



Introductory Riding Competency Standards

Verbal Assessment: IR Assessment Slip 1 – Competency Rubric with Descriptions

Assessment Area	Competent	Not Competent
Correct Fitting Tack	Explains that correct fitting tack prevents injury to horse and rider; mentions professional saddle fitting.	Fails to explain purpose or risks of improper fit
Use of Boots/Bandages	States boots protect legs from injury; includes examples like brushing or hitting obstacles.	Misses protective purpose or does not provide examples.
Bit, Noseband, and Saddle Cloth	Identifies purpose of bit and noseband (mouth/jaw control). Identifies saddle cloth matching discipline.	Missing explanation or relevance of each item to horse or discipline.
Signs of Tack Wear	Lists multiple areas to check (straps, girth points, reins, etc.); explains risk of injury from worn tack.	Incomplete list or no risk explanation.
Rhythm and Relaxation	Defines both terms; links relaxation to balance and rhythm.	Definitions missing or unclear; no link to horse behavior or training.
Contact	Defines contact as connection between rider and horse; includes balance as key to good contact.	Lacks definition or does not mention balance/impulsion.
Impulsion	Defines as controlled energy from hindquarters; includes mental and physical readiness.	Fails to mention energy/activity, or hindquarters.
Rhythm vs. Tempo	Defines rhythm (sequence of footfalls) and tempo (speed); explains relationship between them.	One or both terms undefined or confused.
Footfalls of Gaits	Correctly lists footfall patterns for walk (4-beat), trot (2-beat with suspension), and canter (3-beat with suspension).	Incorrect or incomplete descriptions of gait patterns.
Flexion and Bend	Defines flexion (poll joint) and bend (whole body); discusses importance for suppleness, balance, and connection.	Incomplete or inaccurate definitions; lacks training importance.



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Rules of the Arena	Identifies key rules (e.g., gate closed, passing rules, mounting off track); shows awareness of safety and etiquette.	Few rules listed or demonstrates misunderstanding of arena behaviour.
Warm Up and Cool Down	Explains warm up prepares horse mentally/physically, assesses soundness; cool down aids recovery, reduces stiffness, eliminates waste.	Fails to mention importance/purpose of both warm up and/or cool down