

## *How to Be a Good Spectator at Real Dressage Shows*

1. **Less is More:** In dressage, the less you see the rider do, the better, because that means he is communicating with his horse quietly and his horse is attentive -- they are working as a team.
2. **Good Figures:** Circles are round and lines are straight, a precept true in geometry and dressage. A 20-meter circle should go from one side of the arena to the other, a 10-meter circle only half way across. A horse should not weave on a straight-line movement.
3. **Tempo and Rhythm:** Rhythm is the repetition of footfalls. A sound dressage horse has only three correct rhythms – a four-beat walk, two-beat trot, three-beat canter. Tempo is the speed of repetition of strides. Every horse should have a consistent tempo throughout the test that is controlled by the rider, a tempo so obvious you could sing a song to it.
4. **Naughtiness:** Horses, like people, have good days and bad days and days when they are just feeling a little too good. Naughtiness in horses can be exhibited in bucking, rearing, tossing of the head, or even jumping out of the dressage ring.
5. **Tension:** During a test, the horse needs to remain calm, attentive and supple. If the horse gets tense, he gets rigid through his neck and back, which can exhibit itself in stiff movement, ears that are pinned back and a tail that swishes constantly and doesn't hang arched and quietly swinging.
6. **Rider Seat and Position:** The rider should sit upright quietly and not be depend on his whip, spurs or voice to have a nice test. Riders who use their voice have points deducted off their test score for that movement.
7. **Whipped Cream Lips:** When a horse is relaxed in his jaw and poll (the area just behind his ears), he releases saliva, you might see white foam around his lips and mouth. That is a good sign as it means he is attentively chewing on his bit and comfortable in his work. The amount of white foam varies from horse to horse.
8. **Horses and Flight:** Horses have two main mechanisms for protection from danger: they run and they kick. Remember to always allow plenty of room for the horses at a show and never approach any horse without first alerting the rider that you are doing so.
9. **Scary Stuff:** Horses have the strangest aversions: plastic grocery bags can remind them of Satan's minions and an opened umbrella can cause bolting to three states over. Again, use caution at horse shows and think before you toss away noisy garbage, open an umbrella or put on and take off plastic rain ponchos or blankets in the stands.
10. **SSSSHHHH!** Focus is important during any test, from Training Level to Grand Prix, so remember to be courteous and follow the rules by staying about 15 meters (45 feet) feet back from the competition ring and remaining as quiet as possible during rides. If you have any questions about where you may stand or sit, check with the ring steward.

## *The Haute Ecole* *High School Movements or Airs Above the Ground*

These movements are performed for exhibition purposes only at this time. These movements were originally developed and taught to the horse and rider to prepare the horse to protect his rider when in battle. These movements can be performed by only a handful of horse and rider pairings and are considered the most difficult to ride and the most difficult for the horse to perform.



*Levade*



*Capriole*



*Croupade*



*Ballotade*



*Courbette*