



Tack Explained: Western Bridle

The Western Bridle is pretty simple, compared to the English bridle, with seemingly a few less parts. This bridle is obviously part of the Western set, so can be very decorative. Let's jump straight in and look at the parts of the bridle.



The Western bridle is similar to the English bridle, in the way it has a piece that goes behind the horse's ears, down the horse's cheeks and attaches to a bit at the bottom. But, these all have slightly different names. The head piece (or crownpiece) consists of two straps of leather, one being the throat latch (not lash) and one being the cheekpieces. The browband is also slid onto this. Some Western bridles don't even have a browband, and just have a headpiece, throat latch and cheekpieces. You may also have noticed that the Western bridle does not have a noseband. Some bridles do, but most bridles don't. This is part of the simple Western bridle design.

Now we know what makes up a Western bridle, let's have a look at all the interchangeable parts of the bridle, that we as tack makers can take some creative license in customizing.

The browband on the Western bridle is often a subject of customizing, as there are many different ways of jazzing it up. One of these is the knotted browband (shown here >>). Two pieces of leather are knotted together in a specific way to create this look. This is pretty simple to replicate in model horse scale, and would be a good challenge to have a go at.



Western bridles are often very decorative, and there are a few different methods to achieve different styles of decoration. One of these is slitting. This is where you slit a hole in the middle of the leather, and thread the end through a few times, to achieve a layered look. Another way is tooling, which is cutting decorative patterns (often flowers) into the leather. This photo here is a good example of tooling.

The last different thing about Western bridles is the bits. Western bridles can use ordinary snaffles, but they often use western bits, the most common one being called the western grazing bit, or curb bit. These bits have longer shanks that extend below the jaw, as seen here.



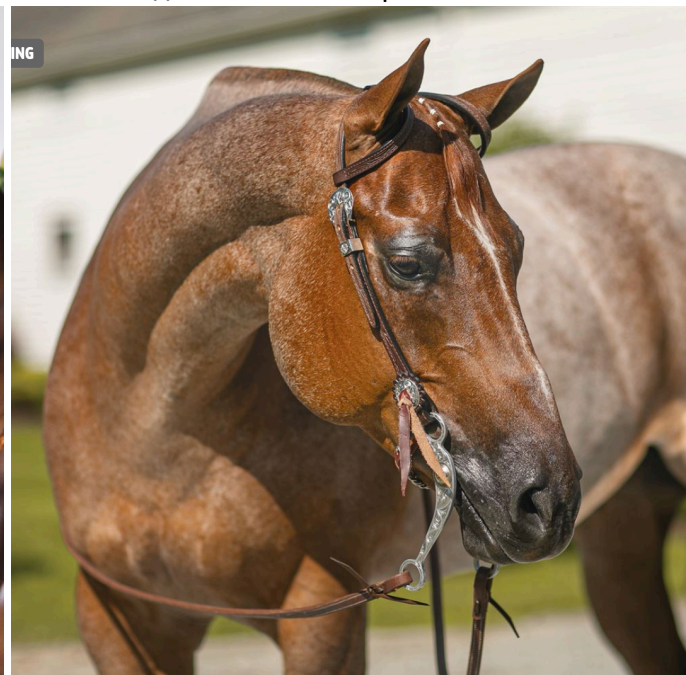
There are a couple of other different types of Western bridles, one being the one ear bridle. This means that the browband, instead of extending across the forehead, one goes around one ear. You can also get double one ear bridles, which go around both ears.

REFERENCE PHOTOS



A very nice bridle with a knotted browband

// A beautiful simple Western Bridle



Another decorated Western bridle with braided reins // Here's a double one ear bridle, on a real horse.

PICTURES

1. www.chickssaddlery.com
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