



Canter Test 1: Walk-trot-walk transitions, trot-canter transitions.

1.	A	Enter at slow trot and proceed down the centre line. Halt, immobility, salute. Proceed in walk.	Straightness of rider		
	X		Rhythm and tempo		
			Trot-halt transition		
2.	C	Track left. 2-3 sets of transitions between walk and slow trot, showing 3-6 strides of trot with each transition.	Position (X2)		
	CHEKA		Walk-trot transitions.		
			Aids		
3.	A	Half 20m circle left in rising trot. Rising trot to walk transition.	Trot diagonal.		
	X		Trot-walk transition.		
4. Between X and A		Continue 20m circle. 2-6 strides of sitting trot, then trot to canter transition.	Trot- canter transition		
			Aids		
			Synchronisation (X2)		
5.	A	<i>Go large and make a transition canter to trot before B</i>	NOT MARKED		
6.	BH	Change the rein in rising trot. Rising trot-walk transition	Accuracy (COR)		
	C		Trot – walk trans		
7.	CMBFA	2 or 3 sets of transitions between walk and slow trot, showing 3-6 strides of trot with each transition.	Synchronisation (X2)		
			Trot-Walk transitions		
			Contact		
8.	A	Half 20m circle right in rising trot. Rising trot to walk transition.	Trot diagonal		
	X		Trot-walk transition		
9. Between X and A		Continue 20m circle. 2-6 strides of sitting trot, then trot to canter transition	Trot-canter transition		
			Relaxation of horse		
			Position (X2)		
10.	A	<i>Go large and make a transition to trot before E (not marked)</i>	NOT MARKED		
11.	EHC	Rising trot Rising trot-walk transition	Rhythm and tempo		
	C		Trot-walk transition		
12.	MXK K	Change the rein Free walk on a long rein. Retake the contact before K. Continue in walk	Rhythm and tempo		
			Relaxation of horse		
			Stretching down.		
13.	A X	Proceed down the centre line Halt, immobility, salute.	Straightness of rider		
			Accuracy		
			Walk-halt transition		
Total					Maximum 99



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This test is for horses who are just beginning canter work in the arena. We introduce canter work fairly late in the horse's training. Only once he has built his strength and balance through lateral work in walk and trot, is he ready to begin canter in the arena. The horse is used to cantering in straight lines, in open spaces, ideally up a slight hill, and is now established and balanced in trot, and can manage some slow sitting trot. He should easily be able to maintain balance in direct and indirect transitions between halt, walk and trot and throughout lateral work in walk and trot. We do not expect the horse to maintain the canter for very long, because at first it is hard for him to maintain the quality of the gait for more than a few strides. Quality is more important than quantity. In this way, we are setting the horse up to remain balanced throughout the canter, and produce a balanced downward transition as well.

This test includes some short periods of slow trot. These should be ridden in sitting trot, but rising trot is allowed if this works better for the horse and rider. In the sitting trot, the movement is absorbed by the rider's seatbones, moving alternately in time with the two halves of the horse's back. If both seatbones move together instead of separately, the rider is not correctly synchronised, and can result in too much movement of the rider's body, hands, legs and head.

This test introduces the trot-canter transition. We aim to keep trot to a minimum to prepare for walk-canter transitions which are introduced in the next test. The limited trot strides enable us to maintain the balance and softness created in the walk, and make for a cleaner transition. A balanced transition creates a balanced canter, and it is far more beneficial to work on correct transitions rather than try to improve the gait once the canter has been established. Keep the canter short – one or two strides is sufficient. Only the upward transition is being tested at this stage: quality and quantity of canter is not important. The transition needs to be balanced, well timed and on the correct lead.

In the canter, the rider's hips move in a circle –forward, up, back, down. The “up” part of the movement synchronises with the moment of suspension, and helps keep the horse off his forehand. Too much forward and back, or “polishing of the saddle” blocks the movement. The rider should emphasise the “up” phase of the circle, and in reality moves very little in the saddle.