

Instructions for the Research Paper and the Informative Speech.

1. This project must be informative – that is, your paper/speech should explain or define, describe or narrate something. (No persuasion or attempts to convince someone of something.) Sample titles might include “How to Change a Tire,” “What to Wear to a Football Tailgate Party,” or “Deep Sea Vents Grow Abundant Life in an Arid Zone.”
2. You must use at least 5 sources, including an interview, as resources for your speech/paper. Only two of the sources may be from the same category – e.g. the internet, books, magazines, newspapers etc. These sources must be cited at appropriate places in your paper and speech, using MLA style.
3. The paper must be at least eight pages long, not including a work cited page, and must be typed, double-spaced. It must include an introduction, body and conclusion. Proof your paper for grammar and spelling.
4. The paper must include a work cited page in proper MLA form.
5. Topic – your choice. You must, however, write a thesis statement at least three sentences long and submit it to Mrs. Petrides for approval.
6. Due dates: Thesis statement _____ Paper and Speech _____

Additional Instructions for your Informative Speech:

1. Your speech must be based on your research paper.
2. You must cite sources at appropriate places in your speech.
3. You should use note cards to speak from, NOT your paper.
4. Your speech must be 5 –7 minutes long.
5. You may use visual aids.

We will discuss these requirements in class to assist you in preparing for and delivering your speech and in writing your paper.

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SP108

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How to Prepare for A Horse Show

Horse shows have been occurring for many decades, with riders and horses of every age competing in them. There are multiple ways to prepare for a horse show, but the type of show will affect how one prepares. A lot of work goes into preparing both the horse and its rider before a big show. One must prepare both physically and mentally before the big show day. Preparing for a show starts weeks before the actual show date and different approaches are taken depending on the type of show and the mentality of the rider.

Preparing for a horse show starts by the rider taking riding lessons from a certified training instructor. By taking these riding lessons before the show, the competitor is able to contend, “not only with [his] own body movements, but those of a thousand-pound animal as well” (McEvoy 8). If one has never been to a horse show before, attending a horse show prior to entering one of their own is beneficial to the riders. Attending a horse show prior is “[t]he best way to learn about and experience” the atmosphere of a horse show (McEvoy 12). Preparing for a horse show is a long process, and “[i]f a rider seriously hopes to ride for the blue, she must dedicate herself to long hours of

preparation” (Hale 81). Once a rider feels comfortable in his/her lessons, the next step is to decide where one should take their horse to show.

Preparing for a horse show depends on the type of show to which the rider will take their horse. According to Cindy Hale in the online article “Rating the Competition”, “[b]y choosing the most suitable level of competition, you can have fun, improve your young horses and keep your riding skills sharp without overfacing yourself or burning yourself out.” The least stressful types of shows are schooling shows, which are not rated shows. Schooling shows have different aspects to them compared to rated shows. Schooling shows give “beginning riders a chance to improve their skills at a price that’s quite affordable, especially compared to the rated shows” (“Rating the Competition”). Horses that can perform well at schooling shows are also generally less expensive to purchase. This is because “[w]hat counts in a horse at this level of showing is reliability, not classic hunter type or movement. Hence, a suitable horse can usually be purchased in the \$2,000 to \$4,000 price range” (“Rating the Competition”). A rated show is one that is more recognized and where more experienced horses and riders compete at higher levels. Rated shows are classified as either “B” shows or the more advanced “A” shows (where riders can compete at an Olympic level). Hale, in “Rating the Competition”, explains that “B” rated shows are becoming more popular than the “A” rated shows in part because “B” shows allow riders to show at a cheaper rate than the “A” shows, but still gives them the competition that they need at their experience level. To compete at

the “A” level “requires a great investment of time and effort. Because competition is so tough, there's no sliding by with just one riding lesson a week. Any cracks in a rider's foundation become glaringly apparent during the pressure of the multi-day A-shows” (“Rating the Competition”). However, once the rider decides on which type of show to attend the next step is to prepare both oneself and their horse for the event.

Before one can even register for the classes at the show they will be attending, one must make sure their horse has an up-to-date Coggins on their horse. A Coggins is a blood test drawn from one's horse by an equine veterinarian and checked for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA), which is a very contagious and deadly disease in horses. Once the blood work comes back on the horse, and is negative, the vet will give the owner a piece of paper called a “Coggins” which clears the horse to travel to other farms and shows (Wiskell). Keeping your horse healthy is a major aspect to horse showing.

Before you can head off to the show, one must make sure all pre-show concerns are met before the big day. Karen Pickett, barn owner and trainer, has been to many shows in her career and has a lot of advice for getting ready for the horse show. Pickett states that the, “first thing one must do to prepare their horse is to give them a thorough bath to get every area of their horse squeaky clean so the horses coat will shine in the show ring”. Pickett advises that one must take care of any stray hairs on the horse's body and one must trim the long and misplaced hairs so that the horse will look professional. The next important step to preparing for the show is what to do with the horse's mane.

Pickett explains that, “just like one fixes their hair for a big event, one must also take the same consideration for their horses mane and tail or what is considered their hair.

Depending on the type of show will determine how one fixes the mane and tail before the show”. She explains how in English shows the proper way to fix the horse’s mane is to pull the mane until the length of the mane is about four inches long. Then one must braid the mane with yarn that is close to the same color so that the yarn will blend in with the horse’s mane. Pickett also explains that there are many different types of braids accepted in the English show ring and it is up to the rider to know which braid to complete on the horse before taking the horse to the show. She then explains that if one is taking their horse to a Western show the way to prepare the horse’s mane is much different, “one must band the horse’s mane for a Western event. To accomplish this, the horse’s mane must be approximately four inches long to start and then one must take small sections of the hair and wrap a small band around the hair as if one was tying their own hair in a ponytail.” Once all the hair is banded, one is then ready for the next step in preparing the horse for the show. Pickett also mentions that if one braids or bands their horse’s mane the night before the show, one might want to put some sort of slinky or some sort of blanket that will cover the mane and protect it from the horse trying to rub out the braids or banding.

Before one can attend a horse show, they must make sure they have all the proper attire and riding equipment for the show. If one is going to attend a horse show, there are

many important pieces of equipment every rider must own. The proper riding attire for an English show is different from Western shows. For all rider's however, the "most important piece of show clothing is the safety helmet. Head protection is one area in which you must not cut corners" (McEvoy 53). Falls are unavoidable and will eventually happen to every rider during his or her career. However, making sure your head is well protected will enable the rider to keep showing and stay safe for many years. If a rider ever falls off and the helmet is impacted, the helmet should be replaced immediately to ensure the safety for the rider. Replacing a helmet can be rather expensive, but "it's still cheaper than the consequences of a bad, unprotected fall" (McEvoy 54). For English riders, the next important piece of show clothing is the riding boots. One cannot wear tennis shoes while riding and expect to be safe. In fact, wearing any type of shoe to ride in that does not have a proper heel is extremely dangerous. This is because the rider's foot can slip through the riding iron on the saddle and cause the rider to become "stuck" to the horse. This in turn could lead to the rider getting dragged by the horse and seriously injured if the rider happens to fall off while their foot is stuck. The showing boots, "should come all the way up to your kneecap for proper fit" and "give good support to the arch of the foot and fit snugly the whole length of the calf" (McEvoy55). Generally the accepted color at English shows for boots is a glossy black color. Another important piece of show clothing is the riding pant, otherwise known as riding breeches. These types of pants, "are designed to be worn with high boots" and

“should be close-fitting and are suitable to show in as long as they’re beige, gray, tan, or rust” (McEvoy 55). Even though breeches are made in many different colors such a bright pink, green, animal print, these types of breeches are not acceptable in the show ring (unless it’s a schooling show that allows any colors) and will cause the rider to be disqualified from the class. Another piece of clothing that is worn is a black belt, which “should be worn with breeches or jodhpurs, as it completes the picture” (McEvoy 55).

The next piece of clothing to be worn is the riding shirt. This type of shirt is commonly called a “rat catcher” and will “button all the way up to the middle of the neck and have no collar” (McEvoy 57). In place of a collar on the shirt is a “solid choker that covers the top buttons” (McEvoy 57) of the rat catcher. Also placed on the choker generally is a choker pin that is a piece of either gold or silver jewelry that will hold the choker in place on the rat catcher. Next is the riding jacket or coat that is worn in the English show ring. One’s riding jacket should “be comfortable and provide a trim, neat appearance” and “the sleeves should be long enough to cover your wrist bone when standing with arms relaxed at your sides” (McEvoy 58). Just like riding breeches, riding jackets must be a certain color to be acceptable in the show ring. Typical colors are “[n]avy blue, hunter green, and dark gray, either pinstriped or solid, are best picks” (McEvoy 59). Riders will generally pick a jacket that matches their riding shirt or vice versa, since no one wants to be mismatched in the show ring! The final piece of show clothing that is necessary to look complete in the show ring is riding gloves. Generally riders choose the color black

for their riding gloves since they “can hide a multitude of hand problems-always an important consideration for a beginner” (McEvoy 59). For Western riders, the show attire is slightly different. Instead of long jackets, riders will wear bright, flashy long sleeved button up shirts (the exact opposite of the neutral colors in the English show ring). Also instead of riding breeches, Western riders will wear dark colored chaps (which are generally made out of some kind of synthetic) and are worn over a pair of jeans or dark colored pants. The boots are slightly different in that Western boots can have designs etched into the leather. Even though these are the basic essentials for showing one must always “[k]now what the show-ring turnout requirements are, and make sure [one complies]” because “[p]oor turnout shows lack of respect to the judge” (“30 Blue Ribbon Tips”).

The day of the big show can be one of the most nerve-wracking experiences for a novice competitor. Horse’s can sense the nervous energy that is being emitted from the rider and, in turn, will become jittery and anxious. Some horse’s will just stand and paw to get rid of nervous energy, but other horses will react more violently with their nerves. Some horses will try to run off, spook, rear, or buck if they feel nervous or scared. If a horse acts this way on the day of the big show this can cause the rider to lose all confidence and maybe even cause the rider to disqualify themselves from their classes. One way to try and help get the horses nerves under control is to lunge the horse. Lunging is when a person will attach a long rope to the horse’s halter or bridle and make

the horse go around in a large circle until the person lunging the horse feel's like the horse has gotten out all of the nervous energy and will be calm and controlled for the rest of the show day. Breathing exercises are also a good technique for some rider's to help them to calm their nerves and prepare for their classes. A nervous or jittery rider is more prone to make simple mistakes, which could cost them a place in their class. Every level of rider can get the case of the nerves at certain shows, some riders know they need to do well in their classes to advance their careers or to accomplish their goals, such as going to the Olympics for show jumping, which can cause even the most experienced of show riders to become nervous or jittery.

Horse showing is all about having fun with your horse and to make great lasting bonds with other people and horses. Being able to prepare and get one's horse physically and mentally ready is a hard and long task along with preparing the rider physically and mentally. Once all the hard work is done, however, the reward is huge. Seeing the rider with a gigantic smile as they receive their first place blue ribbon is an ultimate accomplishment for any rider and horse partnership. Preparing for a horse show is not a simple task, but after a long show day everything one had to do to prepare for the show will be worth the hard work.

Works Cited

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