

The ANRC Forward Riding Proficiency Certificate Courses are designed for home study and completed at your own pace. You may work independently or under the guidance of an instructor. Instructors may also use these materials to supplement their teaching.

Which Level is Right for Me?

Forward Riding Proficiency Certificate Program is designed for riders middle school age through adult. To determine where you should start as a candidate for a **Forward Riding Proficiency Certificate**, read the general description for each proficiency level below, then continue to the specific tasks for each level and testing requirements.

To obtain an ANRC Forward Riding Certificate you have two options for testing: (1) **complete the coursework and submit the required materials for a virtual assessment by an ANRC judging panel** or (2) **request on-site testing at your facility by an ANRC judging panel**.

Levels of ANRC Forward Riding Proficiency Testing:

The Introductory Level is designed as a starting point and does not count towards an ANRC Forward Riding Proficiency Certificate. It is for self-assessment. Candidates that feel confident they have surpassed the introductory level tasks may begin at Level One or higher.

Level One is the foundation level of the Forward Riding system and for riders who feel confident they have mastered the introductory level tasks. Candidates for Level One are riders who are currently showing in local and/or recognized hunter/jumping seat equitation divisions successfully at 2'6" - 2'9". Candidates may also be someone that has some experience foxhunting with a recognized hunt; is successfully competing in Eventing at the Novice level; or currently holds a C1 Pony Club rating.

Level Two is for intermediate riders and those that are confident they have mastered the Level One tasks. Candidates for Level Two are currently showing in local or recognized hunter/jumping seat equitation divisions successfully at 2'9". Candidates also may be someone that is regularly foxhunting with a recognized hunt; is successfully Eventing at the Novice level; or currently holds a C3 Pony Club rating.

Level Three is for advanced riders that have mastered Level Two tasks. Candidates are currently showing in recognized hunter/jumping seat equitation divisions at 3' or higher. Candidates also may be someone that is a seasoned member of a recognized hunt; is successfully Eventing at Training level; or currently holds a B Pony Club rating.

Need help? Utilize the [ANRC Virtual Clinic](#) option to receive proficiency level assessment.

Next, look at the specific criteria for each level.....

ANRC DVD Series Volume I Workbook

Overview: Introductory Level One

The ANRC DVD Series Volume I Workbook: *Life Lessons Learned with Horses* by R. Scot Evans and Shelby French provides a step-by-step guide to understand and practice the Introductory Level and Level One proficiency skills. The ANRC DVD Series will give you visual images to see how tasks should be performed. The companion reference is [Schooling and Riding the Sport Horse: A Modern American Hunter/Jumper System](#) by Paul D. Cronin.

Introductory Level and Level One forward riding proficiency skills provide a systematic method to give a horse a “good beginning,” whether the horse is just learning or needs to recover from an initial “poor start” or negative experience. Level One is the foundation level on which the horse and rider will build on. Mastering Level One tasks will facilitate the later demands of more sophisticated aids and performance expectations.

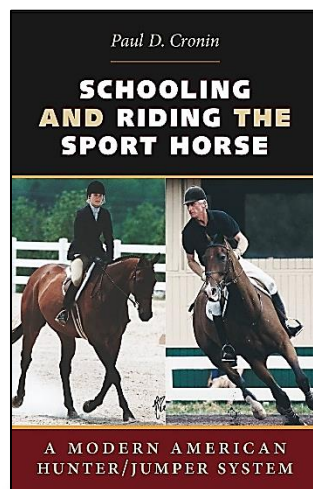
- In working through the Introductory and Level One tasks, the horse will learn to become mentally and physically relaxed and respond to simple directional aids on loose reins. We call this STABILIZATION. When fully stabilized, the horse can maintain its balance and pace at all gaits without constant support of the rider’s legs or hands.
- The rider will focus on becoming aware of their POSITION and gaining control of their body. Only through an independent use of hands and body language will you be able to communicate effectively with your horse. You will develop a pattern of giving clear instructions and in turn, rewarding every effort the horse makes to respond correctly.



Pictured above is USEF Judge and Clinician R. Scot Evans who partnered with Shelby French, USEF Judge and former Director of Riding at Sweet Briar College, to create the **ANRC DVD Series the American System of Forward Riding: *Life Lessons Learned with Horses***.

Introductory Level Proficiency Tasks: *(for self-assessment)*

- Position Phase:
 - Demonstrate a correct, functional position at the walk, posting trot, and canter while riding on loose reins or passive contact.
 - Trot over cavaletti poles to a small crossrail followed by a low vertical (2'-2'6" maximum) demonstrating the ability to maintain a correct, secure position. The rider must take an early release holding the mane.
- Control Phase:
 - Demonstrate the use of alternating leg aids at the walk and the ability to follow the head and neck gestures of the horse with your arms.
 - Trot over a course of cavaletti poles or small crossrails demonstrating good steering with at least one change of direction, posting between the obstacles, and correct two-point position over the poles or crossrails.
 - Perform secure, prompt, and non-abusive trot/canter/trot transitions using elementary control techniques.
 - Using an opening rein, demonstrate the ability to canter large round circles on both leads while sitting the canter and following with your arms.
- Schooling Phase:
 - Show the proper use of a crop with each hand.
 - Demonstrate lateral agility by performing a circle and a half-circle at the trot while maintaining a consistent rhythm and a correct track.
- Theoretical Phase:
 - Explain how the horse's instinctive behavioral responses affect the safety of the riding setting.
 - Explain the aims of the elementary level of riding.
 - Explain the four natural aids available to the rider and the sequence of their use in upward and downward transitions at the elementary level.



The companion reference to the ANRC DVD Series is **Schooling and Riding the Sport Horse: A Modern American Hunter/Jumper System** by Paul D. Cronin. Mr. Cronin, pictured here, is Professor Emeritus and Director Emeritus of Riding at Sweet Briar College and a protégé of Captain Vladimir Littauer, author of **Commonsense Horsemanship**. Littauer was an early influencer and advocate of today's Forward Riding System.

Level One Proficiency Tasks *(for practice and testing)*

- Position Phase:
 - Demonstrate a generally secure position at the walk, trot, and canter while riding on loose reins. The rider's hands should be independent from the rest of the body while the horse is in motion and following the balancing gesture of the horse's head and neck.
 - Demonstrate a sitting trot with and without stirrups while riding on loose reins on a comfortable, quiet horse.
 - Demonstrate a united and non-abusive position. When jumping over combinations that are 2'6" in height, show a secure release and the use of elementary control techniques. The combination should include at least one oxer and have at least three elements.
- Control Phase:
 - Demonstrate the correct use of elementary aids for trot-canter-trot and walk-canter-trot-walk transitions.
 - Demonstrate the leading rein, one direct rein of opposition, and two direct reins of opposition.
 - Demonstrate the correct method for addressing the reins. Bridge the reins to shorten. Know how to move the hands forward and shorten the reins without interfering and so the bit remains still and then release the bridge immediately.
- Schooling Phase:
 - Execute a ¼ turn on the forehand in both directions showing the displacing leg aids.
 - Trot in and canter out of lines within a simple course of fences at 2'3"-2'6" using elementary control techniques.
 - Demonstrate the correct aids for backing and back correctly for two or three steps.
- Theoretical Phase:
 - Clearly explain the aims of the elementary level and the techniques used at that level of riding.
 - Explain the effect of these rein aids and when each should be used: leading rein, one direct rein of opposition, and two direct reins of opposition.
 - Explain how the urging leg, holding leg, and displacing leg affect the horse.
 - Describe a good performance of a ½ turn on the forehand and the purpose for teaching the horse the movement.
 - Describe a good backing performance.
 - Explain the importance of a non-abusive rider position. How can this make both the horse and rider's job more efficient on the flat and over fences?

WHAT AM I REQUIRED TO SUBMIT FOR ANRC LEVEL ONE PROFICIENCY TESTING?

In all performances, the rider should demonstrate a secure, non-abusive position in unity with the horse's motion. The rider must demonstrate elementary control techniques on loose or semi-loose reins. The horse must demonstrate stabilization throughout all required movements and testing phases.

1. **Videotape Submission #1:** Perform the **ANRC Level One Forward Riding Program Ride** that includes position, control, and schooling phase tasks. The program ride requires an arena or riding area with dressage ring letters to show the test is being performed accurately. You can watch a demonstration of the Level One program ride [HERE](#).
2. **Videotape Submission #2:** Create an organized performance demonstrating elementary control techniques: First, jump a combination that is 2'6" in height, include one oxer, and at least three elements. Then, build a simple course of fences at 2'3" – 2'6". Trot in and canter out of each line.
3. Take the **ANRC Forward Riding Level One Written Test**. When you register and pay, you will receive a link to take the written test. The test will include riding theory questions from the book: *Schooling and Riding the Sport Horse* by Paul Cronin. Study questions are available [HERE](#).
4. When meeting virtually or in person with the judging panel be prepared to critique your performance(s).

ANRC DVD Series Volume II Workbook

Overview: Level Two and Level Three

The ANRC DVD Series Volume II Workbook: *Life Lessons Learned with Horses* by R. Scot Evans and Shelby French provides a step-by-step guide to understand and practice the Level Two and Level One proficiency skills. The ANRC DVD Series will give you images to see how tasks should be performed. The companion reference is *Schooling and Riding the Sport Horse: A Modern American Hunter/Jumper System* by Paul D. Cronin.

In building your horse's foundation in Level One, you are shaping your horse's behavior by developing consistent riding habits. Establishing clear communication and expectations instills both confidence and trust in the schooling process. The measurement of success in Forward Riding is that your horse understands what is being asked of him and he is happy in his work---whether the work is the simple life of a school horse or the intense work of a competitive athlete.

- In Levels Two and Three you will continue to expand on your foundation by employing intermediate level techniques for control. Now riding on light contact, you will connect your horse's energy to facilitate a soft, precise performance. Improving your "feel" gives you the timing necessary to synchronize or mesh with your horse's natural balance. Creating impulse, lateral agility, and longitudinal agility now come into play.
- The exercises in the Volume II workbook will help you develop your horse's body, but you must also work to improve you own balance, suppleness, and cardiovascular fitness. Even accomplished riders work on their positions throughout their career. You and your horse are both athletes, and when you fine-tune your body control, you enhance your communication system with your horse.



Level Two Proficiency Tasks *(for skill practice and testing)*

- **Position Phase**
 - Demonstrate a secure working position at the walk, trot, sitting trot, and canter. The rider's hands must function independently of the body, and the rider should be in unity with the horse within all gaits and transitions.
 - Demonstrate a secure working position while riding without stirrups on a comfortable horse at the walk, trot, and canter
 - Demonstrate the ability to maintain a secure jumping position and a correct crest release through a combination of jumps. The combination must contain at least three elements and two oxers set at 2'9" or higher.
 - Demonstrate the ability to maintain a secure working position and correct release while trotting in and cantering out of low lines of jumps. The trot jump at the beginning of the line should be set at 2'6" and the out of the line set at 2'9".

- **Control Phase**
 - Demonstrate the horse's lateral and longitudinal agility in three movements of your choice.
 - Demonstrate simple lead changes through the trot on the centerline of the ring.
 - Practice the ANRC Forward Riding Level Two Program Ride demonstrating passive contact throughout.
 - Demonstrate passive contact and intermediate level control in hunter exercises at the walk, trot, and canter performed in a large ring or an enclosed field in a group of at least two horses.
 - Produce an organized performance over a course of jumps at 2'9". Demonstrate a secure non-abusive working position. *(Simple or flying changes of lead are equally acceptable)*
- **Schooling Phase**
 - Demonstrate an organized procedure (10-20 minutes) for warming up a horse for work and be able to explain why you included the various components.
 - Clearly demonstrate the aids for a short turn at the walk (the beginning schooling movement to teach the horse the half-turn on the haunch.)
 - Pick up a counter-canter and maintain the counter-canter through at least one turn.
- **Theoretical Phase**
 - Explain the various reasons for lunging a horse.
 - Describe a three movements that develop the horse's lateral agility and longitudinal agility and what is a good performance for each example you give.
 - Explain the aims, aids, and techniques for intermediate level of riding.

WHAT AM I REQUIRED TO SUBMIT FOR ANRC LEVEL TWO PROFICIENCY TESTING?

In all performances, the rider should demonstrate a secure, workmanlike position in unity with the horse's motion. The rider's hands must be independent of the movements of the rider's body and demonstrate the intermediate level of control to achieve soft, precise transitions. Cooperation between horse and rider must be apparent throughout each phase of testing and the horse must demonstrate stabilization in the arena and in the field.

1. **Videotape Submission #1:** Perform the [ANRC Level Two Forward Riding Program Ride](#) that includes position, control, and schooling phase tasks using intermediate level control techniques. The program ride requires an arena or riding area with dressage letters to show the test is being performed accurately. You can watch a demonstration of the Level Two program ride [HERE](#).
2. **Videotape Submission #2:** Create an organized performance in a field or large ring in a group with at least two other horses. Demonstrate hunter exercises showing transitions at the walk, trot, and canter employing intermediate level control techniques.
3. **Videotape Submission #3:** Ride over a course of jumps of 7-8 jumps set at 2'9" with at least two changes of direction, a roll-back turn, and a combination (Simple or flying changes of lead are equally acceptable).
4. Take the **ANRC Forward Riding Level Two Written Test**. When you register and pay, you will receive a link to take the written test. The test will include riding theory questions from the book: *Schooling and Riding the Sport Horse* by Paul Cronin. Study questions are available [HERE](#).
5. When meeting virtually or in person with the judging panel be prepared to critique your performance(s).



Level Three Proficiency Tasks *(for skill practice and testing)*

- **Position Phase**
 - Ride the Level Three Program ride demonstrating mastery of a good working position and consistent soft contact (portions are ridden without stirrups).
 - Critique your own position in relation to your understanding of the four fundamentals and seven physical qualities that contribute to the establishment of the fundamentals.
 - Ride a simple course of jumps at 3', demonstrating a quality performance while maintain a secure, non-abusive position that is in unity with the horse's efforts. Demonstrate a medium crest release.
- **Control Phase**
 - Demonstrate a three-loop serpentine at the canter with prompt simple changes through the trot.
 - Demonstrate a well-executed turn on the haunch to the right and to the left.
 - Demonstrate the ability to canter between two rails on the ground set 66' apart in five cantering strides, then in six cantering strides, and again in five cantering strides with no interruption of the canter (if the horse has a short stride, the rider can change the exercise to six and seven cantering strides).
 - Ride a course of 3' jumps in the ring that includes at least one combination and two changes of direction. Demonstrate good turns, flying changes of lead on a straight line, good approaches, and a consistent pace throughout.
 - Jump an outside hunter course of at least six fences set at 2'9" to 3' demonstrating a quality canter for outside jumping, contact between fences, and an appropriate crest release.

- Schooling Phase
 - After walking for 10 minutes, ride your horse in a prepared 5 minute warm-up at the elementary level of control, and then establish contact at the trot.
 - Set three different combinations each containing three or more jumps. Each combination should be set to trot in and canter out. Ride your horse through each of them. Know the distances you set between the jumps for each combination.
 - Ride a ½ circle in reverse demonstrating a flying change of lead. Do this in each direction.
 - Ride a circle at the trot showing correct bending and counter bending (position right and position left).
 - Ride a leg yield at the walk in both directions.
- Theoretical Phase
 - Discuss the qualities of a good working position and reference the qualities you would like to improve in your own riding.
 - Know the footfall patterns of the horse's gaits.
 - Know the distances commonly used to set lines of jumps for a 3' hunter course.
 - Understand and be able to define the terminology used in the system of forward riding.
 - Be able to explain the use of the indirect reins. Explain how indirect reins are used in combination with other aids.

WHAT AM I REQUIRED TO SUBMIT FOR ANRC LEVEL THREE PROFICIENCY TESTING?

In all performances, the rider should demonstrate a secure, workmanlike position in unity with the horse's motion. The rider must employ intermediate level control techniques with soft and precise control. The rider should produce quality in the horse's movement and jumping efforts.

1. **Videotape Submission #1:** Perform the [ANRC Level Three Forward Riding Program Ride](#) that includes a warm-up on loose reins prior to starting the test. The program ride includes position, control, and schooling phase tasks using intermediate level control techniques. The program ride requires an arena or riding area with dressage letters to show the test is being accurately performed. You can watch a demonstration of the Level Three program ride [HERE](#).
2. **Videotape Submission #2:** Set three different combinations each containing three or more jumps that are set to trot in and canter out. Ride your horse through each of them (know the measured distances you have set for each combination). Next, set two ground poles 66' apart. Canter the poles in 5 strides, then 6 strides, then 5 strides with no interruption at the canter. (a horse with a short stride may adjust to 6 strides, 7 strides, and then 6 strides).
3. **Videotape Submission #3:** Ride over a course of 8-10 jumps at 3' with at least two changes of direction, a roll back turn, a combination, and include at least three oxers (Flying changes of lead are expected).
4. **Videotape Submission #4:** Ride over an outside course with a minimum of 6 fences at 2'9" – 3'. The rider must be on contact, a quality canter, a consistent pace, and an appropriate crest release over each jump.
5. Take the **ANRC Forward Riding Level Three Written Test**. When you register and pay, you will receive a link to the written test. The test will include riding theory questions from the book: *Schooling and Riding the Sport Horse* by Paul Cronin. Study questions are available [HERE](#).
6. When meeting virtually or in person with the judging panel, be prepared to critique your performance(s).