



# USA WORKING EQUITATION

## Glossary of Judging Terms

(from USDF Glossary of Judging Terms, 2015)



Alignment (horse)	The lining up of the horse's body parts from tail to poll. One of the four aspects of straightness.
Alignment (rider)	Vertical alignment: the side view of the rider in which the ear, shoulder, hip, and heel are in a vertical line. Lateral alignment: the front or rear view of the rider in which the weight appears to be evenly distributed on the left and right sides and the rider's body does not collapse in the waistline/core in either direction. Rotational alignment: the orientation of the front of the rider's body relative to the horse's line of travel or line of reference.
Amplitude	Reach and roundness of motion. Same as Scope.
Balance	Relative distribution of the weight of a horse and rider upon the fore and hind legs (longitudinal balance) and the left and right legs (lateral balance).
Basics	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pure rhythm with suitable tempo.</li> <li>• Relaxation/suppleness/elasticity/looseness.</li> <li>• Correct contact/connection.</li> <li>• Impulsion, straightness, and longitudinal balance suitable to the level and exercise.</li> </ul>
Bend/Bending	The laterally curved position in which the horse's body, as viewed from above, appears to form a uniform arc from poll to tail.
Collected gaits	Trot or canter: A pace with shorter steps and a more uphill balance than in the working pace, with no sacrifice of impulsion. The horse's frame is shorter, with the neck stretched and arched upward. The tempo remains nearly the same as in the medium or extended pace. Walk: A pace with shorter steps and more uphill balance than in the medium walk, with no sacrifice of activity. The neck oscillates less than in the medium and extended paces and the frame is shorter, with the neck stretched and arched upward. The tempo remains nearly the same as in the medium or extended pace. It is a common misconception that the hind legs step further forward under the body in collection. This is not consonant with the shorter strides required in collection. In the collected paces, the hind feet are picked up relatively sooner after passing behind the hip and spend relatively more time on the ground (stance phase).
Confidence	The boldness and self-assurance with which the horse performs, and the trust in his partnership with the rider.
Contact	The reins are stretched so that they form a straight line, not a loop.
Elasticity	The ability or tendency to stretch and contract the musculature smoothly, giving the impression of stretchiness or springiness.



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Engagement	<p>Increased flexion of the hind leg joints during the weight-bearing (stance) phase of the stride, lowering the croup relative to the forehand, enabling the back to assist in elevating the forehand, and providing a springboard for upward thrust/impulsion. Engagement is carrying power rather than pushing power.</p> <p>Engagement is not flexion of the hocks when the leg is swinging forward, nor does it describe the forward reach of the hind leg under the horse's body.</p>
Extension/extended	<p>Trot or canter: A pace that shows maximum length of stride, frame, and phase of suspension. The uphill balance is greater than in the lengthening pace. The tempo remains nearly the same as in the collected pace.</p> <p>Walk: A pace with maximum length of stride and frame and showing the natural longitudinal oscillation of the neck (while still remaining on contact). The hind feet touch the ground clearly in front of the prints of the forefeet.</p>
Fluidity	Flowing or moving smoothly and easily.
Freedom	The reach, scope, and lack of constriction in the horse's movement.
Harmony	Used in reference to the relationship between horse and rider, the partners' positive physical as well as mental/emotional connection, showing rapport, trust, and confidence in one another and resulting in a sense of synchrony, contentment, and unity.
Impulsion	<p>Thrust of the hind legs, releasing the energy stored by engagement. Thrust is transmitted through a back that is free from negative tension and is manifested in the horse's elastic, whole-body movement.</p> <p>Impulsion is present only in gaits that have a phase of suspension (trot, canter); it is not present in walk, which has energy but not impulsion.</p>
Lightness	<p>Refers to one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horse's lightness on its feet.</li> <li>• Lightness of the rider's aids/horse's responsiveness to light aids.</li> <li>• Lightness/lift of the forehand.</li> </ul>
Medium gaits	<p>Trot or canter: A pace of moderate lengthening, with a longer stride than in the collected or working paces but shorter than in the extended pace. The uphill balance is greater than in the working or lengthening pace, and the length of the frame and suspension are between that of the collected and extended paces. The tempo should remain nearly the same as in the collected pace.</p> <p>Walk: A pace of moderate lengthening, with a length of stride and frame between that of the collected and extended walks and showing natural longitudinal oscillation of the neck.</p>
Quality (of the gait)	Freedom, elasticity, flexibility, fluency, and amplitude. Not the same as purity or correctness.



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Regularity	Purity of the gait. At walk and trot, denotes symmetry in terms of evenness of the length of the steps, levelness of the height of the steps, and equality of the time interval between the steps of the left and right forelimbs, or the left and right hindlimbs.
Relaxation	Referring to the horse's mental/emotional state: calm, without anxiety or nervousness. Referring to the horse's physical state: indicates the absence of muscular contraction other than that needed for optimal carriage, strength, and movement.
Resistance	Active or rigid opposition to the connection or to the aids of a rider. Not the same as disobedience or evasion. The horse can be resistant yet still obedient (perform the exercise). Can be momentary or pervasive, willful or unintentional.
Rhythm	The recurring characteristic sequence and timing of footfalls and phases of a gait.
Self-carriage	State in which the horse carries itself in balance without taking support or balancing on the rider's hand.
Straightness	Proper alignment of the horse's body parts from tail to poll. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On straight or curved lines: parallelism of the horse's longitudinal axis to the line of travel, with the hind hoof prints in line with the front hoof prints.</li> <li>• In two tracks/lateral work: parallelism of the horse's longitudinal axis to the line of reference (e.g., haunches not leading or trailing in leg yielding).</li> <li>• Directness of line of travel: the horse not deviating or wandering left and/or right of the desired path of travel (e.g., as in weaving).</li> </ul>
Submission	The horse's willing cooperation and harmony with the rider, demonstrating an attentive and confident attitude. Willingness to perform the required exercise as well as operate with correct basics.
Suppleness	Range of motion of joints and the ability to move the joints freely. Also described as flexibility. The opposite of stiffness.
Tempo	Rate of repetition of the strides as may be measured by a metronome.
Uphill	Good longitudinal balance with elevated forehand and lowered croup (engaged hindquarters). The degree of engagement of the hind limbs is balanced with the degree of elevation on the forehand.