old on the year of their assessment and not be older than 14 years. Must be capable of driving their own pony and be able to prove a basic knowledge about horses/harness/carriage. Must wear all the safety gears listed in the rules for young drivers.

Who had their Level 1 test passed previously and competed at least one event in the last 12 months, successfully completed their dressage and cones (not retired, withdrawn or eliminated) can proceed with marathon obstacles driving straight after their quiz. If they had not competed in the last 12 months or never completed their Level 1 exam, they should do the full test including dressage and cones driving.

Quiz

- Maximum of 5 questions about basic horse care (example: horse's body parts, feeding, illnesses)
- Maximum of 5 questions about carriage driving (example: harness/carriage parts, competition rules)

List of questions and answers can be found at the end. Mix of Level 1 and Level 2 questions.

Dressage test

- Harnessing pony up in front of Assessors (points 1/poor/-10/excellent/ will be given for correctness)
- **BC PRE-NOVICE** test to be driven
- Assessors will sit at C and score test as on a competition
- Competition rules apply
- Test might be called out by groom on previous agreement with assessors (if child has condition like DLD etc.)

Cones Course

- Maximum of 15 sets numbered cones to be driven in correct order
- Competition rules apply
- Minimum allowed time apply

Marathon obstacle

- Two obstacles with gates A-D
- Gates to be driven in alphabetical order
- Competition rules apply

LEVEL 1

Question	Answer
<i>Horse Care</i>	
What is the pony's natural lifestyle?	Herd animal. Constantly grazing and living in a group of other horses
What is the pony's instinct when frightened?	Try to run away if possible
What feed the pony should be given?	Hay and hard feed (pony mix or cubes) if necessary
How many litres of water a pony can drink per day?	10-35 litre per day
What should be in the pony's stable?	Access to water, adequate amount of hay and clean bedding
If the pony is on the field what should be maintained regularly?	Safe fencing checked regularly, clean water trough, remove any weeds and poisonous plants. Shelter if possible.
Name horse's main coat colours!	Grey, black, bay, chestnut, palomino, dun, coloured
Name horse's body parts!	See attachment
Name at least 3 grooming tools	See attachment
Name at least 3 serious horse illness	Colic, strangles, herpesvirus, influenza, laminitis, tetanus, ulcers, COPD
How do you know if your pony has colic?	Restless walking around stable/field, constant lying down and getting up, rolling, belly kicking, sweating, looking at their own belly, constipation, pawing, rapid breathing, not eating their feed.
What should you do before harnessing your pony?	Brush off all dirt, brush mane and tail, clean hooves, check for any injuries.
How often should your pony have their feet done by a farrier?	Every 6-8 weeks
What should be used in cold weather on the pony?	Rug with appropriate weight for pony's needs.
How would you lead your pony?	With a correctly fitted head collar and lead rope. From the left side of the pony.

<i>Knowledge of harness/carriage parts, competition rules</i>	
Name harness parts.	See attachment.
Name carriage parts.	See attachment.
What is the purpose of the breeching?	Helps pony to slow or control the carriage.
Name the showed driving bit.	See attachment.
What is the penalty for leaving the arena during dressage test?	Elimination
What dressage test should be driven by a child?	BC Pre-Novice

What should be worn by child driver during competition driving?	Smart outfit (including apron) for dressage and cones, gloves, helmet and body protector (up to current safety standards) for all phases.
How should you drive your cones course?	In numerical order, red markers on right hand side and white markers on left.
What is the penalty for knocking a ball in the cones?	3 penalty points per balls per set of cones.
How many people needed to harness up a pony?	At least 2 persons.
The use of tendon/brushing/overreach boots is optional in the cones, but why do you use them?	To prevent injuries to the pony's legs/feet/h hoof.
Can you use any type of boots on pony for dressage?	No.
What aids can you use for driving?	Reins, whip and voice.
Which hand do you hold the driving whip?	Normally in your right hand, unless you are left-handed.
How many obstacles should you drive on the marathon section?	Same as VSE, up to 4.

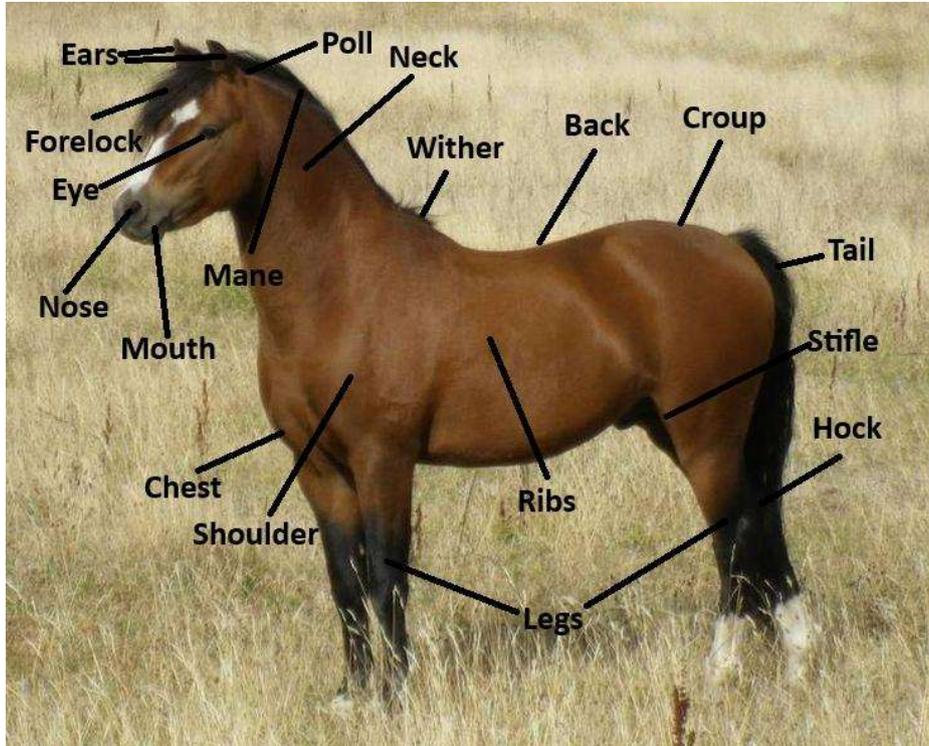
LEVEL 2

Question	Answer
<i>Horse Care</i>	
How many core vaccines a pony should have per year as a booster? (Given that the pony has had all previous vaccines as required)	One vaccine once a year.
Name the pony's organs.	See attachment.
What colour eyes do ponies have?	Brown, blue or hazel, very rarely red (due to lack of pigments)
Name 3 common clipping patterns for ponies.	See attachment.
How many times a day should a pony be fed if in hard work?	Recommended 3 to 4 times.

<i>Knowledge of harness/carriage parts, competition rules</i>	
Name driving bridle parts.	See attachment.
How many penalty points will be given for error of course in dressage?	5 penalties.
How many errors can you have in dressage without elimination?	2
Would you get eliminated for a corrected course in marathon?	No, just penalties given.
How should you drive the gates in a marathon obstacle?	In alphabetical order, red letters on the right hand side and white letters on the left.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Pony body parts

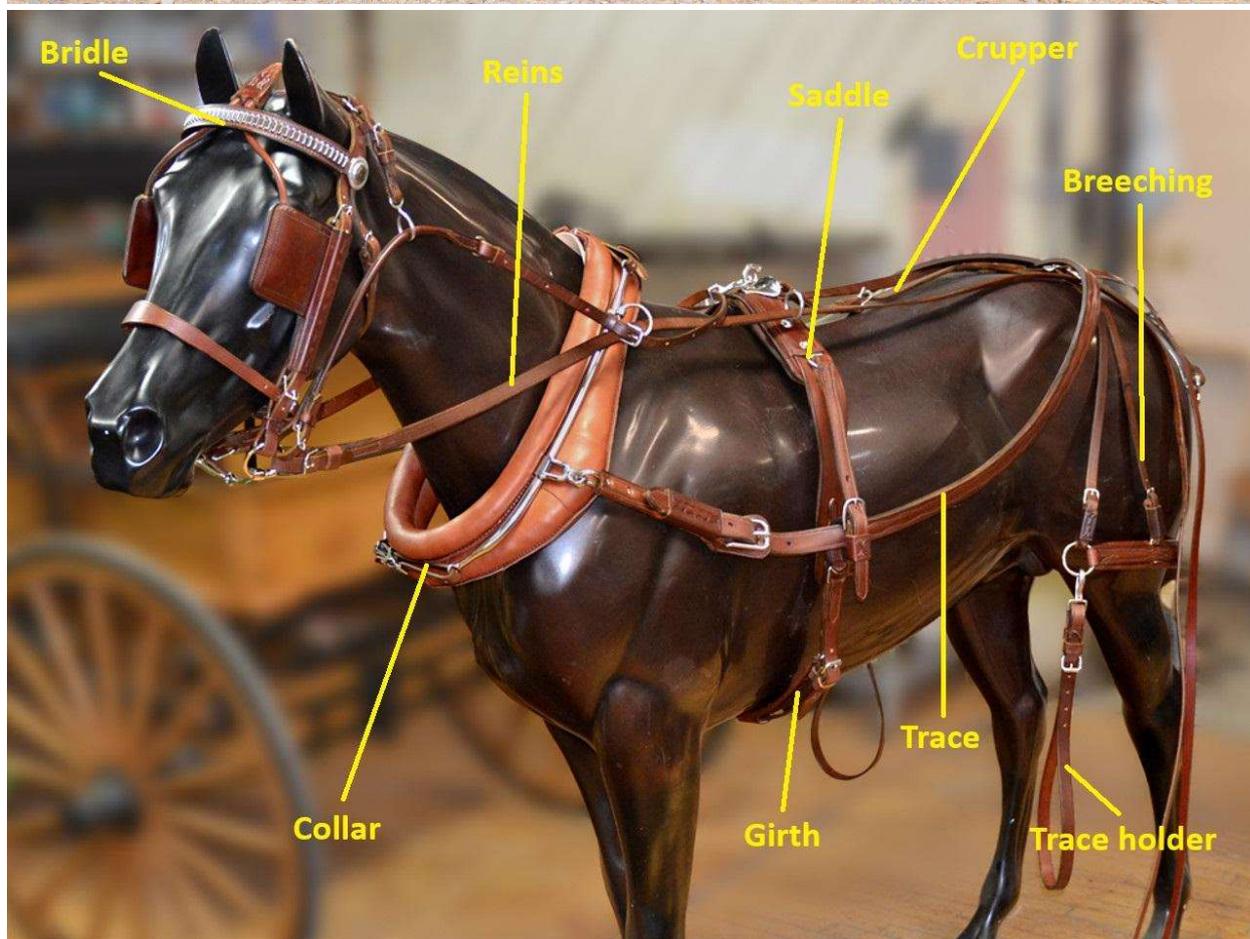
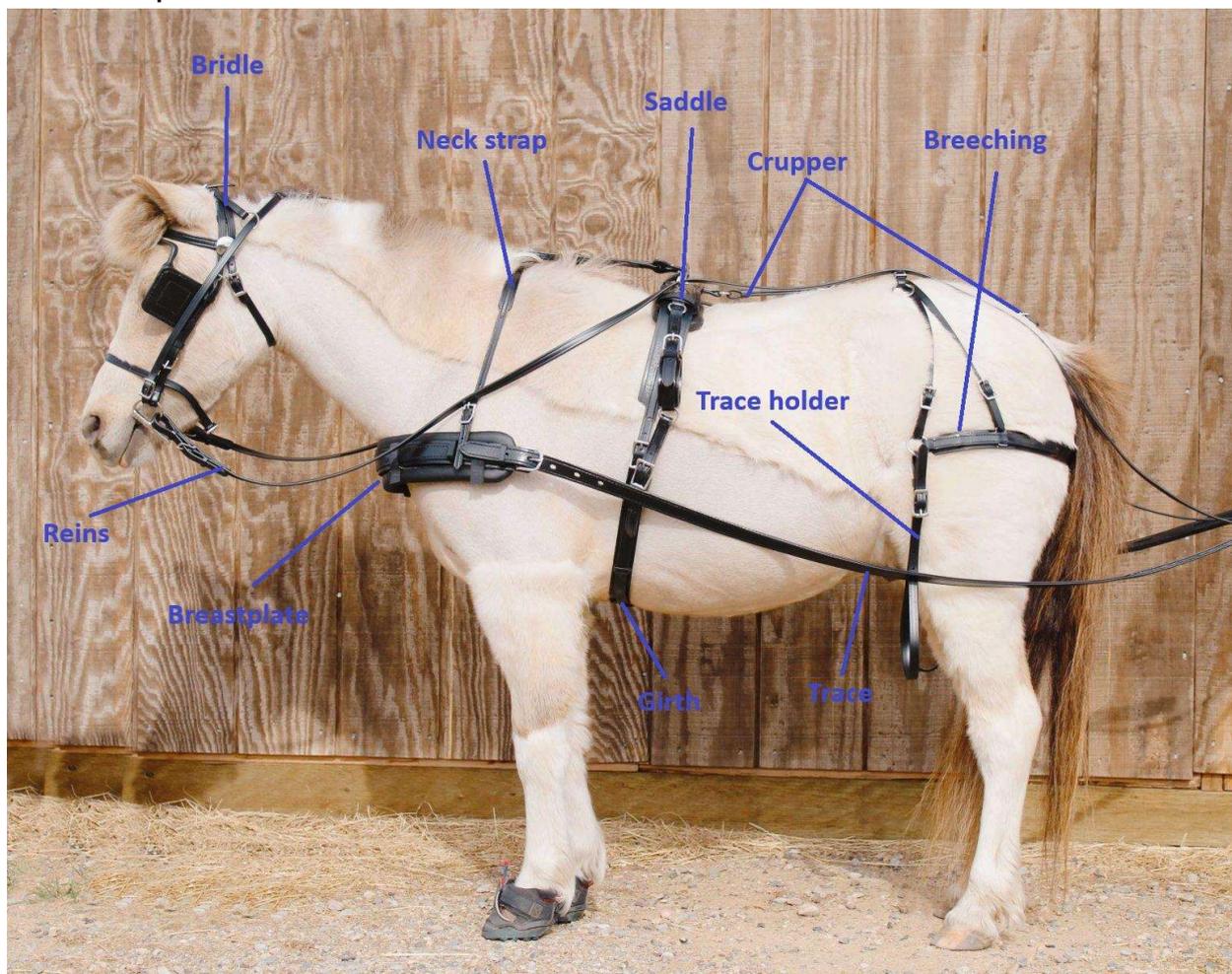


2. Grooming tools

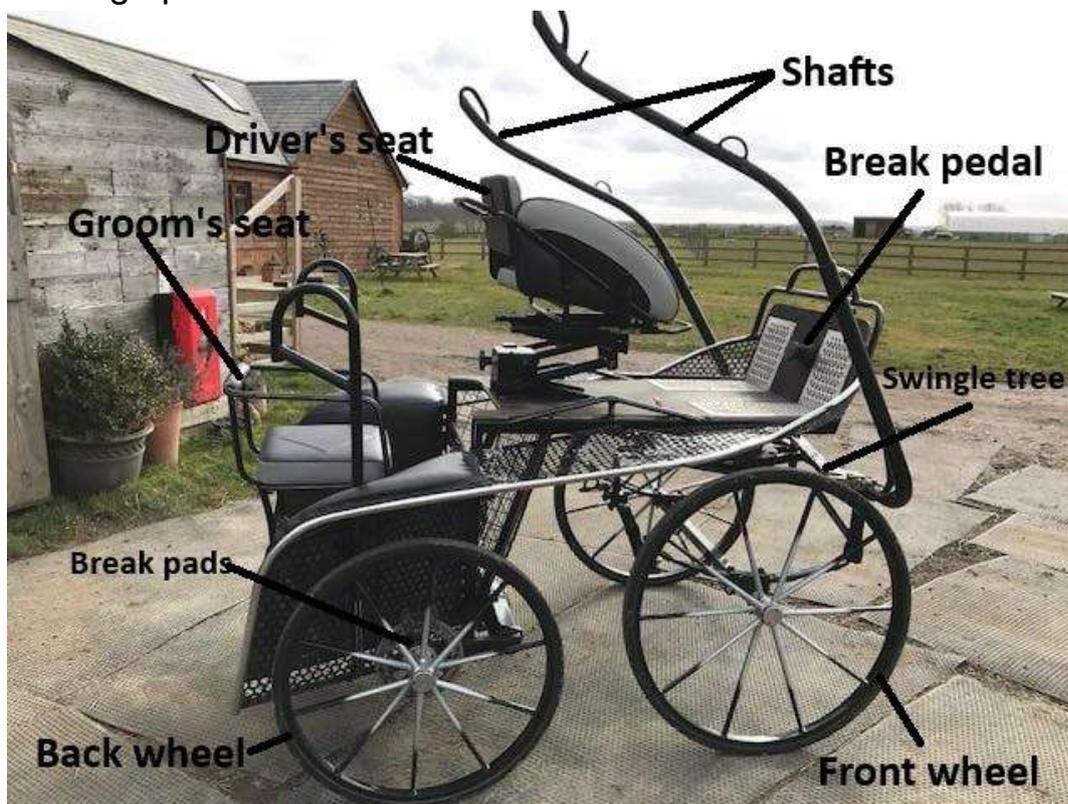
Basic tools and techniques

TOOL	FOR	HOW TO USE	DESIGN
 Rubber curry comb	Loosens dirt and dandruff while providing a massage.	Circular pattern with varying degrees of pressure. Tap on boot frequently to clean.	Use fine density for face and legs; thicker teeth for body.
 Body brush	Lifts out debris loosened by the curry and distributes the natural coat oil.	Short, flicking motions. Frequently rub across curry comb to clean.	Medium stiffness is adequate and comfortable for most horses.
 Finishing brush	Removes any remaining dust and evenly distributes natural skin oil for shine.	Smooth, short flicks along the body.	Often available in horse hair fibers.
 Mane and tail brush	Gently brushes mane and tail without damage.	Start at the bottom and gently brush small lengths. Do not force tangles as it will break the hair.	Various designs including pin cushion types and human hair brushes.
 Shedding blade	Serrated blade removes loose, shedding hair in the spring or thick caked mud; smooth side is for scraping sweat or water.	Long, sweeping motions.	Universal basic design
 Hoof pick	Removes dirt, rock and manure from hoof.	Remove packed dirt and clean the spaces along the frog.	Various designs and sizes.

3. Harness parts



4. Carriage parts



5. Driving bits



4 ring



Elbow



Liverpool



Butterfly



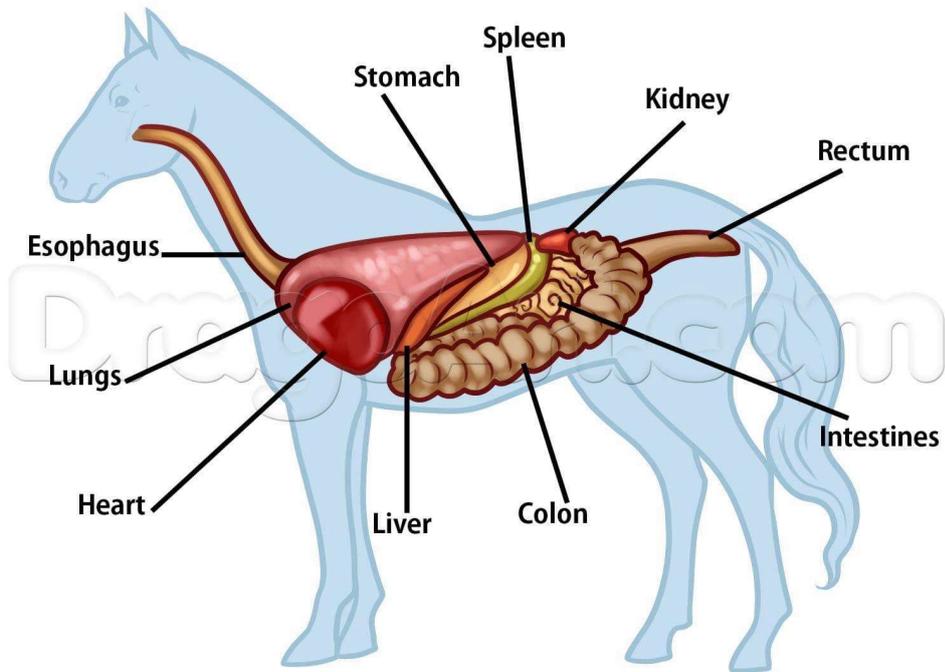
Half cheek



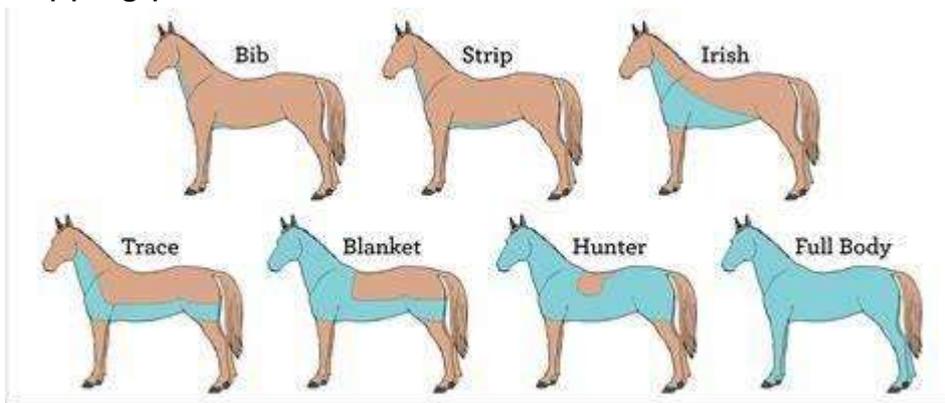
Buxton

Common Driving Cheek Types

6. Pony's organs



7. Clipping patterns



8. Driving bridle parts



Amendments

~ 01/03/2025 - Committee amended pg 3,4,5 to ease the passing of the assessment

Written by *Aniko Foldszin (2024)*