

## **D+ Candidates**

As it is a requirement for anyone wishing to take C Test to have passed their D Test, we have decided to test our older members to D+ (an optional, slightly higher standard) and so include the D Test.

Pony Club endeavours to train for safety in all aspects of 'horsemastership' and you should be aware of the reasons behind how and why things are done in a particular way. You will be asked to demonstrate your ability to handle and ride your pony properly.

The training covers the practical skills as well as a bit of theory and should ensure that the correct methods of handling and general horsemastership are understood and you are able to do things in the approved fashion. ***It is very important that you use these methods during the test*** – whichever way you do them usually!

**NOTE – we assume you have a copy of the Pony Club Manual of Horsemanship!**

The Pony Club 'Manual of Horsemanship' is the basis for all Pony Club training and tuition. It explains how to manage, ride and care for your horse or pony in a safe and approved manner. Testing is also based on its teachings.

***Please*** read the relevant sections, so you know you will be using the correct methods.

The following hints will help to ensure you are fully prepared for the test.

The black text is the official Pony Club information, the blue text includes suggestions for reading and ideas of what to consider or is being looked for in the test.

## **Important notes about riding on the road.**

The road is a dangerous place to ride. Cars go very fast and drivers do not always understand that ponies and horses can be afraid of noisy engines, farm vehicles and lorries or buses.

**When we ride on the road, we have to follow rules and be as safe as possible.** Riders have a right to use the roads, but must try at all times to **be alert and look out for danger** and what other road-users are doing. This means no chatting or daydreaming in case there is a hazard and you don't see it in time to take action. If your horse or pony is not good in traffic, you should avoid riding on the road **if at all possible**, and **NEVER** go out without a steady, traffic-proof companion and an adult.

Always ride on the left hand side of the road, keeping well tucked in to the side and *moving in the same direction* as the traffic. If we have to lead a pony or horse, either from the ground on another horse, we must be between the pony being led and the traffic.

We must make sure other road users can see us easily. Always put plenty of bright safety-wear on yourself and your pony.

### **When not to ride on the road**

If your pony is very 'fresh' (i.e. full of energy) and/or any of the following:

**NEVER set off for a ride on the road** if it is going to get **dark** before you get home or it is **foggy**. Drivers will not be able to see you ahead and a nasty accident is much more likely to happen. They do not expect to see riders out on horses in the fog or after dark.

If the roads are icy, or your pony's shoes are loose or worn thin. Your pony will be at risk of slipping and falling and cars can skid unexpectedly on icy roads.

When it is windy or rainy, horses and ponies can be more spooky than usual, so **extra** care must be taken if you really have to use the road.

It can be very busy at certain times of the day – when people are going to and from work. They might be in a hurry and not very pleased to see ponies and horses in their way. Try not to ride during rush hour!

### **Things which can frighten even a quiet pony are:**

- Big or noisy vehicles and rattling trailers with flapping tarpaulins on
- People in gardens or behind hedges using lawn mowers and hedge cutters
- Children on roller-blades or scooters or kicking footballs
- Bags of rubbish at the side of the road
- Plastic bags stuck in the hedge
- Newspaper or litter blowing across the road
- Dogs loose in the garden, barking at you

### **You must not ride on the pavement – it is against the law.**

Trotting around a corner is dangerous – roads can be extra slippery on corners.

Saying 'Thank you' to kind and helpful drivers is always polite. **A big smile and a nod** of your head is plenty to encourage them to slow down for other riders.

## OBJECTIVE – The aim of the test

To be working towards developing a balanced seat independent of the reins.  
To understand elementary aids and be able to apply them.

## RIDING – What you will be expected to do

- Mount and dismount – [please read how, in the Pony Club Manual of Horsemanship!](#)

The following will be judged on a short ridden 'test' which is quite basic and fairly informal. Please look in the Pony Club Manual and **check you are able to do these things correctly!** Hopefully, you have all learned these skills at home, rallies and camps.

- Hold the reins correctly and carry a whip in either hand
- To be able to control a quiet pony in company, on the roads and in the countryside
- Walk without stirrups
- Use of legs as aids
- Simple turns and circles in walk and trot
- Walk on a loose rein and shorten the reins
- Ride up and down hills in walk - [check this out in the Manual of Horsemanship](#)
- Be able to canter
- Ride over a single pole and very small fence

## ROAD SENSE

- To know on which side of the road you should ride – [Same as the traffic and in the same direction](#)
- To understand a simple 'green cross' code - [Check carefully ahead, to the sides and behind you for all other road users before attempting to turn left, right or cross over](#)
- How to ride along a road, cross a road and say 'thank you', and how to signal to turn right or left – [see above and both reins and whip in one hand and a clear hand signal with the free hand if conditions are safe to do so.](#) A smile and a nod is all you are expected to give as a thank-you gesture.
- To know it is safer to ride on the road with adults or parents – [this should be obvious!](#)
- To show an awareness of dangers when riding on the road, understanding what is likely to frighten a pony or cause him to slip – [icy roads, new or worn road surfaces and loose or thin shoes for slipping.](#) Scary things might include plastic bags in the hedge, general litter blowing or lying about, people in gardens with mowers and hedge cutters – either behind hedges or hidden from your view but which can be heard, children with footballs or on skateboards and bikes, road-works and portable road-signs, dogs running loose in gardens – some like to dive at you, barking, and any sudden unexpected noise from traffic or houses. This sort of thing.
- To understand how to ride with a friend whilst on the road – [This is generally single file and tucked in to the side of the road. If the pony or rider is inexperienced, in certain conditions you may ride with the experienced person/horse next to the traffic. If this is the case, for this level, you really should not be riding on the roads!](#)
- Recognise the dangers to ponies from cars and other traffic – [Large, noisy vehicles, air-brakes, flapping tarpaulins and rattling trailers etc., all might cause even the steadiest ponies to jump or even run off. You are expected to be aware that the roads are very dangerous places to be and that you should be fully prepared, before setting out on any road, for all possible problems.](#)

[Additionally - wild weather \(wind and or rain\) , fresh ponies, foggy or icy conditions, when is is starting to get dark and when the sun is low in the sky \(and drivers' and riders' visibility will be affected\) also make riding on the roads even more dangerous.](#)

[Finally, that you should always wear plenty of high visiblity clothing \(you and the horse\) in order to be as easily seen as possible.](#)

## HORSEMASTERSHIP

To have some knowledge of care and working a pony off grass –

- How safe and suitable their fields are (poisonous plants, broken fences, rickety gates, litter and other rubbish that may get thrown in the field, water supply)
- How often **and what** should be checked – water, feet, rugs, grass available fencing.
- How fat or thin they are likely to be at certain times of the year.
- How fit for working they are and what their coats might be like.
- What sort of grooming to give them if they live out in all weathers.
- If there are any advantages **for the pony** to being out all the time – will he prefer it and is it good for him – if so why? If not, why?
- Any possible *dis*advantages for you!

Put on a saddle and bridle – Again read the correct way please.

Have some knowledge of correctly fitting tack – Why it should fit properly – what may happen if it doesn't. How to check noseband, throatlash and bit are fitted correctly.

Elementary care of saddlery – Keeping it clean, so it is comfortable and also checking the condition of the stitching while you are cleaning it – safety .

Catching a pony and turn it away in the field – The **correct** way how to approach, catch and lead a pony out of the field and how to turn it out again.

Lead a pony in hand at walk and trot, and turn correctly – Know you should wear a riding hat, gloves and boots, lead from the shoulder and **push** around **away** from you to turn.

Tie up a pony correctly Where is most suitable and which knot to use. Also that you should tie up to a breakable piece of string.

Names and uses of essential grooming kit - The order of grooming and *proper* use of brushes etc.

Pick up and pick out feet – Please read how to do it **properly**.

Points of the pony, colours and markings – these will only be fairly basic ones, but you can impress us if you wish.

Be able to recognise New Zealand (**turnout**) rugs, sweat (**cooler**) rugs and a night rug – hopefully you can do this without too much difficulty!

Good luck.