

Unit 16: Introduction to the Principles of Young Horse Handling, Training and Backing

Unit code:	F/601/0377
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit aims to provide learners with an understanding of the principles of introduction to the principles of young horse handling, training and backing and how these can be applied in practice. This unit is primarily aimed at learners within a centre-based setting looking to progress into the sector or further education and training.

● Unit introduction

There is an increased need to prepare young horses for sale and competition in both the thoroughbred (TB) and non-thoroughbred sectors of the horse industry. It is important for learners to be able to do this correctly, as preparing a young horse successfully depends largely on the skills of the trainer. These skills can be developed further over time and are widely sought after by many employers

Learners will review the early management and handling of the horse and demonstrate initial handling of youngstock and consider the methods and reasons for doing so. They will consider and demonstrate the correct introduction and use of ground schooling equipment and tack.

Learners will research the training of youngstock from the ground, and the progression to backing and initial riding. The need for safety is reinforced throughout the unit. Learners will contribute to training on the ground and assist in introducing horse and rider, demonstrating a knowledge of behavioural and associated health issues. Learners will review the methods of training from the ground, backing and initial riding.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to introduce young horses to equipment
- 2 Be able to contribute to the training of the young horse from the ground
- 3 Be able to assist in the introduction of the horse to the rider
- 4 Understand how to contribute to the training and backing of the young horse.

Unit content

1 Be able to introduce young horses to equipment

Safety: correct personal protective equipment (PPE) for handlers; suitable area for work; appropriate and safe equipment; supervision; risk assessments; dangers of working with young horses compared to schoolmasters

Qualities of a good trainer: eg calmness, patience, confidence, consistency, reassurance

Correct introduction of equipment: eg rugs and rollers, bridle, bits (nylon, loose-ring, mouthing), cavesson, saddle, breastplate and neckstrap, lunge rein, long reins, boots, lunge whip

Possible behavioural issues: flight instincts; management of behaviours; different breeds and temperament

2 Be able to contribute to the training of the young horse from the ground

Preparation for backing: eg lungeing, long reining, safe use of equipment, logical progression

Initial training aims: eg preparation for riding, attention, obedience, calmness, confidence, regularity and rhythm of the paces, forward movement

3 Be able to assist in the introduction of the horse to the rider

Safety: correct PPE for assistant and rider; suitable area for work; appropriate and safe equipment; supervision; risk assessments

Traditional and alternative methods: eg traditional, Parelli, Join-Up; advantages and disadvantages

Backing: assist with introducing horse to rider according to current good practice; preliminaries to and leaning over; progression to sitting up; initial introduction of the ridden aids

4 Understand how to contribute to the training and backing of the young horse

Backing and training: understanding correct methods of working and backing young horses; work as a team to assist more experienced trainers; safety; horse welfare

Health and training issues: eg wolf teeth, sore back, sore mouth, bony and bursal enlargements

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 introduce basic handling and preliminary training procedures to the horse	M1 explain selected health and training issues related to initial training	D1 analyse own strengths and areas for improvement during the initial introduction and training process, justifying recommendations for improvement
P2 select and fit suitable equipment to the horse [TM]		
P3 maintain physical and mental wellbeing of the horse throughout procedures [TW]		
P4 monitor progress of the young horse, recommending further training requirements as appropriate [EP]		
P5 select and fit suitable tack for training the young horse from the ground [TW]	M2 explain the importance of health and safety when working with the young horse	
P6 assist with the training of the young horse from the ground safely		
P7 report the horse's progress and wellbeing throughout the training process		

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P8 prepare horse and area for backing according to requirements	M3 evaluate both traditional and alternative approaches to backing the young horse	D2 evaluate a selected programme of work for training the horse from the ground and backing.
P9 assist with introducing the horse to the rider according to current good practice [TW, SM]		
P10 explain the correct procedures for introducing, fitting and using tack and equipment for young horses	M4 plan a programme of work for training the horse from the ground and backing.	
P11 explain the importance of correct handling and introduction of equipment in the early stages of training		
P12 discuss the procedures associated with training young horses from the ground and backing		
P13 evaluate the hazards and risks associated with training young horses from the ground and backing.		

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers CT – creative thinkers	RL – reflective learners TW – team workers	SM – self-managers EP – effective participators
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Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Delivery of this unit will involve practical assessments, written assessment, visits to suitable collections and will link to work experience placements.

Tutors delivering this unit have opportunities to use as wide a range of techniques as possible. Lectures, discussions, seminar presentations, visits to sales or ridden auctions of young horses, supervised practicals and industrial experience would all be suitable. Emphasis is on the development of practical skills. Learners should be encouraged to draw on their personal experiences and skills gained through work experience, employment and with their own horses. Delivery should stimulate, motivate, educate and enthuse learners.

Work placements should be monitored regularly in order to ensure the quality of the learning experience. It would be beneficial if learners and supervisors were made aware of the requirements of this unit before any work-related activities are undertaken so that naturally occurring evidence can be collected at the time. For example, learners may have the opportunity to handle or ride young horses, and they should ask for observation records and/or witness statements to be provided as evidence of this. Guidance on the use of observation records and witness statements is provided on the Edexcel website.

Whichever delivery methods are used, it is essential that tutors stress the importance of the horse's welfare at all times, and the need to manage the resource using legal methods.

Health and safety issues relating to handling, training and riding young horses must be stressed and reinforced regularly, and risk assessments must be undertaken before all practical activities. Adequate PPE must be provided and used following the production of suitable risk assessments.

Tutors should consider integrating the delivery, private study and assessment for this unit with other relevant units and assessment instruments learners are taking as part of their programme of study.

Learning outcome 1 is likely to be delivered through formal lectures, discussions, supervised practical sessions and independent research. Learners will be aware of introducing equipment to, and the health management of, young horses and how to handle and educate them correctly. Visiting expert speakers could add to the relevance of the subject for learners. For example, a veterinary surgeon or stud manager could talk about their work, health problems associated with young horses and the methods they use.

Learning outcome 2 includes working young horses from the ground, and learning outcome 3 covers the backing process. Delivery of the underpinning theory will be needed alongside hands-on practicals and discussions. Visiting speakers could include a professional rider, trainer or somebody who works in yearling sales preparation or a similar field.

Learning outcome 4 covers understanding the correct methods of working and backing horses. Delivery should build on all the previous learning outcomes. Formal lectures, discussions, seminar presentations, research, personal experience, and practical sessions will all be relevant. Visiting speakers could include a professional rider or trainer or somebody who works in yearling sales preparation or a similar field. A visit or demonstration from an alternative trainer would allow learners to appreciate different methods of backing, and the importance of being aware of the horse's behaviour. A visit to a yard that specialises in backing young horses either in the thoroughbred or non-thoroughbred sector would be useful. Videos or video clips would also be a useful delivery tool, both in relation to 'alternative' training methods and, where possible, to video and evaluate the progress of horses learners are working with.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan gives **an indication of the volume of learning it would take the average learner** to achieve the learning outcomes. It is **indicative and is one way of achieving the credit value**.

Learning time should address all learning (including assessment) relevant to the learning outcomes, regardless of where, when and how the learning has taken place.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction and overview of the unit.
Assignment 1: Introduction to the Basics (P1, P2, P3, P4, P11, P13, M1)
Tutor introduces the assignment.
Theory sessions to introduce methods of initial introduction of equipment to and handling of young horses and health and safety.
Practical sessions to introduce methods of initial introduction of equipment to and handling of young horses and health and safety.
Theory sessions: young horse behaviour and health problems eg dental problems.
Assignment 2: Beginning Training (P5, P6, P7, M4, D1)
Tutor introduces the assignment.
Theory sessions to introduce methods of initial introduction of equipment and ground schooling techniques and health and safety.
Practical sessions to practise methods of ground schooling and assisting with training young horses.
Theory sessions: plan a programme of work for training and backing horses.
Assignment 3: Backing the Young Horse (P8, P9)
Tutor introduces the assignment.
Theory sessions to introduce methods of backing.
Practical sessions to practise methods of backing and assisting with backing young horses.
Assignment brief: Evaluating Methods of Training (P10, P12, M2, M3, D2)
Tutor introduces assignment.
Discuss correct procedures for introducing equipment, training and backing. Research and evaluate other methods of starting horses and associated health and safety issues.
Evaluate plan/programme of training for young horses.
Evaluation of unit/reviews.
Unit review.

Assessment

For P1, P2 and P3, learners must demonstrate correct techniques when handling selected youngstock. Tutors should identify the youngstock or agree this through discussion with learners. Where possible, to ensure assessment is fair the size and complexity of the task should be the same for all learners. This could be linked to P4 and M1 through the use of oral questions. This could be assessed directly by the tutor during practical activities. If this format is used then suitable evidence from guided activities would be observation records completed by learners and the tutor. If assessed during a placement, witness statements should be provided by a suitable representative and verified by the tutor.

P5 requires learners to select and fit equipment for lungeing and long reining given youngstock under supervision. Tutors should identify the youngstock or agree this through discussion with learners. Where possible, to ensure assessment is fair the size and complexity of the task should be the same for all learners. This could be assessed directly by the tutor during practical activities and through the use of verbal questioning. If this format is used then suitable evidence from guided activities would be observation records completed by learners and the tutor. If learners are assessed during a placement, witness statements should be provided by a suitable representative and verified by the tutor.

P6 requires learners to assist with lungeing and long reining of given youngstock under supervision. This must be demonstrated both in an enclosed space and in the open. Tutors should identify the youngstock or agree this through discussion with learners. Where possible, to ensure assessment is fair the size and complexity of the task should be the same for all learners. This could be assessed directly by the tutor during practical activities and through the use of verbal questioning (which could be linked to P7 and M2). If this format is used then suitable evidence from guided activities would be observation records completed by learners and the tutor. If learners are assessed during a placement, witness statements should be provided by a suitable representative and verified by the tutor.

For P8 and P9, learners must assist in the traditional handling, preparation and backing of a given young horse. Tutors should identify the horse or agree it through discussion with learners. Where possible, to ensure assessment is fair the size and complexity of the task should be the same for all learners. This could be assessed directly by the tutor during practical activities, and knowledge evidenced through the use of oral questioning. If this format is used then suitable evidence from guided activities would be observation records completed by learners and the tutor. If learners are assessed during a placement, witness statements should be provided by a suitable representative and verified by the tutor. Alternatively, progress could be logged and reported on each week in a logbook, or learners could give a 'youngstock presentation' at the end of the unit. Here, a panel of experts could be assembled for each group to present their horse to, in order to show its progress. Again, this could be combined with oral questioning from the panel. This would need to be assessed over a period of weeks. A logbook format would be appropriate, where tutors could comment on a weekly basis. Tutors should identify the horse and objectives or agree these through discussion with learners. Objectives could be based on the level of supervision involved. Where possible, to ensure assessment is fair the size and complexity of the tasks should be the same for all learners. This will need to be assessed practically. However, it should not matter which 'role' in the process individual learners take, for example the role of an assistant being just as valid as that of the rider. Again, as this process takes place over a period of weeks, a logbook format would be appropriate, as would a presentation with the young horse at the end of the unit. Learners and the tutor could comment on learner and horse performance each week in the logbook.

P10 and P11 require learners to explain the correct procedures for introducing and fitting tack and equipment for young horses. Assessment may be through oral questioning in conjunction with the practical assessments for P2 or through a written report.

P12 and P13 require learners to provide information on procedures associated with training young horses from the ground and backing. Evidence may be in the form of a written report or oral questioning.

For M1, learners must explain selected health and training issues. Tutors should identify the issues or agree these through discussion with learners. Where possible, to ensure assessment is fair the size and complexity of the tasks should be the same for all learners. Oral questioning can be used to establish learner understanding of associated health and training issues.

M2 requires learners to understand the importance of health and safety whilst working with young horses. A written report or oral questioning, together with practical assessments, can be used to establish understanding

For M3, learners must independently research and evaluate both traditional and alternative methods of backing young horses. Evidence can be through oral questioning, a written report or timed presentation. Assessment will link to the information required for P12.

For M4, learners must plan and carry out a programme of work to meet the requirements of a given young horse. Tutors should identify the horse or agree this through discussion with learners. Where possible, to ensure assessment is fair the size and complexity of the task should be the same for all learners. The programme of work will depend on the age and level of the horse's training. The planning process and 'carrying out' could be included as a weekly progress report in the logbook.

D1 requires learners to analyse their own strengths and areas for improvement during the initial introduction and training process. Learners must justify recommendations for improvement in the form of a written self-reflection on practical tasks undertaken for P1, P2, P5 and P6

For D2, learners are required to evaluate a selected programme of work and make appropriate recommendations for improvement. This could be in the form of a logbook, presentation or report.

Programme of suggested assignments

The following table shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, P2, P3, P4, P11, P13, M1	Introduction to the Basics	Two young horses are brought to your yard to begin training and backing. You will need to complete a number of tasks, to industry standards, over a specified period of time. Answer questions on the horses' development and the importance of correct handling. In a written report, explain any specific health or training problems encountered and expand on common problems related to young horses if you do not encounter any in practice.	Practical observation and assessment. Oral assessment. Written evidence.
P5, P6, P7, M4, D1	Beginning Training	Training of the young horses continues. You will need to complete a number of tasks to industry standards. Prepare and then assist in ground schooling. Plan and complete a programme of work for training and backing the horses, using this plan/log monitor the horses' progress and comment on your own performance and development.	Practical observation and assessment. Written log.
P8, P9	Backing the Young Horse	Training and assisting in backing the young horses. You will need to complete a number of tasks to industry standards.	Practical assessment.
P10, P12, M2, M3, D2	Evaluating Methods of Training	Discuss the correct procedures for introducing equipment, tack, ground schooling and backing. Evaluate traditional and alternative methods and any related health and safety issues. Evaluate own programme of work for training and backing.	Written assessment and oral presentation.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC land-based sector suite. This unit has particular links with:

Level 2	Level 3
Introduction to Lungeing Horses	Element 307.1 Introduce young horses to equipment Element 307.2 Contribute to training from the ground and backing
Introduction to the Principles of Horse Behaviour	Understand the Principles of and Plan and Monitor Horse Fitness and Training

Essential resources

Learners will need regular access to the centre's equine unit and availability of suitable youngstock for practical purposes is essential. Links with industry will also prove useful for practical sessions and observations.

Learners must also have access to an adequate number of youngstock to prevent overhandling and stress. Learners will need to practise handling foals as well as either yearlings, two- or three-year-olds. A suitable safe, enclosed area will be needed for working from the ground and backing.

A variety of equipment will be needed, including rugs and rollers, in-hand bridles, foal slips, riding bridles, bits (nylon, rubber, mouthing, loose-ring), cavessons, lunge lines, saddles, neckstraps, breastplates, boots, side reins and a lunge whip.

For learning outcomes 2, 3 and 4, learners will need a three or four-year-old horse to start, but a five or even six-year-old, which has been turned away for a short break and may need to be re-started would be acceptable.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

This unit focuses on practical aspects of handling and backing young horses and will give learners the underpinning knowledge of safe and effective methods. Centres are encouraged to create and develop links with local studs and training yards. Guest speakers and visits will widen learner experience and knowledge of the industry and the methods currently used. Work placements should be monitored regularly in order to ensure the quality of the learning experience. It would be beneficial if learners and supervisors were made aware of the requirements of this unit before any work-related activities so that naturally occurring evidence can be collected at the time.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Brega J – *The Horse: Breeding and Youngstock* (J A Allen, 1996) ISBN 0851316476

Edwards E – *Making the Young Horse the Rational Way* (J A Allen, 2006) ISBN 0851319114

Funnel P – *Training the Young Horse: Schooling for Success* (David & Charles Ltd, 2005) ISBN 0715321498

Klimke R and Klimke I – *The New Basic Training of the Young Horse* (Trafalgar Square Publishing, 2006) ISBN 1570763453

Loriston-Clarke J – *The Young Horse: Breaking and Training* (David & Charles Ltd, 2003) ISBN 0715308483

Maxwell R and Sharples J – *From Birth to Backing: The Complete Handling of the Young Horse* (Trafalgar Square Publishing, 2001) ISBN 0715312847

Ziegner K – *Elements of Dressage: A Guide for Training the Young Horse* (Cadmus Equestrian, 2002) ISBN 3861279029

Websites

www.montyroberts.com

Monty Roberts

www.naturalequine.co.uk

Natural Equine

www.parellinaturalhorsetraining.com

Parelli Natural Horse Training

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)

The following table identifies the PLTS opportunities that have been included within the assessment criteria of this unit:

Skill	When learners are ...
Team workers	training and backing horses with more experienced trainers to successfully achieve safe and successful initial learning and backing adapting behaviour to suit different situations depending on responses of the horses during training taking responsibility, showing confidence in themselves and their contribution
Self-managers	responding positively to change seeking advice and support when needed during training young horses
Effective participators	identifying improvements in relation to the initial handling of the young horse.

Although PLTS opportunities are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	researching different methods of training and backing
Creative thinkers	Evaluating methods of training and backing connecting their own and others' ideas and experiences
Reflective learners	evaluating their own performance and logbook for training and identifying improvements
Self-managers	organising time and resources, prioritising actions when training horses.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	using the internet to research methods of backing and training
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	using the internet to research methods of backing and training
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	planning and producing a programme and logbook presenting information
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	planning and producing a programme and logbook presenting information
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	responding to oral questioning on the horse's progress evaluating their logbook during an oral presentation
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	researching backing/training methods
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	writing a report discussing training procedures and health and safety.