

THE HORSE TRAINER

Here are some tips on how to train a horse. Follow the instructions and answer the questions that follow.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

Always remember that you are dealing with a big, powerful animal. It is extremely important that you stand where your horse can see you. The first thing that any experienced horse trainers will tell you is: never walk behind your horse. Walk around in front of it. If it's absolutely necessary to be close to it but out of its sight, remember to keep talking so that it knows where you are.

Another method is to run your hand down its side to signal where you're going. If you are working with its head, stand on its left (known as the *nearside*), in line with its ear and at an angle. It can see you best there. Should your horse be suddenly startled, you are in a good position to get out of its way.

Above all, never kneel or sit on the floor near it. That will most likely lead to an accident, and the fault will be yours, not your horse's.



PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE

If you wish to teach your horse a new skill or change its behaviour, take it slowly one step at a time. Never raise your voice or get angry, not if you want a calm, confident animal. Respond to your horse when it does what you want by immediately rewarding it so that the behaviour will be repeated next time you ask. This is called *reinforcement*.

There are two kinds of reinforcement: *positive* and *negative*. (These don't necessarily mean *good* and *bad*.) Positive reinforcers include treats, speaking softly or stroking. It should be given the instant your horse does what you want. Negative reinforcers are things like a gentle push with the fingers, a light tap of the whip, or rein or leg pressure. They are never abrupt and never frightening or painful for the horse. Negative reinforcement should continue until the horse gives the right response. Remember: be patient but persistent.

1. What important advice are you likely to receive from an experienced horse trainer?
2. Describe **2 ways** of letting your horse know where you are, if it can't see you.
3. When dealing with a horse what is meant by the *nearside*?
4. Why is it important to remain standing while looking after a horse?
5. What would be the result if you were to get angry with your horse and shout?
6. How does rewarding your horse for the behaviour you want lead to success in training?
7. Describe **3 examples** of negative reinforcement.