

Describing Horses by Colors

When you hear someone describe a horse for the first time, it may sound like a foreign language. Many of the descriptive words are specific to horses. You may need to learn the words in order to talk to another horse person, a veterinarian or a farrier (a person who changes the shoes on a horse). Today, we will talk about describing a horse by their color, markings and age. Later today, you will be asked to tell us about the LTRC horses by describing them with the terms you learned.

Horse Colors: Horses come in many different colors. The most common colors/patterns are listed below along with the colors of our horses. You'll use this list of colors later in an activity describing our horses:

1. **Brown:** various shades from light brown to almost completely black. They bodies may be shaded black or brown or mostly black. The areas around their muzzle and eyebrows, flank and girth are red or golden brown.
2. **Bay:** reddish body with a black mane or tail and/or black in the lower legs. Some bays are very dark red, others are bright red.
3. **Chestnut:** A reddish body color with no black. Mane and tail are the same shade or lighter than the body coat. Variations include:
 - Liver chestnut: very dark brown coat. Sometimes a liver chestnut is also simply called "brown"
 - Sorrel: Reddish-tan to red coat, about the color of a new penny. The most common shade of chestnut
4. **Black:** Black is relatively uncommon, though it is not "rare". Most black horses will fade to a brownish color if the horse is exposed to sunlight on a regular basis. Others have a blue-black shade that does not fade in the sun. For a horse to be considered black, it must be completely black except for white markings on face and legs. A true black horse has fine hairs around the eyes and muzzle that are black.
5. **Gray:** Gray horses can be born any color, and lighten as they age. Most will eventually gray out to either a complete white or a "fleabitten" hair coat. Most "white" horses are actually grays with a fully white hair coat. A gray horse is distinguished from a white horse by dark skin, particularly noticeable around the eyes, muzzle, flanks, and other areas with little or no hair. Variations include:

- Dapple gray: a dark-colored horse with lighter rings of graying hairs, called dapples, scattered throughout.

- Fleabitten gray: an otherwise fully white-haired horse that develops reddish-looking hairs flecked throughout the coat.

6. **Pinto:** a multi-colored horse/pony with large patches of brown, white, and/or black.

Variations include:

- Tobiano: large black/brown patches over mostly white coat
- Overo: large white patches over mostly brown or black coat

7. **Palomino:** Horse/pony with golden, yellow, or tan shade with a flaxen or white mane and tail. Often cited as being a color "within three shades of a newly minted gold coin", palominos range in shades from extremely light, to deep chocolate, but always with a white or flaxen mane and tail.

8. **Buckskin:** Coat color is yellow, cream, or gold with black mane, tail, and legs.

9. **Roan:** A color pattern that causes white hairs to be evenly intermixed within the horse's body color. Variations include strawberry roan, bay roan, red roan, blue roan, and black roan

10. **Cremello:** Chestnut base coat and a type of gene that washes out almost all color until color is pale cream or light tan color. Often called "white", they are not truly white horses. A cremello usually has blue eyes.

Brown

Bay

Chestnut

Black

Fleabitten Grey



Pinto

Palomino

Buckskin

Roan

Cremello