



## Horse Identification

Horse identification is very important in all aspects of equine knowledge and this will play a big part in the equine Level 2 course at Northumberland College. In this qualification, you will complete a number of different units and horse identification will link in with all of these different units.

In this module we will cover:

- **Sex**
- **Breed/type**
- **Markings**
- **Colours**

First of all, identification starts with the sex of the horse, this is identified from a young age of the horse. The identification with regard to sex is as follows

- **Stallion** – An uncastrated male horse of any age.
- **Gelding** – A castrated horse of any age.
- **Colt** – An uncastrated male under the age of four.
- **Mare** – A female horse over the age of four.
- **Filly** – A female horse under the age of four.
- **Foal** – Described either as a 'colt' or a 'filly'

**Bonus question** - What is the identification of a horse that has retained one or two testes due to incorrect castration or failure of the testes to descend.



Another important part of horse identification is the breed of the horse. There are several types of horse breeds and too many to mention!

However, list as many as you can think of below:

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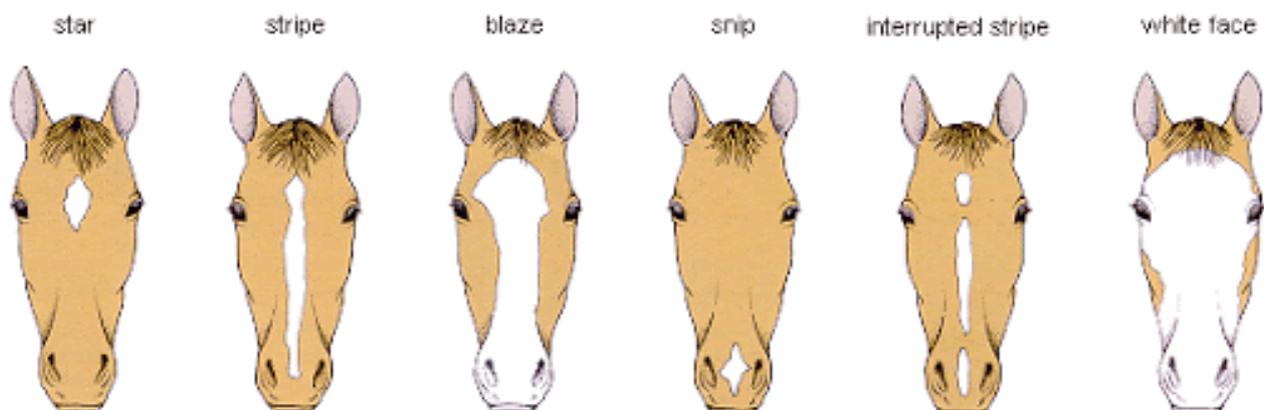
In addition to this, markings of the horse also play a big part in identification of the horse and why this important to know the different markings.

The markings are split into:

- **Facial markings**
- **Body markings**
- **Leg markings**
- **Hoof markings**

## Facial markings

- A **star** is a white mark on the forehead. It can be further described as large, small or irregular.
- A **stripe** is a narrow white marking down the face. It may be a continuation of a star and can be further described as narrow and irregular.
- A **blaze** is a broad white marking extending from between the eyes and down the face over the nasal bones.
- A **white face** is an exaggerated blaze. It covers the whole of the forehead and front of the face to the mouth.
- A **snip** is a white mark between the nostrils. If extending to the right or left nostril it should be so described.
- A **white upper lip** and **underlip** describes skin at the edges of the lips.
- A **white muzzle** describe where white skin is found on both lips and up to the nostrils.
- A **wall eye** is one which shows a lack of colouring matter. It has a greyish/white or blue appearance, however the sight is not affected.



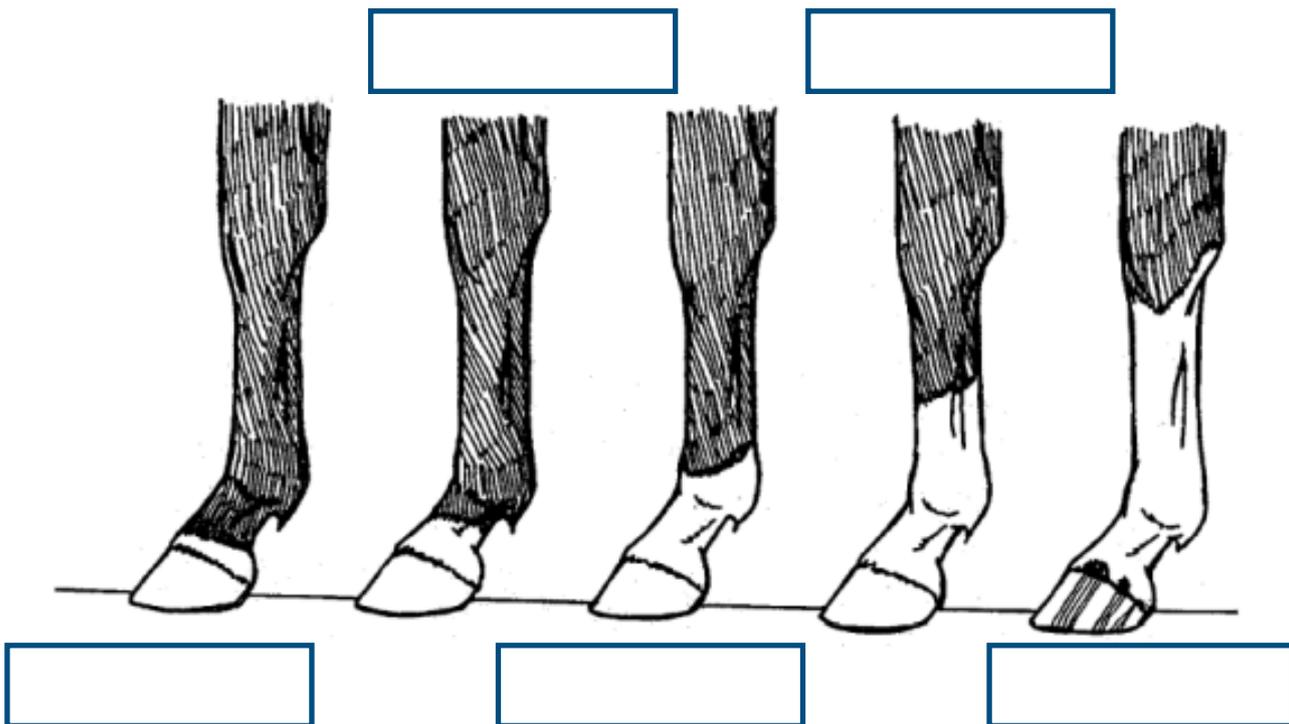
## Leg markings

White marking on the legs are defined by reference to the anatomy of the horse. There traditional terms 'sock' & 'stocking' are used as a causal description of the type of marking on the leg. Therefore, the terms need to be more specific of where the white markings are positioned on the leg.

The markings are usually described as; **Coronet**, **Half-Pastern**, **Sock** (white to top of Fetlock Joint), **Half-Cannon** and **Stocking** with **Ermine** spots in the stocking

Extra - The term **ermine** is used where black spots occur on white markings, these are usually found around the coronet.

Below is a little exercise, name the different types of leg markings...



## **Colours**

For purposes of identification, it is important for a horse's colour and markings to be described correctly. The precise colour can sometimes be difficult to determine, but reference to the colour of his 'points' - muzzle, eyelids, tips of the ears, legs and the mane and tail - should clarify the problem. The legs below the knee can be black or a darker version of the body, but they also may have white markings.

These are a few of the colours are most commonly found. They are usually broken down into sections. These are as follows;

### **Bay**

A bay horse is a dark brown in colour with similar limbs, mane and tail. However, there are variations of the colour bay...

**Dark Bay** - A horse is mid-brown in colour with black limbs, mane and tail.

**Bright Bay** - A horse that is mahogany in colour with black limbs, mane and tail.

**Light Bay** - A horse that is a paler shade of brown or pale mahogany, with black limbs, mane and tail.



### **Chestnut**

A chestnut horse is a paler version of the above and may have a flaxen mane and tail.

**Liver chestnut** - A horse that is a rich red brown colour with similar limbs, mane and tail.



## Grey

A grey horse is one with both black and white hair growing in the coat, with matching points and mane and tail. The skin is black. However, there are some variations of this colour...

**Iron grey** - A horse that has predominantly black hairs and can appear nearly black. He may become paler with age.

**Light grey** - A horse that has predominantly white hairs.

**Flea bitten grey** - A horse that has a dark or brown hair growing in speckles over the body.

**Dapple grey** - A horse that is circles and dapples of darker black or grey hair over the body.

Fun fact!!

All grey horses become lighter with age, but are never described as white. On examination, the skin will be seen to be dark coloured. They may be born brown or black.

Finally could you name a couple of colours that could be put under the coloured umbrella...

Here are a few pictures that may help!



## Coloured

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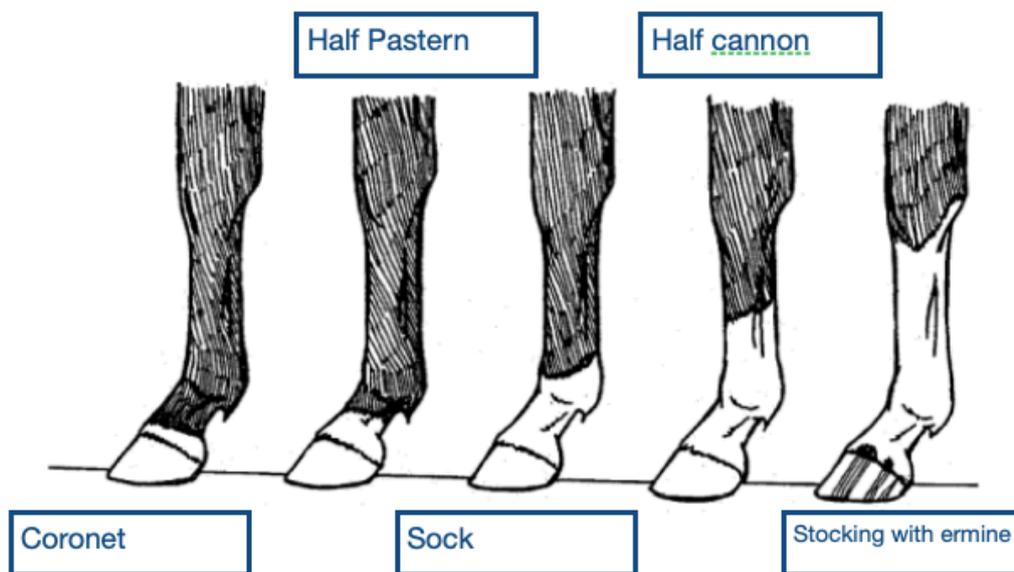
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## Answers

1. **Bonus question** - What is the identification of a horse that has retained one or two testes due to incorrect castration or failure of the testes to descend.

- A Rig

2.



3.



Piebald



Tricoloured



Skewbald