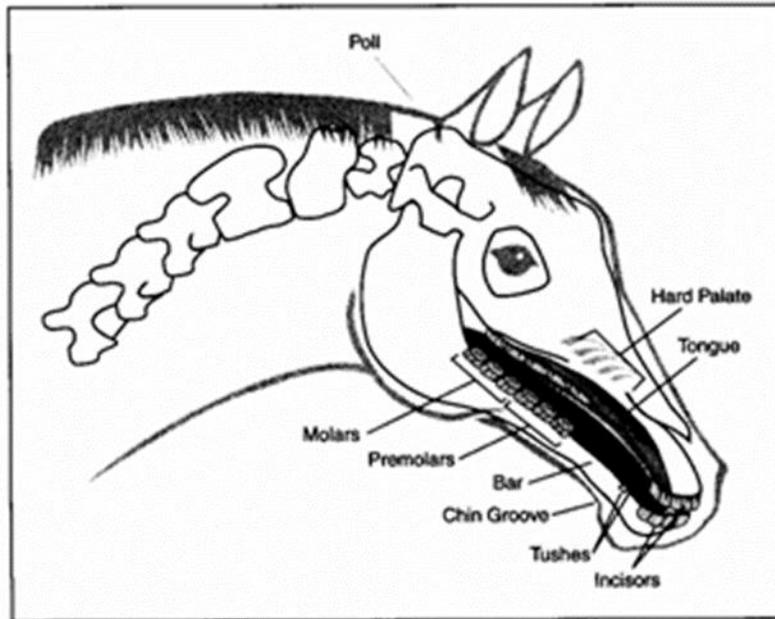


Seven Parts of the Horse's head that bits can apply pressure:

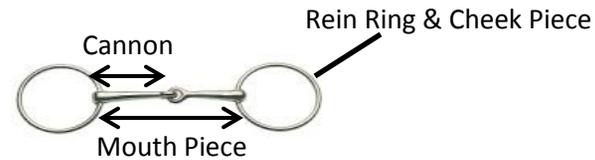
- 1) Bars
- 2) Tongue
- 3) Poll
- 4) Lips
- 5) Nose
- 6) Chin groove
- 7) Palate/Roof of mouth



Parts of the Head & Mouth

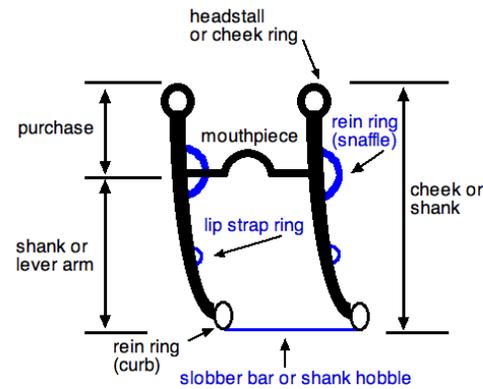
Basic Bit Types:

Snaffle: This type of bit functions using direct pressure and a 1:1 ratio. This means 1 ounce of pressure applied through the reins is 1 ounce of pressure felt by the horse in its mouth. The reins connect directly across from the mouth piece on the cheek.



Curb: This type of bit functions using indirect pressure and leverage. This means 1 ounce of pressure applied through the reins is amplified and is felt stronger in the horse's mouth. The reins connect below the mouth piece. A curb chain is always used with this bit.

Parts of a curb bit
 Elements in blue are not seen on all bits



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Bit-less Bridle: This type of bit functions by applying pressure to areas on the horses head other than the mouth. There are multiple types:

Mechanical hackamore: Uses leverage and indirect pressure. Requires a curb chain.

Side pull: uses direct pressure

Bosal: must be shaped to horse's face. Works on horse's jaw and nose.

Combination Bit: a bit that has actions of both a curb and hackamore or a snaffle and a hackamore.

Proper Adjustment & Fit:

Height of Mouthpiece: 1-2 wrinkles in corner of mouth but this depends on type of bit and conformation of mouth.

Height of Hackamore: Sits in similar location to a halter. If it is too low it can break the tip of the nasal bone. If it is too high it can rub and will be ineffective in signaling.

Width of Mouthpiece: cheeks of bit should not pinch the lips or press into the face. There should be a ¼ inch on one side when bit is pulled straight in the horse's mouth by the bit rings.

Curb Chain: General Rule is that the shank of the bit should not rotate more than 45 degrees. It is best to test by pulling on the reins while un-mounted because every rider's hands

apply pressure differently and every horse responds to pressure differently

Severity:

- 1) Diameter of mouth piece
- 2) Texture of mouth piece
- 3) Type of curb chain
- 4) Shank to purchase ratio
- 5) Type of shank
- 6) Weight of bit

Signs of Resistance:

- 1) Going behind the bit
- 2) Going above the bit
- 3) Mouth Gaping Open
- 4) Tongue hanging out of mouth or sucking on tongue
- 5) Tongue over the mouthpiece of bit
- 6) Leaning on/Running through bit

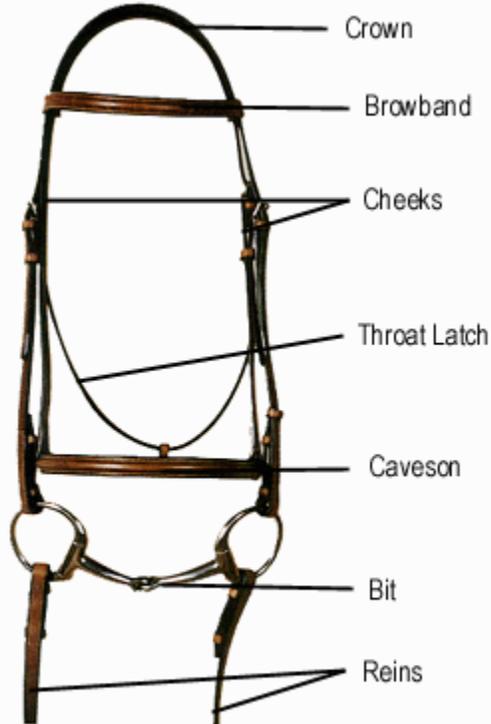
A note about teeth: Horses teeth continue to grow out of their jaw throughout their entire lives. Discomfort from losing baby teeth, tooth abscess, waves, or sharp edges on teeth affect the bit's performance even if it is a bit-less style. Horses need their teeth floated on average every 6 months to 1 year by a veterinarian or equine dentist. Some horses require additional dental work to comfortably accommodate a bit.

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Right Tool for the Job

- 1) horse's level of training/job description
- 2) rider's level of training
- 3) rules of governing body of competitions
- 4) conformation of horse's head and mouth

Bridles



Bridles Parts:

- 1) cheek pieces
- 2) crown piece
- 3) throatlatch
- 4) browband
- 5) reins
- 6) cavesson

Proper Fit:

- 1) Should allow chosen bit to be adjusted properly in mouth
- 2) Browband should not pinch ears or squish forehead
- 3) Throatlatch should be loose enough for 2-3 vertical fingers to slide through
- 4) Cavesson should allow 1-2 side to side fingers to slide through. There should be 1-2 fingers between the cheek bone and the noseband to prevent rubbing.