



## CLINICIAN ACADEMY SAMPLE TEST QUESTIONS

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### 1. What is the importance of balancing the sensitizing and desensitizing exercises?

- Incomplete Answer: Sensitizing exercises make sure the horse will move when you ask him to and desensitizing exercises make sure he's not worried about you or your tools.
- Complete Answer: Sensitizing exercises teach the horse to move away from pressure. If you do too much sensitizing and not enough desensitizing, the horse will start to over-react to pressure. He'll think that anytime something moves, it's a cue for him to move his feet.
- Desensitizing exercises teach the horse to stand still and ignore pressure. If you do too much desensitizing and not enough sensitizing, the horse will be bombproof, but he'll also have a bad attitude about moving his feet, which means you'll have a lack of control. Balancing the two types of exercises ensures that you get the best of both worlds—a horse that goes when you say go but then also falls asleep when you ask him to stop.

### 2. Explain pressure.

- Incomplete Answer: Pressure is like electricity. You can use pressure to motivate the horse to move his feet.
- Complete Answer: Pressure is like electricity; you can't see it but you still know it's there. And just like electricity, the amount of discomfort you feel from pressure depends on how much is applied. Anything that moves creates pressure. If it moves a little bit, it creates a little bit of pressure, and if it moves a lot, it creates a lot of pressure. This means that you don't actually have to touch the horse to apply pressure to him. Just moving the Handy Stick, the lead rope, or even your hand applies mental pressure.

### 3. Why does Clinton discourage people from using verbal cues?

- Incomplete Answer: You shouldn't use verbal cues because using your body language is more effective.
- Complete Answer: Generally, people who use a lot of verbal cues also have very poor body language. They try to verbally tell the horse what to do rather than effectively communicating with him in a language that he understands (body language). They also tend to be Nagging Mothers. They'll beg the horse to do something, such as constantly clucking to keep him going forward, rather than making the horse responsible for his own feet. Verbal cues can be a great training aid if used effectively, but when you're first learning, it's easier to get good at using your body language before adding the additional element of voice cues.

### 4. How does Clinton teach people to apply pressure effectively?

- Incomplete Answer: Start with a low amount of pressure and keep increasing it until the horse finds the answer.

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- Complete Answer: Always apply pressure using rhythm. Rhythm makes your cues black and white for the horse to understand because you're making it clear when he's doing the right thing and when he's doing the wrong thing. It's important to start with the least amount of pressure possible, and with each set of 4 counts, gradually increase the pressure until you get the response you're looking for, or at least a try in that direction.
5. **What should you do if the horse is using the reactive side of his brain? (For example, he starts spooking and shying at a sign on the fence.)**
- Incomplete Answer: Move his feet forward, backwards, left and right.
  - Complete Answer: You should move his feet forward, backwards, left and right. The more changes of direction, the better. The Sending Exercise would be ideal for this kind of situation. Send him back and forth between you and the sign until he relaxes and starts using the thinking side of his brain. Then you can let him rest beside the sign. Horses can only think of one thing at a time, so the more you hustle his feet and do lots of changes of directions, the more he'll start thinking about you rather than spooking at the sign. If you're under saddle, you can use the same concept by doing rollbacks into the sign until he starts to use the thinking side of his brain.
6. **When Backing Up, what should you do if the horse keeps backing up when you try to rub him to a stop?**
- Incomplete Answer: Keep rubbing him until he stops. If he doesn't stop, make him back up again.
  - Complete Answer: Keep following him backwards as you rub him with the stick. If he takes more than 4 steps, change your body language to active and ask him to back up again. When he takes a few good steps, change your body language to passive and start rubbing him with the stick, giving him another opportunity to stop. Repeat this process until the horse figures out that standing still when you rub him is a much easier option than having to move his feet and back up. When he does stand still, keep rubbing him for at least 10 seconds so that he starts associating rubbing with standing still and getting a rest.
7. **Why is an energetic departure important?**
- Incomplete Answer: It shows that you have the horse's respect.
  - Complete Answer: The attitude the horse has during the departure determines his attitude on the circle. If he has a lazy disrespectful departure, he'll have a lazy disrespectful attitude on the circle. It's an important part of gaining the horse's overall respect because it proves that you can make his feet move without having to move yours.
8. **During the Sending Exercise, what should you do if the horse tries to run too close to you and cut you off when you send him through the gap?**
- Incomplete Answer: Tap his front end away with the Handy Stick.
  - Complete Answer: Whenever the horse tries to get pushy with his front end, get your stick up by his jaw to block him. Tap him away on his neck or jaw if you have to. If necessary, you may have to break the exercise down into steps. When sending him through the gap, point and at the same time drive his front end away by applying pressure with your stick toward his jaw. Don't let him go through the gap until he's facing the right direction. Then apply pressure behind the drive line to encourage impulsion. Get direction before impulsion. Break it down for him until he understands what to do and starts to do it correctly on his own.

**9. When yielding the forequarters, what should you do if the horse constantly wants to cross behind rather than in front?**

- Incomplete Answer: Stand back further to encourage him to go forward and walk him out of it when he takes one good step.
- Complete Answer: Continue applying pressure with rhythm until he takes one step across. As soon as he does, walk him out of it in a circle away from you rather than rubbing him to a stop. He's stepping behind himself because he's too sucked back, so walking him out of it will encourage forward motion in the yield. You probably won't have to do it very many times before he starts to have too much forward motion, and at that point just go back to rubbing him to a stop. Make sure to adjust your body position depending on how the horse is responding. If he's crossing behind, stand back closer to his shoulder as you apply pressure in order to drive him forward more.

**10. In Circle Driving, why wouldn't you bump on the halter if the horse leans against it?**

- Incomplete Answer: He should learn to come off the halter pressure by himself.
- Complete Answer: This exercise is designed to teach the horse to come off of steady pressure from the halter. As you practice, he'll realize that softening to the pressure is much more comfortable than leaning against it, and he'll start to create his own slack. Using driving pressure with the halter isn't effective in this exercise, especially in the Teaching Stage, because of your body position. Unlike your position in Lunging for Respect Stage 1 and 2 where you stay behind the drive line and are constantly driving the horse forward with your body language, Circle Driving requires you to be shoulder-to-shoulder with the horse, putting yourself right at the drive line. Applying driving pressure in this position would most likely cause the horse to back off rather than coming up beside you.

**11. When yielding the hindquarters under saddle, how do you correct a horse that wants to walk forward too much?**

- Incomplete Answer: Bend his head more because it will put him in more of a bind and make it hard for him to walk forward.
- Complete Answer: Put the horse in more of a bind by bending his head more. You may have to shorten up on the rein in order to be effective. If he still wants to walk forward, try pulling the rein across your belly button, which will help lock up his front feet. It's the same correction we make when yielding the hindquarters on the ground when the horse walks forward (similar to pulling the lead rope up across his withers). If he continues to push through the pressure, try using driving pressure by bumping the rein across your belly button. If you're still having trouble, the horse is probably telling you that you need to spend more time yielding his hindquarters on the ground, especially using the Touch and Rub Exercise.

**12. When yielding the hindquarters under saddle, why is it important to hold the sparker in your outside hand?**

- Incomplete Answer: You hold it in your outside hand because you can be the most effective with it.
- Complete Answer: If you hold it in your inside hand, the sparker becomes like a wet noodle and you aren't able to be effective with it. By holding it in your outside hand, you're able to build any level of momentum as you swing it across your body. In saying that, it's equally important to draw it back to the outside of your body after each swing so that you're in position to apply pressure again if needed. Also, some horses will start to get smart if you hold it in your inside hand and they know when they see the sparker they have to listen and pay attention. When you hold it in your outside hand, they never know whether you have it or not, so they learn to pay attention all the time, not just when they can see it.

**13. Why is it important to do Draw to a Stop?**

- Incomplete Answer: It teaches the horse to stop and soften vertically when you pick up on him.
- Complete Answer: This exercise teaches the horse to respond correctly when you pick up on two reins. When you pull on two reins, most horses' first reaction is to brace against the bit, raise their head and neck, and even speed up. This exercise will instead teach the horse to immediately soften at the poll and slow down as soon as he feels pressure from two reins. Without this response, it will be difficult to progress with his training, especially when teaching Vertical Flexion at the Walk, Trot and Canter.

**14. When you ask the horse to back up under saddle, he tucks his head in, locks his feet up, and won't move. What should you do?**

- Incomplete Answer: Yield his hindquarters and try again from the beginning.
- Complete Answer: You basically have two choices. Since the horse has lost all the energy in his feet, you could pull one rein (without actually releasing the pressure) and yield his hind- quarters again, which would provide the energy you need to redirect him backwards. Or you could continue to apply pressure up by his elbows, alternating your legs, as you hold light steady pressure with the reins until he finds the answer by taking one step backwards. If it seems like the pressure you're applying is not enough to motivate him to look for another answer, you may have to increase the pressure by tapping his elbows with your spurs.

**15. How do you know when the horse and the rider are ready to start using spurs?**

- Incomplete Answer: When the horse is respectful of your leg and you can ride with a secure seat.
- Complete Answer: The rider must be able to ride with a secure seat, meaning she doesn't need to hang onto the reins or squeeze with her lower legs for balance. If she doesn't have good balance, she might accidentally kick or squeeze the horse if he jumps or swerves quickly. The horse must be able to move forward at the walk, trot and canter off of just a light squeeze from your legs and yield his hindquarters 360-degrees off of your bare heel. This proves that when you incorporate spurs, they aren't being used for the wrong reason. Spurs aren't the most effective way to make a horse go faster. Instead, they're used as a backup for your leg when bending and softening the horse laterally. The horse must also be relatively quiet, where he's not jumpy, spooky or reactive.

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