

ANATOMY OF USDF DRESSAGE TEST SHEETS

INTRODUCTORY LEVEL

by Leslie Raulin

Dressage tests (below FEI tests) used in the US are published by the US Dressage Federation (USDF, www.USDF.org) and US Equestrian (USEF, www.USEF.org). The USDF Introductory Level test sheets and the USEF Training through Fourth Level test sheets have a standard “anatomy” (format) that riders should understand and study. This document will explain the “anatomy” of USDF Introductory Level test sheets. The USEF Training through Fourth Level test sheets have a different “anatomy” so are discussed in a separate document. [Click here](#) to download these tests.

Test sheets are printed on 8½” x 14” (legal) paper. In the past they were printed on colored paper (Introductory = White, Training = Pink, First = Blue, Second = Yellow, Third = Lilac, Fourth = Green); however, white paper for all tests is now accepted. The tests have two pages, usually printed double-sided.

Introductory Level Test B will be used as an example test for this document. We will start with page 1.

Page 1

2019 USDF INTRODUCTORY LEVEL – TEST B

WALK—TROT

REQUIREMENTS:
Free walk
Medium walk
Working trot rising
20 meter circle
Halt through walk

PURPOSE: To introduce the rider and/or horse to the sport of dressage. To show understanding of riding the horse forward with a steady tempo into an elastic contact with independent, steady hands and a correctly balanced seat. To show proper geometry of figures in the arena with correct bend (corners and circles).

NO.

TEST	DIRECTIVE IDEAS	POINTS	COEFFICIENT	TOTAL	REMARKS
1. A	Enter working trot rising.				
X	Halt through medium walk. Salute - Proceed working trot rising.				
2. C	Track left, working trot rising.				
3. E	Circle left 20 meters, working trot rising.				
4. Between K & A	Medium walk.				
5. F-E	Free walk.				
6. E-H	Medium walk.				
7. Between H & C	Working trot rising.				
8. B	Circle right 20 meters, working trot rising.				
9. A	Down centerline.				
X	Halt through medium walk. Salute.				

Leave arena in free walk. Exit at A.

Page 2

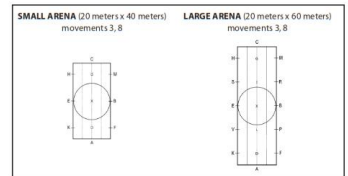
COLLECTIVE MARKS:

Galts (freedom and regularity).				
Impulsion (desire to move forward with suppleness of the back and steady tempo).				
Submission (acceptance of steady contact, attention, and confidence).		2		
Rider's position (keeping in balance with horse).				
Rider's effectiveness of aids (correct bend and preparation of transitions).				
Geometry and accuracy (correct size and shape of circles and turns).				

FURTHER REMARKS:

160

SUBTOTAL _____
ERRORS (_____) _____
TOTAL POINTS _____



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www.usdf.org



Score sheet effective date: December 1, 2018; November 30, 2022

INSTRUCTION:
- All tests work to the rider's right.
- Transitions from walk to trot and trot to walk may be performed through starting feet with the adjective of performing a standard transition.
- Turns from center line to long side and long side to the track at a point midway between the centerline and the corner and vice versa.

COMMENT:
Horses should be ridden on a light but steady contact, with the exception of the free walk in which the horse is allowed complete freedom to stretch neck forward and downward.

MAXIMUM POSSIBLE POINTS: 160
FINAL SCORE

Points _____ Percent _____

Name of Judge/Referee _____

Signature of Judge _____

Name of Competitor _____

Class _____

Date _____

Name and Number of Judge _____

Name of Rider _____

UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION™
2019
INTRODUCTORY LEVEL – TEST B
WALK—TROT
USDF
INTRODUCTORY LEVEL TEST
B

This unique series of tests provides an opportunity for the horse and/or rider new to dressage to demonstrate elementary skills. The tests have been designed to encourage correct performance and to prepare the horse for the transition to the USEF tests.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULING TIME

5:00 Standard Arena
(Possibly longer for archery/show)

The **1** **test name** (in this example, 2019 USDF INTRODUCTORY LEVEL – TEST B (WALK-TROT)) is at the top of page 1.

The **2** **REQUIREMENTS** section lists dressage test patterns in the current test for which the horse/rider pair must show competence. In this example, USDF Introductory Level Test B, the requirements are free walk, medium walk, working trot rising, 20-meter circle, and halt through walk; these test patterns were also in USDF Introductory Level Test A. The next test, USDF Introductory Level Test C, has working canter as a new requirement. The REQUIREMENTS section guides the rider as to which skills are necessary to successfully ride the specific test.

The **3** **PURPOSE** of the level is next. The different proficiencies for the horse/rider pair riding Introductory Level are discussed on this part of the test. The rider should ensure the pair is capable of these proficiencies before riding the level in a show.

The **4** **NO.** box is used by show staff to enter the bridle number of the horse/rider pair that will be judged using the test sheet at hand.

Top of Page 1

1 2019 USDF INTRODUCTORY LEVEL – TEST B

WALK—TROT

2 **REQUIREMENTS:**
Free walk
Medium walk
Working trot rising
20 meter circle
Halt through walk

3 **PURPOSE:** To introduce the rider and/or horse to the sport of dressage. To show understanding of riding the horse forward with a steady tempo into an elastic contact with independent, steady hands and a correctly balanced seat. To show proper geometry of figures in the arena with correct bend (corners and circles).

NO.

4

PAGE 1 MIDDLE

The middle of page 1 of the test has the test movements and associated information.

The **1 NUMBER** gives the movement number – 1, 2, 3, etc. Each movement may encompass one or more test pattern(s) (gait change, turn, dressage exercise such as leg yield, etc.). Each movement receives one judge score.

The **2 LETTER** gives the arena letter(s) where a test pattern is performed:

- One letter indicates where the pattern begins – A, C, etc.
- Two letters indicate where the pattern begins and ends – E-X, M-P, etc.
- Three letters indicated where the pattern starts, the letter it passes through, and the letter where it ends – M-X-K, H-X-F, etc.
- Some patterns begin before a letter (Before C, etc.) or between letters (Between C and M, etc.).

The **3 TEST** boxes indicate the test patterns the horse/rider pair are to perform at the corresponding arena letter(s). For example:

- Proceed working trot
- Track left
- Medium walk

NOTE: Test patterns may also be called movements. This can get confusing!

The **4 DIRECTIVE IDEAS** boxes provide the criteria by which the judge evaluates and scores each movement. **Riders should study the directive ideas very closely.**

The **5 POINTS** boxes are where the judge's points for each movement are entered. When a horse/rider pair complete a movement, the judge states the points and the scribe writes the points in the appropriate points box. Points are 0-10 in 0.5 increments: 0 = Not executed 3 = Fairly bad 6 = Satisfactory 9 = Very good
 1 = Very bad 4 = Insufficient 7 = Fairly good 10 = Excellent
 2 = Bad 5 = Marginal 8 = Good

The **6 COEFFICIENT** boxes may or may not have a number in it. If a movement or collective mark has a coefficient, it is considered more important so is given more "weight" in the test results by multiplying the judge points by the coefficient. For example, if a collective mark has a coefficient of 2 and the judge points was 6, the scorers multiply 2 x 6 to give the **7 TOTAL** of 12. The scorers write 12 in the appropriate TOTAL box. For Introductory Level tests, none of the movements has a coefficient; one of the collective remarks has a coefficient.

The **8 REMARKS** column has remarks said by the judge and written by the scribe. The remarks may include terms in the 2019 USDF Glossary of Judging Terms ([click here](#) to download). Riders use the remarks to know what was and was not done well and to improve their riding and test scores.

	1 2	3	4	POINTS	COEFFICIENT	TOTAL	REMARKS
Movement	1. A	Enter working trot rising. Test Pattern	Straightness on centerline and in transitions; clear trot and walk rhythm.	5	6	7	8
	X	Halt through medium walk. Salute - Proceed working trot rising. Test Pattern					
	2. C	Track left, working trot rising.	Balance and bend in turn.				

The bottom of page 1 has the text **1 Leave arena in free walk. Exit at A.** This is the end of the test.

Next is the **2 USDF and USEF copyright.**

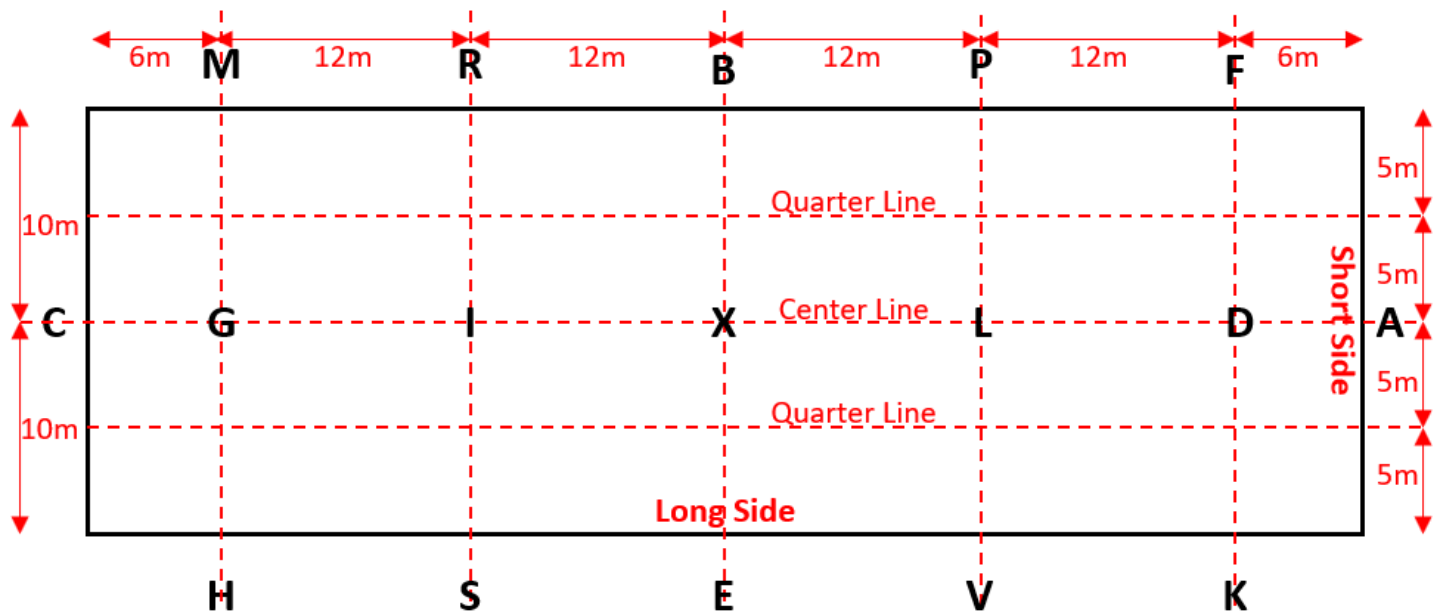
The **3 paragraph** discusses document reproduction and disclaimer for document errors. The USDF and USEF dressage tests are available online ([click here](#)) for use in dressage schooling shows, USEF licensed / USDF recognized dressage shows (these shows pay a fee for each test ridden in the show; Introductory Level tests do not count toward national awards as they are considered “not recognized”), and for test practice at the barn.

1 Leave arena in free walk. Exit at A.

2

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20m x 60m Arena (Standard Arena, Large Arena)



(May be used for Introductory and Training Level tests. All other tests must use the 20m x 60m arena.)

The top of page 2 has the **1 COLLECTIVE MARKS**. Collective marks are additional judging criteria and points determined by the judge that are not based on each ridden movement; instead, they are based on an overall impression for specific criteria (gaits, impulsion, submission, rider's position, rider's effectiveness of aids, geometry and accuracy). The criteria are defined on the test sheet. Collective marks have **2 points**, **3 coefficients**, **4 totals**, and **5 remarks**. The judge writes the points and the remarks.

The **6 FURTHER REMARKS** box usually contains further remarks from the judge. If the judge feels the movement and collective marks remarks provide sufficient information, the further remarks box may be empty. However, most judges provide overall impression comments that point out the good aspects of the test performance and areas that need improvement. The judge writes the further remarks.

The **7 SUBTOTAL** box is completed by scorers. The subtotal is the total of all TOTALS boxes on the test (movements and collective marks).

The **8 ERRORS** box is completed by scorers. It is based on errors of course and/or omissions that are annotated on the test (usually written by the scribe in red ink). If there was one error, a -2 is written in the errors box. If there were two errors, a -6 is written in the errors box (-2 for first error plus -4 for second error). If there were three errors, the horse/rider pair is eliminated. In schooling shows, the judge may allow the ride to continue; however, the ride is not scored and no class place or ribbon is awarded.

The **9 TOTAL POINTS** box is the subtotal minus the errors. It is calculated and written by scorers. Riders should verify a correct calculation and report any errors to show management before the end of the show.

The **10 Maximum Points** for the test are located here. This is the maximum points achievable if the horse/rider pair received a 10 on every movement and collective mark (this does not happen!).

COLLECTIVE MARKS:		2	3	4	5
1	Gaits (freedom and regularity).				
	Impulsion (desire to move forward with suppleness of the back and steady tempo).				
	Submission (acceptance of steady contact, attention, and confidence).		2		
	Rider's position (keeping in balance with horse).				
	Rider's effectiveness of aids (correct bend and preparation of transitions).				
	Geometry and accuracy (correct size and shape of circles and turns).				
6 FURTHER REMARKS:		160			
		10	7 SUBTOTAL		8
		9 TOTAL POINTS		8 ERRORS (= _____)	

The middle of page 2 has diagrams for 20m circles in a **1 SMALL ARENA**, and a **2 LARGE ARENA**.

Next is the **3 USDF and USEF copyright**.

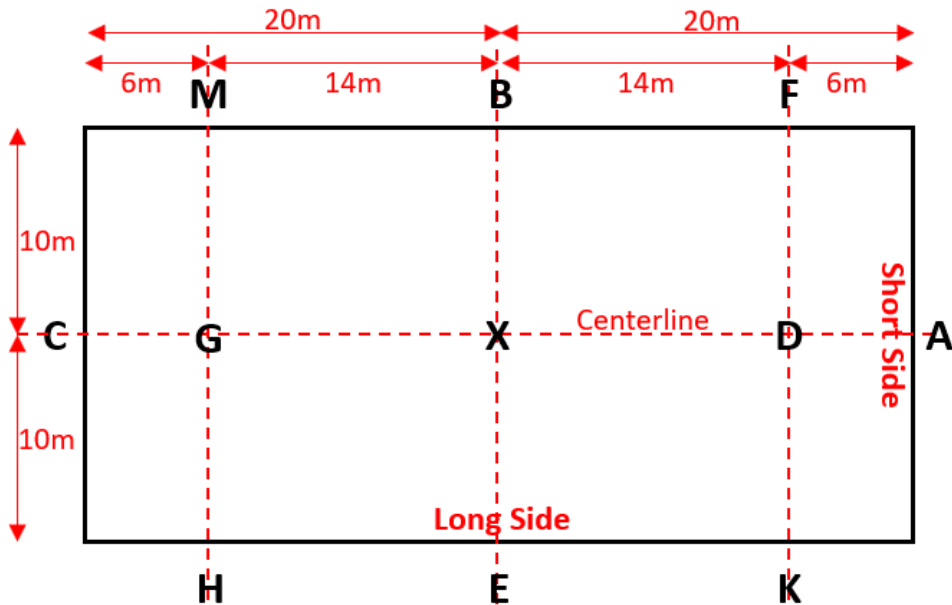
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1

2

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20m x 40m Arena (Small Arena)



(May be used for Introductory and Training Level tests. All other tests must use the 20m x 60m arena.)

The **1 USDF and test names** are first.

The **2 SUGGESTED SCHEDULING TIME** provides the average amount of time to ride the test in a small arena and a large arena. This does not include administrative time for the judge to complete the test sheet.

The **3 INSTRUCTION** provides information for the rider on how to ride specific areas of the test.

The **4 COMMENT** provides additional information for the rider on how to ride specific areas of the test.

The **5 Name of Competition**, **6 Class**, **7 Date**, **8 Number and Name of Horse**, and **9 Name of Rider** are completed by show management. The information may be provided on a printed sticker.

The **10 Points** is the TOTAL POINTS entered on the top section of page 2. The value is entered by scorers.

The **11 Percent** is the Points divided by the Maximum Points (in this example 160). For example, if the Points was 105, the Percent is $105 / 160 = 65.625\%$. The Percent is taken to three decimal places using standard rounding conventions. The Percent is calculated and written by scorers. Riders should verify a correct calculation and report any errors to show management before the end of the show.

The **12 Name of Judge / Position** (arena letter position) is written on this line by show management. If the Name of Judge and position are included on a printed sticker, this line may be left blank.

The **13 Signature of Judge** is located on this line. If there is no signature, the test sheet is not complete and may not be accepted as proof of qualification for awards, etc. Riders should report to show management if the signature is absent.

Finally, **14 USDF, USEF logos**, **15 USDF information**, and **16 test effective dates** are provided.

1

UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION™
2019
INTRODUCTORY LEVEL – TEST B
WALK—TROT

USDF
INTRODUCTORY
LEVEL TEST
B

2

SUGGESTED SCHEDULING TIME
5:00 Standard Arena
4:00 Small Arena
(possibly longer for schooling shows)

3

INSTRUCTION:

- All trot work to be ridden rising.
- Transitions from walk to trot and trot to walk may be performed through sitting trot with the objective of performing a smooth transition.
- Turns from center line to long side and long side to centerline should be ridden as a half circle, touching the track at a point midway between the centerline and the corner, and vice versa.

4

COMMENT:

Horses should be ridden on a light but steady contact with the exception of the free walk in which the horse is allowed complete freedom to stretch neck forward and downward.

5

Name of Competition

6

Class

7

Date

8

Number and Name of Horse

9

Name of Rider

10

Points

11

Percent

12

Name of Judge/Position

13

Signature of Judge

14

MAXIMUM POSSIBLE POINTS: 160
FINAL SCORE

15

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