

USPC Dressage B and A Level COMPARISON Flow Chart (for Standards Revised 2024)

	B	A
Riding Expectations	<p>The candidate demonstrates an independent seat and hand throughout the execution of USEF Second Level movements, over ground poles and/or cavaletti, and with confidence in the open. Candidates should show correct alignment, stability, and elasticity in their position, and be able to stay centered in lateral movements while demonstrating appropriate angle and bend. The candidate should ride with the collection and thoroughness appropriate to USEF Second Level, with the horse reliably on the bit and accepting weight on the hindquarters. The candidate should demonstrate all the components of the Training Scale and, through the correct application of the rider's aids, be able to demonstrate a greater degree of straightness, bending, suppleness, thoroughness, balance, and self-carriage. The candidate should be confident in identifying and assessing evasions/resistances on their own and switch mount and maintain the qualities of the Training Scale. The candidate discusses and evaluates all rides within the framework of the Training Scale. The candidate should show a clear awareness of their position and mechanics on all mounts. The level of riding is in accordance with the USEF Second Level directives. These expectations are applied to each block of the test.</p>	<p>The candidate demonstrates an independent seat and hand, showing the ability to ride with increased engagement and clear, well-defined transitions between collected, medium, and extended gaits as required at the USEF Third Level. Riding with tact, confidence, harmony, and security, the candidate should ride reliably on the bit in a consistent uphill balance, demonstrating a greater degree of self-carriage, straightness, thoroughness, suppleness, balance, and bend. Utilizing an extensive "toolbox" of schooling techniques, the candidate must accurately assess and advance the training of a wide variety of mounts at various stages of training, demonstrating a confident, consistent, and effective performance on each. All rides should be discussed in the context of the Training Scale, USEF directives, current training/weaknesses/strengths of the mount and plans for improvement. Cavaletti and riding in the open should be used to enhance the mount's gaits, impulsion, straightness, and/or collection. The candidate must show self-awareness of how their aids, independence, position, connection, and elasticity affect the mechanics of required movements and either positively or negatively affect the horse's quality of gaits, movement, and performance. The level of riding is in accordance with the USEF Third Level directives. These expectations are applied to each block of the test.</p>
Warm-up	<p>RIDING ON THE FLAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate warm-up for work on the flat, including movements from Second Level tests. Demonstrate accurate and smooth transitions, correct use of aids, regularity of gaits, lengthening and shortening of frame, balance, self-carriage, and collection appropriate to the level. Trot work should progress from rising to sitting. 	<p>RIDING ON THE FLAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate efficient warm-up appropriate for the level, including movements from Third Level tests. Perform exercises to improve each mount's rhythm, engagement, energy, elasticity/relaxation, connection (on the aids with correct contact), impulsion, straightness, and collection.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride at all gaits without stirrups with a secure and independent seat and continued effective use of aids. • Discuss reasons for and results of warm-up mount. • Discuss warm-up including: rhythm/tempo, suppleness/relaxation, contact/connection, impulsion, balance, engagement, collection, and thoroughness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride at all gaits without stirrups with a secure and independent seat with continuing effective influence. • Discuss reasons for and results of warm-up ridden mount. • Discuss warm-up including: rhythm/tempo, suppleness/relaxation, contacts/connection, impulsion, balance, engagement, collection, and thoroughness.
Ride Schooling Figures to Include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Medium and free walks ▲ Collected and medium trot and canter ▲ 10-meter circles at the trot and canter ▲ Simple change of lead (through the walk) ▲ Counter canter ▲ Half-turn on the haunches ▲ Shoulder in ▲ Haunches in (travers) ▲ Halt with immobility for 5 seconds from the trot ▲ Rein back three to four steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Medium and extended walk ▲ Collected, medium, and extended trot ▲ Collected, medium, and extended canter ▲ 10-meter trot and canter circles ▲ Shoulder in ▲ Travers (haunches in), renvers (haunches out) in trot. ▲ Half pass at the trot and canter ▲ Half turn on the haunches ▲ Counter canter ▲ Flying changes ▲ Movements from higher levels may be used for gymnastic value at the discretion of the candidate.
Test Ride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride a USEF Dressage test, either Second Level, Test 3 (current version), or Third Level Test of choice. (Second Level must be presented in a snaffle; Third Level test may be presented in a snaffle or double bridle.) • Rider should demonstrate the directives of the chosen USEF test. • Evaluate and discuss performance according to the Training Scale as it applies to directives of the test chosen, including strong and weak points and level of training of the mount being ridden. • Rider shows position with correct alignment and symmetry. • Rider shows independent, tactful, and effective aids. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride a USEF Dressage test at Third Level Test 3 (current version), or above. • Rider should demonstrate the directives of Third Level. • Critique ride according to the Training Scale, as it applies to the directive of the test chosen, including strong and weak points and level of training of the mount being ridden. • Rider shows position with correct alignment and symmetry. • Rider shows independent and effective aids, with harmony and tactful influence according to the Training Scale.
Switch Ride	<p>RIDING ON THE FLAT - SWITCH RIDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate ability to ride an unfamiliar mount showing confidence and control while demonstrating Riding Expectations and elements of the Training Scale appropriate to the level of the horse. • Discuss performance using the directives of Second Level and the Training Scale. 	<p>TRAINING – SWITCH RIDE (Schooled Horse)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride one or more assigned mounts: critique ride, according to the Training Scale, evaluating level of training of mount. At least one switch mount should be schooled to Second Level or above. • Perform exercises to improve each mount's rhythm, engagement, energy, elasticity/relaxation, connection (on the aids

		<p>with correct contact), impulsion, straightness, and collection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and address evasions of all mounts and demonstrate/discuss short term and long-term training plans to correct them. • Demonstrate/discuss short term and long-term training plans for each mount, including specific dressage figures and movements, use of cavaletti and work in the open.
Training	<p>TRAINING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how rider’s position affects the biomechanics of the mount’s movement. • Discuss how to put the mount “on the aids”. Discuss the terms connection, thoroughness, engagement, and collection. • Discuss the difference between medium and lengthening within the gaits, and lateral and longitudinal suppleness. • Discuss two or more exercises to improve an aspect of the Training Scale for your mount. Demonstrate these exercises and discuss their effectiveness (note if this applies to their mount or switch). 	<p>TRAINING - (Lower Level or Green Horse)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate must bring a less experienced horse (minimum of Training Level in order to demonstrate training of a green horse). Cavaletti may be used in the warm-up phase for the green horse, at the discretion of the candidate. • Demonstrate training techniques and exercises appropriate to the mount’s current level of training. Address and evasions or weaknesses. • Evaluate a mount’s strong and weak points and their level of training in relation to the Training Scale. • Discuss training techniques and specific exercises that address any current weakness while advancing the mount’s training. • Candidate should demonstrate the correct fit of the double bridle. Discuss the application and use of the double bridle. • Candidate may choose to demonstrate the use of the double bridle at their discretion on their own mount.
Riding in the Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride in the open in a manner to build confidence of mount, showing ability to direct its energy toward a positive experience. • Show exercises (using varied terrain if available) to improve mount’s mental and physical development. • Critique ride and discuss exercises chosen and their effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride in the open in a manner to build confidence of mount, showing ability to direct its energy toward a positive experience. • Show exercises (using varied terrain if available) to improve mount’s mental and physical development. • Critique ride and discuss exercises chosen and their effects. • Discuss the introduction of work in the open to a young horse.
Riding Over Ground Poles/Cavaletti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the use of cavaletti to improve collected and medium gaits. • Set 2-3 cavaletti exercises. Explain choice of exercises to include spacing and placement of cavaletti. Discuss choice as to when cavaletti exercises will be performed (in test warm-up) or in training period) in the context of what works best for own mount. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss purpose of ground poles and cavaletti in the training of young and experienced horses. • Set 2-4 cavaletti exercises. Explain the choice of exercises to include spacing and placement of cavaletti. Discuss choice as to when cavaletti exercises will be performed (in test warm-up or in training period) in the context of what works best for own mount.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride own mount through chosen cavaletti or ground pole exercises at the walk and trot (canter optional), improving the balance, suppleness, elasticity and strength needed for collected and medium gaits. • Discuss performance, including success of exercises chosen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride own mount through chosen cavaletti or ground pole exercises at the walk and trot (canter optional), improving the balance, suppleness, elasticity and strength needed for collected and extended gaits. Cavaletti should be integrated with movements as part of the gymnastic phase of the ride. • Discuss performance, including success of exercises chosen, integration into work, effect on mount's mental and physical development, and progression of training in relation to the Training Scale.
Longeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how to teach a mount to longe. • Discuss benefits of longeing the mount. Discuss safety precautions for longeing a rider. Demonstrate proper fit and use of equipment, including snaffle bit (attached to bridle or cavesson), saddle or surcingle, and side reins or training equipment found in the <i>USPC Manual of Horsemanship H-B – A</i>. • Longe own mount, demonstrating safe longeing techniques. Longeing should reflect “riding horse from the ground” with effectiveness, and coordinated use of voice, body position, and equipment (line and whip). • Demonstrate the walk, trot, and canter on a 20-meter circle, establishing rhythm, balance, and energetic gaits, while improving the lateral and longitudinal suppleness. • Candidate should identify and deficiencies in the mount's gaits, balance, or movement and incorporate specific exercises to improve these areas, then discuss the effectiveness of the exercises. • A Candidate who currently hold a certification at his/her same level on a different track must demonstrate Dressage longeing (lateral move). 	N/A
Bandaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present one of the following bandages: ice, poultice, sweat. Discuss materials used, purpose, and dangers of chosen bandage. 	N/A
Conditioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present a 6-to-8-week conditioning and feeding program designed to get a totally unfit (out of work 6-12 months), but healthy horse to a basic fitness level for daily riding (described on pages 229-230 in the <i>USPC Manual of Horsemanship C-Level</i>). The plan must include a description of mount (e.g., age breed, body score), current fitness level (unfit & amount of time off), the amount and type of work to be done, at least one day off, and should demonstrate an understanding of the basic conditioning 	N/A

	<p>principals and type of work most appropriate for this horse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how you would build on the basic level of fitness you achieved with the above plan, in order to further condition the horse for a competition or more intense work. The type of work or level of competition must be stated. • Discuss the different types of work (e.g., building flexibility, strength, cross training) that you included in the plan and their intended effect on conditioning. • Discuss how to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan (TPR recovery rates/strength/flexibility) and any nutritional changes that might need to be made as the plan progresses. 	
<p>RETEST PROCEDURES</p>	<p>See General National Testing Information on the Pony Club Website</p>	



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