



PONY CLUB



ACHIEVEMENT BADGES

LEARNING THEORY

Mini Achievement Badge

Learning Objectives

What a reward is for a pony and when to give a reward.

Syllabus

- 1 Understand that ponies learn by trying new things.
- 2 Understand what counts as a reward to your pony.
- 3 Understand that ponies like rewards for trying to do something correctly.
- 4 Be able to give two examples of how to reward their pony. Explain that this is called positive reinforcement.

Teaching Ideas and Resources

- 1 Tell the story of the two fields side by side with the gate between them at one end and the pony who when called learnt where the field gate was by walking up and down the fence until it came across the gate, and that after that it knew to go straight to the gate when called. Explain that you could tell a person where the gate is, but a pony has to learn by trial and error, so ponies and people can not learn in the same way.
- 2 As a whole group, discuss what you think a pony would like as a reward and how it might make them feel.
- 3 On a piece of paper write down one side options of rewards, i.e. treats, scratches, stopping using aids, having a rest after work, etc., then on the other side list things the pony can do to earn a reward i.e. standing still to mount, walking up to you to be caught, jumping a jump nicely etc. Ask the members to match the reward to the effort and discuss why it is suitable.
- 4 Ask each member if they can think of a time they have given their pony a reward, discuss and give suggestions for the future.

Questions

- 1** Ask for a simple explanation of how ponies learn new things.
- 2** Ask for three examples of how they can reward their pony.
- 3** Ask for three examples of things that a pony can be rewarded for doing.
- 4** Ask each member to show you how they would scratch their pony on the neck/wither, and tell of a time when they were able to give their pony a reward and what it was for.

Answers

- 1** They try something and if they get a reward then they are likely to do it again at first try.
- 2** Give treat, scratch on neck/withers, stop doing something the pony might not like such as using their legs, allow to rest/stretch neck after a section of hard work.
- 3** Standing still to mount, walking up to them when catching in field, walking straight into trailer/lorry, reacting to leg aids quickly, picking feet up etc.
- 4** Scratching not patting is more rewarding to the pony, so they need to show a scratch or rub not pat.