










COLORS AND MARKINGS GENERAL KNOWLEDGE STUDY GUIDE







I. Colors


Colors in the horse industry are extremely important for identification, and for breeding purposes. Color is inherited by both the sire and dam. Some breed associations believe that color has an impact on the performance and personality of the horse. Every young horse lover is first attracted to a horse by its color, and some owners let the color influence their decision when purchasing or looking to purchase a horse.

It is essential for a good horseman or horsewomen to have continuous knowledge of horse colors, markings and patterns. There are five basic horse coat colors: brown, black, bay, chestnut and white. Some variations of these colors are dun, gray, palomino, pinto/paint and roan. However, there are many other coat colors that will be discussed.

COLOR	DESCRIPTION	PICTURE
Bay	Coat is dark red to yellowish brown; the mane, tail and lower limbs are black. www.wanttobuyahorse.com	
Black	Skin, mane, tail and body hair are all black. Only white markings on the face and legs are allowed. www.visiteasterseals.org	
Brown	Dark skin with black and dark brown hair mixed; mane and tail are black. www.sureawinner.com	

Chestnut	<p>Brown hair with reddish brown to golden brown points on the hair. The mane and tail must be close to the coat color.</p> <p>www.zipposrv.com</p>	
White	<p>Snow-white hair with pink skin and brown eyes. A true white horse is born pure white and dies the same color; age doesn't affect this color. This color is rare.</p> <p>www.ansi.okstate.edu</p>	
Gray	<p>Born a solid dark color, as the horse gets older more white hairs appear and as the horse ages it can become solid white. Can be flea-bitten or dappled.</p> <p>parkerfarms.com</p>	
Dun	<p>The dominant hair color is a shade of yellow; the mane, tail, skin and hooves can range from white to black. They may have dorsal stripes. A zebra dun is one with black points and stripes on legs and withers.</p> <p>www.geocities.com/lhthayne/referance_sires.html</p>	
Palomino	<p>Golden color, they have a white-cream mane and tail. True palominos have no dark hair.</p> <p>www.equusite.com</p>	
Cream	<p>This is a light yellow coat on unpigmented skin; the eyes can be blue or pink.</p> <p>www.ansi.okstate.edu</p>	

Dark Bay	A reddish brown coat with black points. www.smallwoodfarm.net	
Buckskin	This coat is a yellowish/gold body color with black points. www.aqpa.com/Classiieds/Page_2/Page2.htm	
Grullo	This is a dun horse with yellow hairs mixed with brown or black; they always have black points. This color is not affected by age and can have a smoke or mouse-gray appearance. Most have a dorsal stripe. grulloquarterhorses.homestead.com	
Light Bay	Yellow-brown in coat color with black points. www.elpre.com	
Red Dun	This color is a form of a dun with a reddish orange or yellowish coat with a red strip down the back and a red mane and tail epage.com	
Sorrel	The body color is red or copper red; the mane and tail can either be the same color as the body or flaxen. www.vgl.ucdavis.edu	
Albino	This color has no pigment in the skin, hair and eyes.	This color doesn't exist because there is a lethal gene involved in this color.




Dark Gray	The skin is dark and the coat is an uneven mixture of black/brown-black hairs. The percentage of white hairs increases with age. www.elpre.com	
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II. PATTERNS

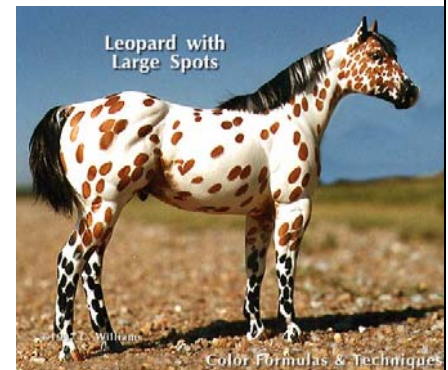
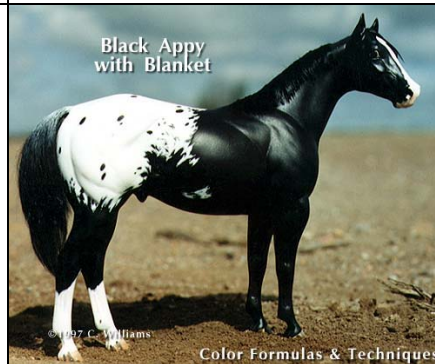
There are also many different patterns that can be identified on a horse. These patterns may be favored (depending on the owner) when looking to buy a flashy partner. Even though all horses are amazing to look at and appreciate, some think these patterns bring out different, unique personalities. Breeders enjoy seeing what color will come out from different sires and dams. Here are the most common patterns for you to value.

Roan- Most roans are a combination of bay (#3, formerly known as strawberry), chestnut (red roan #2), or black (blue roan #1) with white hairs intermingled. Some patches on the body maybe be darker than others, they are born and pass away the same color. The determining factor of whether a horse is light roan or dark roan is based on how much white hair is present in comparison to the colored hair.

www.bluroans.com
www.versatilehorses.com

<p>1</p> 	<p>2</p> 
<p>3</p> 	

Appaloosa- This is a breed of many colors; they can have any basic coat color with many coat patterns. These include blanket (white blanket over hips with or without spots), leopard (white with spots over the entire body), and snowflake (a base color with white spots scattered all over the body). They normally have vertically striped hooves and white around the eye.





<http://www.appaloosamuseum.org/v1/media/Kids/WordSearch/hoof.jpg>



Paint/Pinto – This coat has a pattern of white and any one color, these colors can be black, brown, chestnut, dun, roan, gray, palomino, grullo, sorrel, buckskin or bay. The markings can be any size or shape and located on any part of the body. Only pintos are allowed to have a dark colored head without any markings. However, they both may have a bi-colored tail. Two specific patterns are overo and tobiano.

Tobiano- The white markings appear to descend vertically down the body and upward from the hooves. White is allowed to cross the back and all the legs have white up to the knees and hocks. The dark color usually covers both flanks; the spots are regular and round patterns that extend down over the neck and chest.

Overo- The head is mostly white; the white markings appear to spread horizontally along the body. The top line and legs are colored; the white doesn't cross the back. At least one leg is normally colored up to the hock or knee. The white is irregular and referred to as calico.

www.apha.com



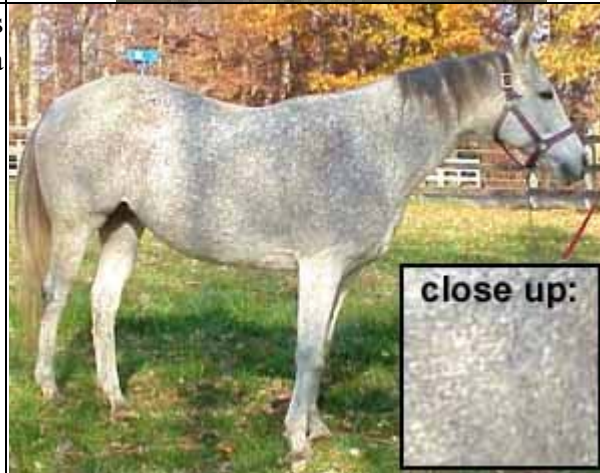
Patched- Large roan spots on base colors
lostspokeranch.com



Dappled- Having darker spots printed on the coat.
members.iinet.net.au



Flea-bitten – Can only occur in a gray and is when the coat has small reddish spots/specks on a white background.
www.equusite.com



III. MARKINGS

A marking is a visual change of predominant coat color of a horse. It is important to identify a horse not just by its coat color or patterns, but by the markings too. Not all horses have markings, but it's important to acknowledge the ones that do using the proper terms. Markings can be alterations in the horse eye, coat color, or anywhere else on the body.

HEAD
Snip

Small patch of white that appears over the muzzle usually to the lips.



Star

A small, clearly defined spot of white hairs on the forehead.



Stripe

A long narrow white marking from the forehead to the muzzle.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse_markings



Bald-Face White appears over most of the flat surface of the face, which can include the eyes and mouth.

<http://www.deannesweb.com/horses/horsecolors/markings/concentration/last.html> (Bald Face, Blaze and all leg marking Pictures)



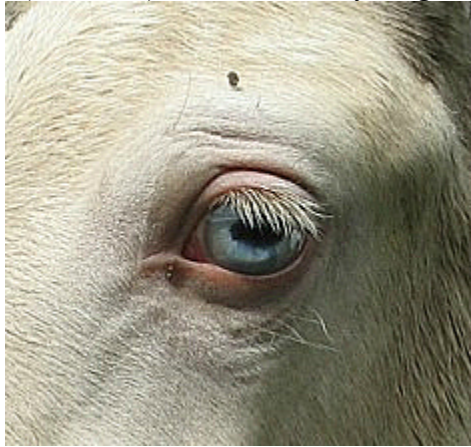
Blaze Wide white stripe down the face.



Flame A few white hairs in the center of the forehead.



Walleyed When the iris of one eye is of a light color. This indicates that the white covering the face (bald face) is around the eye region.



LEGS

Coronet

A white strip that covers the coronet bands



Pastern

White that extends from the coronet to (and including) the pastern



Half-Pastern White hairs that extend from the coronet to (not including) the pastern



Ankle White that extends from the coronet to (and including) the fetlock.



Full Stocking White starting from the coronet to (and including) the knee/hock.



Half Stocking White starting at the coronet and extending to the middle of the cannon



Outside Heel White patch of hairs on the outside heel of the horse.

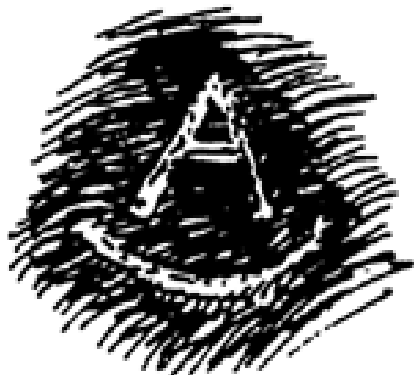
Inside Heel- White patch of hairs on the inside heel of the horse.



BODY

Chestnuts A callous area on the inside of the horse's leg with a subtle pattern, but this pattern is unique to each horse. All horses have chestnuts.

Brand A mark of identification burned on the cheek, shoulder or hip.



<http://www.deannesweb.com/horses/horsecolors/markings/concentration/last.html> (Brand Drawing) www.cowboyshowcase.com (picture)

Dorsal Stripe A dark line running from the poll to the dock of the tail.
www.aanativearts.com



MANE AND TAIL

- Black Points** The mane, tail and legs are black or darker than the rest of the horse. This can be seen best on a bay.
- Silver** A mane or tail which is white with a few black hairs.
- True White** Manes and tails only having white hairs.
- Broom-Tailed** A heavy, coarse tail.
- Flaxen** A straw yellow or dirty white; usually a mixture of dark hair with white.
- Rat-Tailed** Very little hair in the tail.

ALTERATIONS

- Dark** The horse has a predominance of black hair/deep color, with little yellow visible.
- Golden** Occurs when the light strikes certain shades of dun, chestnut and bay to make them seen extremely light. (An example is having the sun make your hair lighter in the summer)
- Pure** Clear coat and has depth of color.
- Ratty** Dull, dirty tones coat.
- Smokey** Having a bluish tinge to the coloration of the coat.
- Striped** Having back stripes or bars on the legs.
- Blue-Eye** The eyes of a horse should be rich brown with a black pupil. However when the eye ball is clear (a shade between white and blue) it is termed glass-eyed



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse markings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse_markings)

Mealy Mouthed - A horse whose color is faded around the mouth; this mostly occurs in bays and brown. It is also known as 'mulish' because mules can also obtain this feature.