

## **What is a Working Student in the Horse Industry?**

“Working student.” It’s a phrase that is often thrown around in the horse world, but what does it really involve? If you’re questioning whether being a working student is right for you, or even whether you should take a working student on yourself, this information about the world of the working student may help you decide.

### **The Basics of Being a Working Student**

The exact duties of a working student are a bit hard to describe, since every working student position is different. Typically, a working student is a young adult who aspires to become a professional rider or trainer. An established rider or trainer often takes on a working student for help with their barn and horses. In exchange, working students usually receive riding lessons from the trainer or rider.

Many working student positions include lodging, though there is rarely any monetary pay involved. Instead, working students receive knowledge and training. The job of a working student can be a hard one, usually requiring long hours and offering few days off. If a rider is traveling, working students may travel a circuit with the rider, or they may stay back at the barn to take care of the horses who are staying behind.

### **Why Be a Working Student**

Being a working student requires a lot of physical work with very little financial reward. So why do it? The rewards of being a working student are based more in the instruction and experience that you receive while working the position. Working students often have the opportunity to ride talented upper-level horses that they might not otherwise be able to ride. Additionally, if you are working under a quality rider or trainer, you can’t beat the instruction that you will receive.

### **Evaluating a Working Student Position**

If you are considering becoming a working student, take a look at the different positions available. If you have a rider or trainer that you admire, find out if they are or will be accepting working students. In the meantime, brush up on your horse care, grooming, and riding skills, and ask your current trainer if you can use them as a reference.

When considering a particular working student position, it is important to thoroughly understand just what your responsibilities and time commitment will be. You should also specifically ask about what you receive in return – is your housing paid for? How many lessons will you receive, and how regularly? If there is no monetary stipend, then consider how you will cover your own expenses, such as food.

Working student opportunities can be a great way to get a leg up in the horse world as you learn from some of the best in the industry.

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