

## Topic Page: [Harnesses](#)

Summary Article: **harness**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

comprehensive term for the gear of a draft animal, excluding the yoke, by which it is attached to the load that it pulls. Although harnesses are used on dogs (for drawing travois and dogsleds), on goats, and sometimes on oxen, the typical harness is for horses. There are two main kinds—the collar harness and the breast harness. In the collar harness a padded leather collar fits over the horse's shoulders; to it are fastened the hames, linked metal parts with two curved projections to which are attached the traces, leather straps that pass down the sides of the horse and by which the load is drawn. In the breast harness the traces are attached to a breastband that crosses the shoulders below the neck. The horse is controlled by reins or lines attached to the bit, a metal mouthpiece held in place by the bridle, i.e., the various straps and buckles that make up the headgear of the horse, including the blinders. A long, narrow saddle pad is held in place on the horse's back by a bellyband (or girth), a backband, and a crupper, a loop under the tail. The reins pass through rings on the hames and on the saddle pad; looped straps on the pad hold the shafts of a vehicle. The breeching, a strap that passes around the hindquarters below the tail and is held in place by hip straps, bears the stress when the horse is backed up or is going downhill. There are many individual parts of the various harnesses, each of them having a specific name; the different kinds of bits alone are innumerable. Harness making is an ancient craft, dating from the domestication of the horse; the saddle was a later invention.

### **APA**

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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## MLA

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