



# SCRIBE



# SCRIBE

## Functions; Attributes and Skills

### Functions

- ❖ A scribe writes the judges comments onto the test sheets.
- ❖ The scribe must be able to sit quietly and concentrate for hours upon end listening and recording the judge's comments accurately and consistently.
- ❖ Time Commitment Required: Minimum of 4 hours; judges prefer to have the same scribe all day or for the whole show.
- ❖ Before the first ride:
  - The judge will discuss with you how business will be conducted.
  - Among the points included might be whether comments for a movement will be given before or after the score so that comments will be entered in the proper place on the test sheet; how to note errors/voice; and whether to use abbreviations.
- ❖ At the start of each class:
  - Be sure the judge knows what test is being performed.
  - A spare copy of the test is usually provided for the judge.
- ❖ At the start of each ride:
  - Check each rider's number as soon as possible and confirm it with the label on the test sheet. If the numbers do not match, quickly locate the proper test sheet or, if that is not possible, at least note the rider's number on the inside of the test sheet.
  - Always write the rider's number in the number box on the inside of the test sheet.
- ❖ During the riding of the test:
  - Write the judge's comments exactly as given. Do not rearrange or edit.
  - Do not talk to the judge during a ride. If you get lost or forget a comment, make a check mark in the margin and keep going.
  - If you strongly suspect the judge has skipped a score, quietly mention this by saying "is this score for the transition?" or "is this movement number \_\_\_?"
  - If a score is changed for whatever reason, make a slash through the incorrect score and write the correct number next to it. Do not try to write over. The judge needs to initial these corrections.

### Attributes and Skills

- ❖ Clear, legible handwriting or printing, even at top-speed.
- ❖ Limit conversation with the judge. Speak when spoken to!
- ❖ Make NO remarks about any horse or rider in the competition, including but not limited to any background information about the horse or rider, their trainer/coach, breeding, etc.
- ❖ Maintain confidentiality. Never repeat the judge's remark.



### USEF Rules

#### ❖ USEF DR126 Requirements for Dressage Competition Management.

- The following requirements apply to all Levels 1-5 of Dressage Competitions, except where noted. Specific requirements for specific levels of competitions are listed under .2, below. EC 9/21/09 Effective 12/1/09
  - **Scribes.** EC 9/21/09 Effective 12/1/09
    - **Scribes** should have a knowledge of the tests being ridden.
    - **Scribes** (including electronic scribes) must not be an owner, coach, trainer or family member of a competitor/horse in the class(es) in which they are scribing.
    - **Scribe** changes should not be made more than once per day for each judge.
    - It is strongly recommended that **scribes** and apprentice judges not compete before judges with whom they have worked at the same competition.
    - First-time **scribes** must not be assigned to foreign judges or judges for FEI level classes.
    - Only one **scribe** to be provided for the judging panel for the FEI Dressage Tests for 4-year old, 5-year old and 6-year old horses and the USEF Dressage Test for 4-year old horses.

#### ❖ USEF DR132 Dressage Seat Equitation.

- 2. USEF Dressage Seat Medal Program
  - **Championship Rules.**
    - Two Federation Registered (R) or Senior (S) judges will officiate together in each Semi-Finals class, using the same **scribes** and the same class score sheets. They must consult prior to arriving at scores. Three Federation Registered (R) or Senior (S) judges will officiate together, as above, in each Finals class. Finals class judges must be approved by the Federation Dressage Committee

### DOs and DON'Ts

#### ❖ DO

- Arrive at the show office at least 30 minutes before the start of the class.
- Dress appropriately. You should be neat to show respect for the judge and show. Consider layers and sun protection.
- Have an extra pen. The show should provide this.
- Check the correct number of tests per class.
- Become familiar with the tests about to be ridden.
- Understand the vocabulary of dressage terms so you know that the judge is saying.
- Be sure the test you are about to write on corresponds with the rider trotting down centerline
- Stay focused on the judge and the test so you can keep up
- Write legibly
- Keep track of scratches from the show office.

#### ❖ DON'T

- Arrive late. The show cannot go on without you!
- Offer any comments or explanations to the judge about any competitors.
- Distract the judge with idle chatter.
- Use abbreviations or odd symbols that may not be clearly understood.
- Improvise if you get lost or behind.
- Give any reaction to the comments or scores such as a gasp or groan.





# SCRIBE

## *Suggestions*



- ❖ First of all, you must understand the principle duty of a scribe is to simply write down what is being dictated to them. That's it, plain and simple, in a nutshell. A scribe neither adds nor deletes anything that is to go on record. This you must do without reaction... no gasps of dismay or cheers of approval! Judging is the judge's responsibility, and you should never offer any insights or explanations of what you see in the ring.
- ❖ It is also imperative that you do not distract the judge with idle chatter or questions about training methods. Things can move quickly, and it is easy to become distracted and get behind. Take your lead from the judge with regards to conversation. Some judges will be talkative and happy to offer insights to their reasoning; others will scarcely utter a word other than their scores and comments for movements.
- ❖ Be courteous and respectful, and let the judge concentrate on doing their job.
- ❖ Next responsibility is to stay focused and attentive to what is going on in the ring and be certain you, the judge, and the competitor are synchronized. This means keeping an eye on the test, an eye on the competitor, and an ear on the judge.
- ❖ Nothing quite so frustrates a judge as to get number scores and comments put in the wrong place. If you believe you are missing a score, quietly mention this immediately to the judge so that the two of you don't fall hopelessly behind and out of synch. One way to do this is to ask, "is this the score for the transition?"
- ❖ Occasionally the judge may accidentally omit a score, and they will appreciate a prompt so they, too, can keep on track. If a score for a movement actually has been missed, expect to just go on with the scoring, leaving that space blank. It is impossible to backtrack in the middle of a ride, and the judge will have to fill that mark in at the end of the test.
- ❖ Once the final mark has been given, the Collective Marks and Comments remain. Some judges will dictate these, but many judges prefer to fill these out them-selves, making the final comments in their own handwriting.
- ❖ There is also a mechanical skill that becomes important for scribing – the ability to write quickly and legibly. There is nothing quite so annoying to a competitor as to get a test back that is full of unintelligible scribbling in the comments section of each movement.
- ❖ It is important that a scribe deliver the message clearly, so not only does your handwriting need to be clear, but you must use complete words whenever possible. An abbreviation that seems obvious to you may be meaningless to the rider trying to decipher the test back in the barn.
- ❖ Concurrent with this, it is important that a scribe has a good working vocabulary of dressage terms so that they can understand the judge's comments. This familiarity of terms will lessen any potential confusion as the judge rattles off comments for one movement after another.
- ❖ It is also very helpful if the scribe has a familiarity with the test that is being ridden, even if it means they have just read through it before the class starts. That way they can have a clue about what movements are involved and what is coming up, and can help anticipate when a score will be given. This becomes vitally important as the tests become more and more complex.
- ❖ Be especially aware that sometimes there are scores given for the overall quality of a movement, in addition to the specific movement itself; these are easy to miss.



# SCRIBE

## *Suggestions, cont'd.*



- ❖ There is also a mechanical skill that becomes important for scribing – the ability to write quickly and legibly. There is nothing quite so annoying to a competitor as to get a test back that is full of unintelligible scribbling in the comments section of each movement.
- ❖ It is important that a scribe deliver the message clearly, so not only does your handwriting need to be clear, but you must use complete words whenever possible. An abbreviation that seems obvious to you may be meaningless to the rider trying to decipher the test back in the barn.
- ❖ Concurrent with this, it is important that a scribe has a good working vocabulary of dressage terms so that they can understand the judge's comments. This familiarity of terms will lessen any potential confusion as the judge rattles off comments for one movement after another.
- ❖ It is also very helpful if the scribe has a familiarity with the test that is being ridden, even if it means they have just read through it before the class starts. That way they can have a clue about what movements are involved and what is coming up, and can help anticipate when a score will be given. This becomes vitally important as the tests become more and more complex.
- ❖ Be especially aware that sometimes there are scores given for the overall quality of a movement, in addition to the specific movement itself; these are easy to miss.
- ❖ Finally, there is the responsibility of "housekeeping." This means getting to the judge's table early, making sure there are the appropriate number of tests for each class.
- ❖ Show management should furnish the judge with a class list, giving the order of rides and riders' names and numbers. There should be a labeled test for every competitor, as well as a blank test for the judge to use throughout the test.
- ❖ Be sure to check the rider's number, and be certain that the test you are about to write on corresponds with the competitor who has just trotted past!
- ❖ Finally, check to see that the judge has signed the front of the test; some will sign all the tests before a class begins.
- ❖ Completed tests should then be set aside, ready for the runners to pick up. The runners are also there to serve as messengers; let them know if you or the judge need anything (pencils, food, drinks).
- ❖ You will also need to keep track of any scratches, have an idea of how well you are keeping on time, and keep track of details in general. Many of these details are the responsibility of the show management. However, it is in the best interest of all involved for you to help with the details as well.
- ❖ Everyone can make a contribution to a smoothly run show, and the scribe can play a vital role.
- ❖ And above all, Thank You. Without you "silent witnesses" the show could not go on. So, give it a try! See showing from a different perspective. I promise you won't regret the experience! Enjoy it!!



## Scribing for a Dressage Judge

**"Thinking Horseman" columnist Kip Goldreyer explains why the delights of scribing for a dressage judge outweigh the difficulties.**

By Kip Goldreyer

I'm a soft touch when it comes to volunteering at dressage shows. My favorite job has always been ring steward: I get to watch the warm-ups and most of the rides. I'm occasionally pressed into service to read a test. And I come as close as I'll ever come to my childhood dream of being a traffic cop. With clipboard in hand, I boss people around--and they THANK ME for it!

Lately, though, I'm beginning to prefer scribing: I get to sit down all day. I dissect our sport by figuring out what the judges are looking for. I start to see patterns to their pet peeves and bugaboos: This judge HATES horses that work haunches-in to avoid carrying themselves; that judge LOVES to see more energy. I see how test movements connect (or, unfortunately, don't connect). I sharpen my eye. On rare occasions, I get to comment. (When an involuntary "WOW" popped out of my mouth at a First Level horse's trot lengthening, the judge said, "Exactly. Write that down.") And as a volunteer, I know I'm helping out.

Want to try it? Great! But as a competitor and a scribe, let me tell you that, to be good *and* enjoy the experience, you need:

**Sharp hearing.** Hey! Don't laugh. Judges aren't horse whisperers, they're *test* whisperers. They are absolutely allergic to having their scores and comments overheard by riders or spectators. So they're never, ever loud. They quickly become *sotto voce* when a rider ventures closer to the judge's stand than, say, B and E, and they go absolutely ventriloquist when a rider halts at C. The lips don't move, sound does not emerge--but the words must appear on paper. Complicating this sound deficit, of course, are the external vagaries of horse-showing--howling wind, pounding rain, gear-grinding water trucks, crackling public address systems and piped-in "background" music that's anything but. Your ears have their work cut out for them, as does your willingness to do what it takes. During freestyles at a recent show, the music blasted so deafeningly--the better for the riders to hear it--that I ended up with my head snuggled cozily on the judge's shoulder.

**Speed.** "Write fast and use lots of abbreviations," one judge told me as we started Fourth Level, where movements come faster than lemmings pouring over a cliff. "I give LOTS of comments." (Of course, for every judge who speaks volumes, there's the judge who confines her- or himself to two or three pet words for which you could almost use rubber stamps--"supple," "active," "obedient.") Some judges are "every man for himself." Some are solicitous. "I'm on Movement 27. Are you?" And some--they're fun--are tour guides. "Now we come to the second shoulder-in. Let's see if it's better than the first."

Speed, by the way, does not mean sloppy. As a competitor, I can tell you that I love a scribe with...

**Good penmanship.** It is, after all, a form of communication. I am not talking textbook Palmer Method here, just something that a normal dressage nut with a high school education and 20/20 eyesight can decipher. Good tiny handwriting is even better: The boxes are smallish to begin with, and they shrink progressively as the movements increase from nine (USDF Introductory Test 1) to 38 (FEI Grand Prix).

Is it penmanship overkill that I bring my own tiny-tipped pens, extra-fine Pilot V-Balls or Pilot Precise Rolling Balls in black or blue, plus red for marking errors? Maybe. But then there's my straightedge. It's great for upper-level tests: I pull it down the page, one box at a time, and so never accidentally skip one of those teensy-weensy spaces assigned to a big, important movement. The straightedge is also invaluable for drawing lines to demarcate *clearly* the walk, trot, canter and passage/piaffe work in the freestyle tests. This is necessary because it's you, the scribe, who must jump around finding movements and writing scores as they appear in the choreography. As one judge said during a series of freestyle classes, "You're truly the one doing all the work."

**Knowledge of the tests.** Knowing where you have to write like mad and where (usually during the walk work) you have a bit of a breather is a real advantage. And when movements start coming one on top of the other, being able to see that you and the rider are indeed on, say, the half-pirouette left is a major help. (If you're just starting a scribing career, by the way, put that upper-level stuff on hold, at least for a while. Get your feet wet with the lower-level tests and move up only as your confidence and comfort level increase.)

**Multi-taskability.** No scribe just sits there and writes. You *orchestrate*. You check that the number on the next rider matches the name and number on the lineup and on the front of the test in your hand. (I always turn the test over and write the number in the upper right-hand corner, too.) You remind the judge of which class and test she's judging and when both change--there's nothing worse than knowing it's *your* fault that she incorrectly rang somebody off course. You mark errors. And you check how to do it before starting because, in spite of the rules, every judge is different. Some want errors marked in red; black is fine with others. Some want the word "error" written on the movement; others want the minus number in the right-hand margin. Some want YOU to carry errors down to the totals; others want to do it themselves; still others say that's the scorekeeper's job.

You hand the completed, signed test to the runner (surreptitiously checking for the judge's signature on the front). When the judge starts to look faint--judging is devilish hard work--you ask the runner to bring a Power Bar. You may, once in a blue moon, get to express your opinion. ("A 6," said one judge. "Or 7. What do you think?") You *will* be appreciated. (After I calmly executed our first test together--the 32-movement Prix St. Georges--with nary a fluff or bobble, the visibly relieved judge, who didn't know me from Adam, turned and gave me a jubilant high-five because she knew we were gonna be A-OK.) And sometimes...oh joy...when the judge is busy finishing her written remarks, she may ask you to ring the bell for the next ride.

Now, what's not to like about *that*?

*This column originally appeared in the October 2002 issue of Practical Horseman magazine.*



*Kip Goldreyer and Tex*

SYMBOL	DEFINITION
sal	salute
satis	satisfactory
serp	serpentine
sh-in	shoulder-in
sl,sit	slight, slightly
sm	small
str	straight
thru	through
trans	transition
tr	trot
tu ha	turn on haunches
tu for	turn on forehand
unstd hd	unsteady hand
unus	unusual
us	usual, usually
vert	vertical
v	very, volte
wv	weaving
w/	with
wr	wrong
X	Dressage letter "X"

SYMBOL	DEFINITION
irreg	irregular
lack imp	lack impulsion
LF	left front
LH	left hind
lat	lateral
ld	lead
lg	large
L, l	left
a box symbol	square
obv	obvious
ord	ordinary
outw	outward
pos	position
prec	precise
reg	regular
res	resistance
R, r	right
rhy	rhythm
rush	rush, rushed
RF	right front
RH	right hind

SYMBOL	DEFINITION
dpt	depart
diag	diagonal
dir	direction
disob	disobedient
eng	engaged, engagement
ext	extended, extension
flex	flexed, flexion
4hd or f/hand	forehand
forw, FW	forward
gd	good
ht	halt
ha	haunches
h-in	haunches in
hd titit	head titled
h/leg, hl	hind legs
hur	hurried
imp	impulsion
inattan	inattentive
incomp	incomplete
inw	inward

SYMBOL	DEFINITION
A	Dressage letter "A"
abr	abrupt
@	at
attn	attentive
bk	back
bal	balance
bt	beat
b/f	before
b/h or beh	behind
bend	bending
bet	better
b/n	between
C	Dressage letter "C"
cad	cadence
ct, cant	canter
c-line, CL, cl	center-line
O, O	circle
col	collected
cor	corner
crkd	crooked





## USDF Glossary of Judging Terms

This is not a complete list; only those terms most related to the score are listed here. [Click here](#) for a more complete list.

- ❖ **Acceptance** Lack of evasion, resistance, or protest; acquiescence. Used in reference to the horse's unresistant willingness to allow the maintenance of a steady contact, the application of aids, and/or the placement of the rider's weight.
- ❖ **Activity** Energy, vigor, liveliness - referring especially to that of the hindlegs.
- ❖ **Alignment** The lining up of the horse's body parts from tail to poll.
- ❖ **Balance** Relative distribution of the weight of horse and rider upon the fore and hind legs (longitudinal balance) and the left and right legs (lateral balance). The horse is in good balance when the weight is distributed evenly left and right, and sufficiently toward the rear legs that it can easily manage the task at hand. Loss of balance means the sudden increase of weight onto the forehand and/or to one side.
- ❖ **Beat**
  1. A footfall within a gait. A hoof, or pair of hooves virtually simultaneously striking the ground. By this definition the walk has four beats, the trot has two, and the canter three.
  2. The emphasized beat (as in music). By this definition the walk has two beats, the trot has two and the canter has one beat.
- ❖ **Behind the Vertical** The head position in which the horse's nostril falls behind the imaginary vertical line dropped from the horse's eye (i.e., toward the chest). The horse may or may not be behind the bit.
- ❖ **Bend** The laterally arced position in which the horse's body appears to form an even curve from poll to tail. Examples of faulty bend are: bending only in the neck, only at the base of the neck, or bent the wrong direction.
- ❖ **Cadence** The marked accentuation of the rhythm and (musical) beat that is a result of a steady and suitable tempo harmonizing with a springy impulsion.
- ❖ **Carriage** The posture of the horse, most easily evaluated when the horse's profile or outline.
- ❖ **Connection** State in which there is no blockage, break, or slack in the circuit that joins horse and rider into a single harmonious unit. The unrestricted flow of energy and influence from and through the rider to and throughout the horse, and back to the rider. See Throughness.
- ❖ **Constrained** Forced or compelled against the will, resulting in undue sustained muscular contraction. E.g., the horse may be constrained to bend, or flex, or to move forward at speed.
- ❖ **Constricted** Limited by constraint, restraint, or sustained muscular contraction. Held together, forcefully shortened, or physically tight.
- ❖ **Correctness** The straightness of the action of the limbs (e.g., faults would be winging, paddling, ringing hocks). Not the same as Purity. Dressage judges deal with Correctness only indirectly; that is, to the degree that it affects the purity or quality of the gait. Breeding class judges address Correctness directly.
- ❖ **Cross-Canter** The horse canters on one lead in front and the other lead behind. Same as Disunited.



## USDF Glossary of Judging Terms, Cont'd.

- ❖ **Disunited** Same as Cross-Canter.
- ❖ **Elasticity** The ability or tendency to stretch and contract the musculature smoothly, giving the impression of "stretchiness" or "springiness".
- ❖ **Engagement** Increased flexion of the joints of the hind legs, during its weight-bearing phase. This causes a relative lowering of the quarters/raising of the forehand, thus shifting more of the task of loading-bearing to the hindquarters. A prerequisite for upward thrust/impulsion. Engagement is *not* flexion of the hocks or "hock action" in which the joints of the hind legs are markedly flexed while the leg is in the air. *Nor* is engagement merely the length of the step of the hind leg forward toward the horse's girth - *that* is reach of the hind leg.
- ❖ **Evasion** Avoidance of the difficulty, correctness, or purpose of the movement, often without active resistance or disobedience (e.g., tilting head, open mouth, broken neckline, etc.). Bit evasions are means of avoiding correct contact with the bit.
- ❖ **Flexion** Articulation of a joint so that the angle between the bones is decreased. Lateral and longitudinal flexion are commonly referred to as flexion "at the poll".
- ❖ **Impulsion** Thrust. Releasing of the energy stored by engagement. In dressage, impulsion is associated with a phase of suspension such as exists in trot and canter, but does not exist in walk. Therefore, impulsion is not applicable to the walk. [Note: It may be enlightening to compare the original French with the later English translation of the FEI scoresheets under "Impulsion." The English translation of the French reads, "the desire to move forward," whereas what the French actually says is, "the desire to *carry himself* forward" ("Le desire de se porter en avant").]
- ❖ **Obedience** Willingness to perform the movement, transition, or figure asked by the rider. May demonstrate resistance or evasion, yet still be obedient (e.g., the horse may perform a series of flying changes without mistakes and in the right place, but is behind the bit, tilted in the head with mouth open and tail swishing, reluctant to cover enough ground, etc., thus he obediently performs the task, but not necessarily submissively, supplely, etc.).
- ❖ **On the Aids** Well-connected, on the bit, in front of the leg, and responsive.
- ❖ **Pace**
  1. The variation within the gait; e.g., collected, working, lengthened, medium, extended. The variation in meters per minute occurs ideally because of the change in stride length, with no change in tempo. [NOTE: The **FEI Rules for Dressage** are at this time without any specific term for what in English (per Webster) is correctly called "pace." Further, the FEI translation of the French *l'allure* was "pace," rather than the more exact English translation of "gait".]
  2. A gait in which the lateral pairs of legs move in unison (also called "amble") - not a dressage gait.
- ❖ **Poll** The highest point of the horse's skull (the occipital crest). In common dressage usage, flexion "at the poll" refers to the longitudinal or lateral flexion of the joint immediately behind the poll.
- ❖ **Purity** Correctness of the order and timing of the footfalls of the gaits.
- ❖ **Quality** The quality of a gait refers to its freedom/amplitude, elasticity, fluency, etc. Not the same as Purity or Correctness.
- ❖ **Resistance** Physical opposition by the horse against the rider. Not synonymous with disobedience nor with Evasion. Can be momentary or pervasive.



- ❖ **Rhythm** The characteristic sequence of footfalls and phases of a given gait. For purposes of dressage, the only correct rhythms are those of the pure walk, pure trot, and pure canter (not those of amble, pace, rack, etc.). [NOTE: Rhythm is sometimes used mistakenly to mean tempo; this usage is not consistent with the correct English definition of "rhythm" (per Webster), nor with its normal usage in the music world.]
- ❖ **Scope** Amplitude (reach and roundness) of movement.
- ❖ **Self-Carriage** State in which the horse carries itself without taking support or balancing on the rider's hand.
- ❖ **Straightness**
  1. Parallelism to required line of travel (e.g. haunches neither left nor right of centerline)
  2. Alignment of body parts appropriate to the task at hand (e.g. not a popped shoulder or twisted neck).
  3. Directness of line of travel (e.g. not weaving).
- ❖ **Submission** Compliance. Throughness and Obedience. The yielding of the horse's will to that of the rider, as revealed by a constant attention, willingness, and confidence in the attitude of the horse, as well as by the harmony and ease displayed in the correct execution of the movements, including correct bend, acceptance of and obedience to the rider's aids, and a balance appropriate to the task at hand.
- ❖ **Suppleness** Pliability; ability to smoothly adjust the carriage (longitudinally) and the position or bend (laterally), without impairment of the flow of movement, or of the balance.
- ❖ **Suspension** The moment or phase of the trot or canter in which the horse has no feet on the ground.
- ❖ **Tempo** Beats per minute, as would be determined by a metronome. [NOTE: Some Europeans use the term "tempo" to refer to what in English is more correctly called Pace.]
- ❖ **Throughness** The supple, elastic, unblocked, connected state of the horse's musculature that permits an unrestricted flow of energy from back to front and front to back, which allows the aids/influences to freely go through to all parts of the horse (e.g., the rein aids go through and reach and influence the hind legs). Synonymous with the German term "Durchlaessigkeit," or "throughlettingness." See Connection.