

Ok, so we all know that different styles of riding require different tack. And we also know that the lingo for all this stuff is different. I grew up riding Western and English, so I'm fortunate to be tack-bilingual. However, not everybody knows both worlds, and that's where this helpful guide comes in. At Healing Reins we primarily use Dressage tack, which is a form of English gear. We also have some hunt seat stuff, but for the purposes of this article we're going to lump it all together as English tack. We're going to do a whole English vs. Western thing here.

Why is this important for all of us to know? Consistency is key for many of our riders. Simplicity is a good way to help them be successful in their learning, and if we're all consistent and simple with our lingo, we can help riders avoid unnecessary confusion. It's also important to keep age appropriateness and skill level in mind. Introducing vocabulary is never a bad idea, but make sure that with the vocabulary is an age/skill level appropriate description. Imagine that you already have a hard time connecting verbal directions to physical action (read more about that in our Disability Awareness article). What you hear gets jumbled in your head, and you have to figure out how to make sense of it, then figure out how to get the direction from your brain to your body. If you're struggling with that, lots of words and complicated directions is NOT going to be helpful.

Let's start with a translation quiz.

Western Lingo ~~~~~ Which English word does it match with?

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| Cinch | Canter |
| Jog | Steer |
| Lope | Trot |
| Neck rein | Girth |

To make sure we're all on the same page, the matches are as follows: Cinch and girth, jog and trot, lope and canter, neck rein and steer.

So here we have a helpful guide to help you familiarize yourself with our tack. At the very bottom you'll find a saddle parts and bridle parts diagram (Note: the bridle parts are generally the same on bridles and side pulls, except side pulls don't have the bit).

Girths and Saddles: At Healing Reins we use a *Dressage girth* and an *all-purpose girth*. The dressage girths are shorter and go with the *Dressage saddles*, which have higher cantles, longer flaps, and longer billets (long billets means you can use a short girth). All purpose girths go with hunt seat saddles, which have shorter billets, requiring a longer girth.

Dressage girth



All-purpose girth



Side pull and reins: Sidepulls are used instead of bridles for most of our riders so we don't have bits in the horse's mouth with unsteady hands. The reins hook directly to the side of the horse's head, giving the rider full control of where the head is pointing. Pressure on the reins results in direct pressure on the nose, almost like riding in a halter. We have different types of reins to attach to the side pull depending on the rider. The majority of our riders use *rainbow reins*, aptly named for their colorful nature. This helps us give reference points for rein length when needed. *Ladder reins* are used for riders who only use one hand on the horse, and each side of the reins is connected in the middle giving the rider full control. *Cotton reins* are just white cotton, and are softer in case we have a rider who is tactile sensitive to the rainbow reins.

Sidepull



Rainbow Reins



Ladder reins



Surcingles: We use surcingles in place of saddles when necessary. The different kinds of surcingles we use are *triangle surcingle*, *hexagonal surcingle*, *vaulting surcingle* and *flat surcingle*. The ones with handles provide a place for the riders to stabilize themselves if needed, while the flat one helps hold all the blankets in place and gives the rider freedom of movement forward and backward.

Triangle surcingle



Hexagonal surcingle



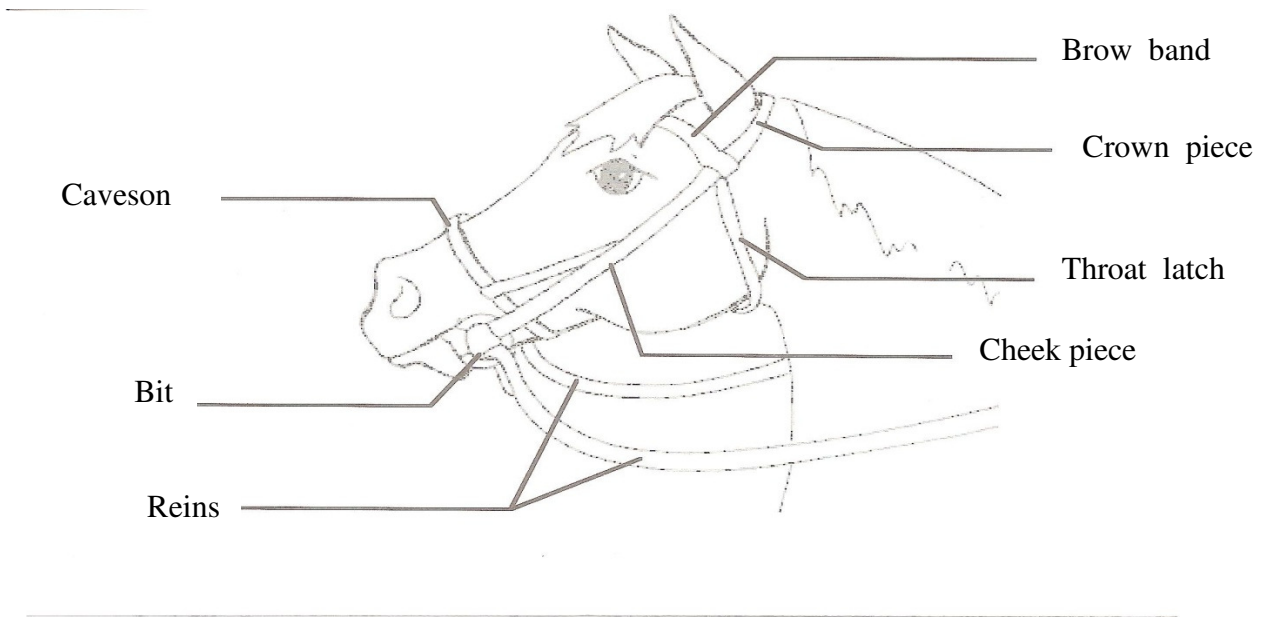
Vaulting surcingle



Flat surcingle



ENGLISH BRIDLE PARTS



ENGLISH / DRESSAGE SADDLE PARTS

