



PONY CLUB



ACHIEVEMENT BADGES

EQUINE DENTISTRY

Advanced Achievement Badge

Learning Objectives

Know the structure and function of the teeth, recognize, and know how to manage problems, age horses.

Syllabus

- 1 Know the structure of teeth, enamel, infundibulum, dentine pulp cavity, dental pulp, root canal.
- 2 Recognize hooks.
- 3 Know about parrot mouths and undershot jaws, and the challenges they present.
- 4 Understand the problems of sharp teeth affecting the horse's way of going, and the remedial step to take.
- 5 Know old horses may have problems chewing food and what to do about it.
- 6 Be able to age a 1yr old, 2yr old, 3yr old, 4yr old, 5yrold, 7yr old 10yr old, 15yr old and horses 20 and beyond.

Teaching Ideas and Resources

- 1 Build a tooth with different coloured play dough for the different parts of the tooth.

Draw and label parts of the tooth.

The top surface or crown of the horse's tooth is covered by hard enamel which is resistant to bacteria and acids. Underneath the enamel is the dentin which is a softer material. Beneath the dentin is the pulp of the centre of the tooth that contains blood vessels and nerves.

<https://thehorse.com/19389/back-to-basics-dental-anatomy/>

- 2** Show where hooks appear and display a hook either in a horse's mouth or in a diagram. Explain at what age hooks appear.
- 3** Model in play dough, or draw, parrot mouth.
Look at the horses/ponies in the yard, do any have undershot jaws. Are any of them poor or finding difficulty in eating?
- 4** Explain how horses' teeth can grow to become sharp.
Describe how this can lead to uneven contact or a horse hanging behind the contact. Ask if any of the members have experienced riding a horse with sharp teeth, could they describe the feel to the rest of the class.
Explain all horses/ponies should have their teeth checked by a vet yearly.
- 5** Make up a sample feed suitable for an old horse, feel the softness compared to a normal feed.
- 6** Draw on small cards individual teeth to represent the incisors at different ages.
Assemble these 'teeth' to show the different ages when called out randomly by coach.
Walk around the yard aging horses, age the horses/ponies in the ride.

Recommended Reading

- ▶ The 14th Edition of The Pony Club Manual: Pages: care 156, sharp teeth 122, aging 16 & 17

Questions

- 1** Which is the hardest part of the tooth. Which part of the tooth contains blood vessels?
- 2** What are hooks, why are they useful in ageing horses?
- 3** What is a parrot mouth? Why is it a disadvantage?
- 4** How would you know that your horse had sharp teeth?
- 5** What problems can old horses have when eating. How can you help them?
- 6** How would you recognise a 7yr old mouth and a 10yr old mouth.

Answers

- 1** Dentine.
The inner most layer, the pulp.

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- 2** A hook is found on the last incisor at 7yrs old, then appear again at 13. They are useful as no horse under 7 has a hook so they are another sign to help age a horse.
- 3** Where the upper jaw is longer than the lower jaw. It makes it difficult for a horse to gather in food, extreme cases cannot even graze.
- 4** Not steady in the contact, possibly less forwards. Conformation of problem by a routine check by the vet.
- 5** Difficulty chewing, eating very slowly. Feed soft food, especially formulated for old horses.
- 6** A 7yrs a full mouth of teeth plus a hook. At 10yrs teeth a little more angled and the start of a Galvayne's groove.