

Competitive English Horse Events

There are many different competitive events and disciplines available for horses and their riders. One of these many disciplines is english riding. While english may be used in reference to saddle horses and other gaited horses, this article refers to english as activities ridden in the hunt seat or hunter disciplines.

There are several english activities. These include:

- Dressage
- Eventing
- Hunter Jumping
- Show Jumping

Dressage



Dressage is a competition which evaluates the horse's training, responsiveness and obedience to the rider. A prescribed pattern of movements, which increases in difficulty the horse reaches higher levels of training, is used to evaluate the precision and smoothness of the pattern, the transitions between movements and horse's obedience to and harmony with the rider. Dressage is also a component of eventing, and one of the equestrian events in the Summer Olympics.

For more information you can visit the [United States Dressage Foundation](#).

Eventing

Eventing is an equestrian triathlon competition which was developed to test military horses. Horses first must exhibit their ability to respond to the rider through a dressage test. Then their speed, endurance and cross-country jumping ability are tested in an endurance phase. Finally, their stamina and jumping ability are evaluated in a final show jumping competition. Eventing is a rigorous test of the athleticism of the horse and rider, and is one of the equestrian events in the Summer Olympics.



For more information, visit the [United States Eventing Association](#).

Hunter Horses

Hunter horses are used to gallop cross-country and over jumps in fox-hunting. Show ring hunters are judged on traits needed to perform in the hunt field. Quality and ease of gaits, manners, and form and safety over fences are important judging criteria. Hunters are judged differently from jumpers in that their style and way of jumping is scored, in addition to their ability to successfully complete the course.

Show Jumping

Show jumpers are horses that are specifically trained and talented at jumping large jumps within a specific time limit. The major criteria for show jumpers is to get over the jump without errors, such as refusing to jump or knocking down the jump, with the added difficulty of speed. Quality of gaits and manners are not considered. If there are several horses that have a 'clear' round, with no faults, the horse with the fastest time over the course will be named the winner.

Hunter on the Flat

There are also classes for English horses where they walk, trot and canter in the ring. These are called 'flat' classes, because there are no jumps. Their performance is evaluated on the quality of their gaits, their responsiveness to the rider and their manners. Flat classes can be either hunter type, where the horse moves with a relatively longer and lower stride, or saddle type classes, where horses move with a more elevated head set and more flexion and animation of the knees and hocks.

