

Course	Agricultural Science I
Unit	Equine Science
Lesson	Conformation and Selection
Estimated Time	50 minutes

Student Outcome

The student will be able to identify the ideal selection and conformation traits of a horse and their importance when purchasing a horse.

Learning Objectives

1. Determine the ideal characteristics when selecting a horse.
2. Recognize the influence of a horse's temperament on selection.
3. Describe the importance of balance and soundness.
4. Explain the use of performance records and pedigrees.

Grade Level Expectations

SC/EC/3/B/09-11/a SC/EC/3/C/09-11/b

Resources, Supplies & Equipment, and Supplemental Information

Resources

1. *Equine Science* (Student Reference). University of Missouri-Columbia: Instructional Materials Laboratory, 1995.
2. University of Missouri-Columbia Extension Division agricultural publications
 - a. G2840: Unsoundness and Blemishes of Horses: Feet and Legs
 - b. G2842: Determining Age of Horses by Their Teeth
 - c. G2843: Leg Set: Its Effect on Action and Soundness of Horses
3. *Equine Science Curriculum Enhancement*. University of Missouri-Columbia: Instructional Materials Laboratory, 2003.

Supplemental Information

1. Internet Sites
 - ❑ Bradley, M. *Leg Set: Its Effect on Action and Soundness of Horses*. University of Missouri-Columbia Extension Division agricultural publication, G2843. <http://extension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/ansci/g02843.htm>.
 - ❑ Equine Tooth Problems and Dental Care. KBR Horse Health Information. Accessed June 11, 2007, from <http://www.kbrhorse.net/hea/float.html>.
 - ❑ Loch, W. *Buying a Horse*. University of Missouri-Columbia Extension Division agricultural publication, G2835. Accessed June 11, 2007, from <http://extension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/ansci/g02835.htm>.
 - ❑ Loch, W. *Horse Conformation: Form to Function*. University of Missouri-Columbia Extension Division agricultural publication, G2837. Accessed June 11, 2007, from <http://extension.missouri.edu/xplor/agguides/ansci/g02837.htm>.
 - ❑ Loch, W. and M. Bradley. *Determining Age of Horses by Their Teeth*. University of Missouri-Columbia Extension Division agricultural publication, G2842. Accessed June 11, 2007, from

<http://extension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/ansci/g02842.htm>.

- ❑ Loch, W. and M. Bradley. *Unsoundness and Blemishes of Horses: Feet and Legs*. University of Missouri-Columbia Extension Division agricultural publication, G2840. Accessed June 11, 2007, from <http://extension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/ansci/g02840.htm>.

2. Print

- ❑ Campbell, J. R., M. D. Kenealy, and K. L. Campbell. *Animal Sciences: The Biology, Care, and Production of Domestic Animals*. 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 2003.
 - ❑ Ensminger, M. E., and C. J. Hammer. *Equine Science*. 8th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2004.
 - ❑ Frandson, R. D., W. L. Wilke, and A. D. Fails. *Anatomy and Physiology of Farm Animals*. 6th ed. Baltimore: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, 2003.
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Interest Approach

Begin by asking students if they have ever heard of people who have been taken advantage of by disreputable car salespeople because they didn't know anything about cars. Then ask whether they think it could happen when buying a horse.

Communicate the Learning Objectives

1. Determine the ideal characteristics when selecting a horse.
2. Recognize the influence of a horse's temperament on selection.
3. Describe the importance of balance and soundness.
4. Explain the use of performance records and pedigrees.

Instructor Directions	Content Outline
Objective 1 <i>Selecting a horse is kind of like buying a car; everyone wants four good tires, no flaws in the body, two bright headlights, good air intake, a sound motor, and a solid exhaust system. Of course, the emphasis will vary, depending on the owner's needs and skill level.</i>	Determine the ideal characteristics when selecting a horse. General body condition—healthy and of normal weight Gender considerations—stallions only for experienced riders Leg structure—front hoofs aligned in a straight line with the shoulder Muscling appropriate for the breed Tooth structure—indicates age <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Permanent teeth come in by age 4 ½ years.2. Horses have one set of temporary and one set of permanent teeth. Eye size and placement—large, wide-set eyes
Objective 2 <i>When selecting a horse, one of the first things to take into consideration is temperament. If a horse is temperamental and unpredictable or even aggressive, it is better to keep looking – even if it has everything else you are looking for. A good-looking horse that is uncontrollable will only cause injuries.</i>	Recognize the influence of a horse's temperament on selection. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Small, narrowly set eyes are associated with poor eyesight and temperament problems.2. A good-looking horse with a bad temperament is a poor mix.
Objective 3	Describe the importance of balance and soundness.

Instructor Directions	Content Outline
<p><i>While it is important for the horse to be as sound as possible, no horse is perfect. Look for a well-balanced horse, one with few imperfections and good proportions. Making sure a horse is sound (healthy) and free from defects is very important. If the horse is not sound, there can be greater problems in the future that can create large medical bills or problems that can't be corrected.</i></p>	<p>Balance (well developed and all parts blending together)</p> <p>Two categories of structure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blemishes 2. Unsoundness/defects <p>Minor travel or gait defects correctable by shoeing</p> <p>Causes of unsoundness: an inherited trait or from some outside influence such as stress, strain, injury, or nutritional deficiency</p> <p>Hidden problems caused by disreputable dealers</p>
<p>Objective 4</p> <p><i>Performance records tell how the horse's ancestors performed and can help predict how well the animal will perform. A pedigree describes the horse's ancestry. Performance records tell how well past generations performed and can help predict how well an individual might do in the future. The Thoroughbred breed registry was the first to use performance records.</i></p>	<p>Explain the use of performance records and pedigrees.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recording genetic characteristics 2. Breeding for excellence 3. Show ring winnings 4. Using with performance records 5. Recording ancestors and their performance
<p>Application:</p>	<p>Other activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit a breed registry or invite a representative to visit the class. Discuss the importance of registering a horse and the procedure for registering a horse. 2. Have students access an interactive horse judging Web site to practice judging horses. The site, developed by the College of Agriculture at the University of Kentucky, is located at http://www.ca.uky.edu/Agripedia/AGMANIA/HORSE/INDEX.asp.
<p>Closure/Summary</p>	<p>It is important to be able to distinguish between desirable and undesirable characteristics when choosing a horse, especially if the animal is for breeding purposes. Pedigrees and performance records can be valuable tools to use when selecting a horse.</p>

Instructor Directions	Content Outline
Evaluation: Quiz	<p>Answers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. c 2. d 3. c 4. b 5. d 6. b 7. c 8. a 9. a 10. d 11. b 12. a 13. b