### Beginner

A beginning rider has taken few or no lessons. Groundwork and halter classes are encouraged for this rider. **This rider is able to independently:**

- securely tie the horse to a fence and walk away
- lead the horse in hand at a walk and a trot and halt the horse
- ride the horse at a walk
- trot for a short period of time
- practice riding in a group setting

**The rider may need assistance:**

- identifying pieces of tack and their purpose
- saddling their horse

### Novice

A novice rider has had some experience riding. They are comfortable around their horse. **Walk/Trot classes are most appropriate for this rider. This rider is able to independently:**

- saddle the horse
- identify tack and its purposes
- able to trot for a prolonged period of time
- safely control the horse at a trot in a group setting

**This rider is beginning to:**

- canter for a short period of time
- attempt some basic arena exercises, trail obstacles, patterns
### Intermediate
An intermediate rider is very comfortable riding at the trot and canter. They should be becoming more knowledgeable about different horse breeds, confirmations, and disciplines. Pleasure classes, games and obstacles are appropriate for this rider. This rider can independently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>switch between trotting and cantering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>change direction easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attempts various obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>backing around barrels, sidestepping, over a bridge, mailbox, open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and close a gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stop and reverse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Advanced
The advanced rider is comfortable at all three gaits and switching leads. The rider can memorize complicated patterns and complete advanced arena exercises. An advanced rider is sharpening their skills and refining their movements. The rider demonstrates appropriate attire and sets personal goals for competing in the different disciplines. An advanced rider is ready to try new challenges like jumping, galloping, competitive Western games, begin cow handling, English dressage, judging, or training a young horse.

Some goals I've set for myself: