

# INTRODUCTION TO THE HORSERACING INDUSTRY

Workbook





# INTRODUCTION

This workbook provides information you will require to gain an introductory level of knowledge of the horseracing industry.

It comprises three sections:

- History of Horseracing
- Major Organisations within the Racing Industry
- Major Races, Race Types and Racecourses in British Racing.



## LEVEL 1 QUALIFICATION

You may be interested in taking an introductory qualification about the horseracing industry.

This qualification forms part of a suite of qualifications that provide knowledge and understanding of how racing operates, including information about its structure, governance and administration.

Level 1 recognises basic knowledge and understanding and the ability to apply learning with guidance or supervision. Learning at this level is about knowledge of the basic structure of the racing and breeding industries, and forms the building block for further learning and study leading to Levels 2 and 3.

This qualification is appropriate for someone entering the industry with no previous knowledge or experience of racing and breeding, and who wishes to gain a basic understanding of the sector to help them in their work.

## ASSESSMENT

Each unit can be assessed independently by a multiple-choice test.



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# HISTORY OF HORSERACING

**The roots of modern horseracing lie in the 12th century, when English knights returned from the Crusades on fast Arab horses. The earliest recorded horserace in England took place at Netherby in Yorkshire in around 200AD.**

Horseracing is often referred to as the Sport of Kings. In the early days, the royals and wealthy people were responsible for developing horseracing. Racing became a fashionable hobby for the landed gentry during the reign of King Richard I. Later, during the reign of King Henry VIII, the first racecourse was officially established at Chester in 1540.

## KING JAMES I

Horseracing really took off during the reign of King James I when he had a royal palace built near Newmarket. In 1616, James I imported the Markham Arabian for £154 to use with his mares. This small bay stallion became one of the first ancestors of the modern Thoroughbred.

Races were generally run for gold and silver bells and, later, cups. Races were over long distances, up to eight miles, with horses carrying weights of 8–17 stones, and often involved heats, with a final run on the same day.

## KING CHARLES I AND KING CHARLES II

King Charles I loved horseracing and set up regular race meetings in Newmarket. The first Newmarket Gold Cup was run in 1634. However, it was his son Charles II who was responsible for the development of racing as we know it today. He rode in races himself, and started a series of races known as the Royal Plates. Between 1660 and 1685, Charles II was holding races between two horses, which were known as match races, on private courses or on open fields.

Charles II was responsible for the development of the Thoroughbred as a breed. He wanted to support breeders in Britain, and of course they wanted him to choose their horses. So they went abroad to look for horses that they could breed with to improve their stock. They went to the Middle East and countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean. They imported as many stallions of the right quality as they could afford. By comparison, not many mares were imported. By the middle of the 18th century, they had finished the importation.

King Charles II's connection to Newmarket is still remembered today. The Rowley Mile racecourse there is named after his favourite riding horse Old Rowley.

## QUEEN ANNE

Queen Anne was also very influential in the development of horseracing. In the early 18th century, she owned and raced a large number of horses. She played a large part in the development of Ascot racecourse in 1711. The opening race at Royal Ascot, the Queen Anne Stakes, is named after her.

It was during Queen Anne's reign that match races were taken over by races between several horses. This encouraged more spectators and gave them more chance to bet on the result of the race. Horseracing began to take place all over the country, with better prize money (known then as purses) to attract the best horses. It was becoming more and more possible to make money by breeding and owning racehorses. In 1740, Parliament introduced an Act 'to restrain and to prevent the excessive increase in horseracing', though this did not have much effect, and horseracing continued to develop.

## THE JOCKEY CLUB

The Jockey Club came into existence in the early 1700s and in 1752 it bought a coffee house in Newmarket for its meetings. Its main role at that time was to give leadership and authority to the sport by regulating racing. It wrote a full set of rules for horseracing, which were eventually taken up throughout Britain and copied worldwide. It was also decided to regulate the breeding of racehorses as the Thoroughbred breed had developed so much.







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## WEATHERBYS

To regulate and keep track of the breeding of racehorses, James Weatherby (who was a secretary to the Jockey Club) took on the task of tracing pedigrees and putting together the family history of horses in England.

This developed into the General Stud Book, which was first published in 1791. This recorded the pedigree (family tree) of every Thoroughbred foal born in England. In the 1800s, only horses that were descendants of those listed in the General Stud Book could be called Thoroughbred and were allowed to race under Jockey Club rules. The Weatherby family remain the owners of the General Stud Book, and they published **the 47th volume in 2013.** **49th volume in 2022.**

## TECHNOLOGY

After World War Two, several technical improvements were introduced. The photo-finish was first used in 1947, and the starting stalls for flat races were introduced at Newmarket on 8 July 1965.

Today, horseracing is the second most widely televised sport after football.



## HISTORY OF THE THOROUGHBRED

The Thoroughbred as we know it today was first developed in the 17th and 18th centuries, when mares from this country were bred with imported Arabian stallions. All Thoroughbreds today can trace their pedigrees to three stallions that were imported into England during this period and to 74 foundation mares of English and oriental blood. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Thoroughbred breed spread throughout the world. They were imported into North America during 1730 and into Australia, Europe, Japan and South America during the 19th century.

The three imported stallions were the Byerley Turk (1680), the Darley Arabian (1700) and the Godolphin Arabian (1724).

The most notable descendant of the Darley Arabian was Eclipse, foaled in 1764, the year of the great eclipse of the sun. Eclipse won 18 races. He was so good that many owners did not want to race their horses against him and so eight of his races were walkovers (i.e. he was the only horse in the race!). Eclipse retired to stud in 1771 and sired three Derby winners.

After his death, Eclipse was dissected to try to work out the secret of his success. It was decided that his huge heart pumped blood around the body more effectively than most, his back legs gave plenty of leverage, and he had powerful lungs. His skeleton is still owned by the Royal Veterinary College and can be seen at the National Horseracing Museum in Newmarket.

Thoroughbreds have gradually changed over the years. They are now much bigger and faster over shorter distances and mature earlier.

The Thoroughbred exists in over 70 countries around the world. About 93,000 Thoroughbred foals were born in 2014, the last year for which comprehensive figures are available. Of these, 4,328 were born in Britain and 8,000 in Ireland. The USA is the single largest producer of Thoroughbreds, with 20,300 born there in 2014.

4,500 in GB, 9,000 in Ireland. US is the single largest breeder, around 17,000 per breeding season, GSB is second with a combined number of 14,000, AUS in third with 12,000, Japan in fourth with 7,000.



# MAJOR ORGANISATIONS WITHIN THE RACING INDUSTRY

## RACING ORGANISATIONS

There are many groups and organisations that work together to ensure the efficient and fair running of the horseracing industry. The following are some of the main organisations, with a brief description of their roles.

### AMATEUR JOCKEYS' ASSOCIATION (AJA)

The AJA looks after the interests of all its members, both male and female, in an increasingly professional world. It achieves this through:

- improving the standard and safety of all amateur riders
- encouraging amateur races under both codes (flat and jump racing)
- finding sponsors for and sponsoring events
- acting on behalf of its members by providing recommendations to the various regulatory and administrative racing bodies
- selecting and financing amateur jockeys to ride abroad
- playing an important part in the formation of the policy of the British racing industry.

### BRITISH HORSERACING AUTHORITY (BHA)

The BHA governs, regulates and represents British Horseracing. The BHA's role is to lead and co-ordinate activities which will ensure the overall health, development and growth of the industry. Its key strategic objectives are:

- to deliver improved and sustainable funding from betting on the sport
- to provide equine welfare leadership
- to develop properly funded and integrated industry training, welfare and careers marketing activities
- to work with others in the sport to grow participation levels
- to continue to evolve a regulatory and integrity framework that ensures improved confidence among participants and the racing and betting public
- to continue to develop a framework that sees Britain further its position as the home of the best quality racing in the world.

### BRITISH RACING SCHOOL (BRS)

The BRS, originally founded in 1969, moved to Newmarket in 1983. As one of the centres of excellence for the racing industry, it promotes high-class training for people working in the racing industry. It runs several types of training courses, including for stable staff, jockeys and trainers.



### **HORSERACE BETTING LEVY BOARD (HBLB)**

The Levy Board is a statutory body established by the Betting Levy Act 1961 and now operates in accordance with the provisions of the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963 (as amended). Its statutory objectives are to collect money from bookmakers and the Tote by way of a levy, from bets taken on horseracing, and to apply the funds raised to one or more of the following:

- the improvement of horseracing
- the improvement of breeds of horses
- the advancement of veterinary science or veterinary education.

On 3 March 2016, government announced new funding arrangements for British racing which will create a level playing field for British based and offshore gambling operators, and ensure a fair return from all gambling operators to racing. Racing will be responsible for making decisions on spending the new fund which is intended to be in place by April 2017.

### **INJURED JOCKEYS FUND (IJF)**

The IJF was established in 1964 after two jockeys suffered career-ending falls. It provides immediate and ongoing help to injured jockeys and their families.

It provides support for current and former jockeys at its specialist centres at Oaksey House and Jack Berry House. [and the Peter O'Sullivan house in Newmarket.](#)

[Comma](#)

### **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STABLE STAFF (NASS)**

NASS is the trade union for stable staff. It was set up to give advice, guidance and support to all stable staff. It achieves this through:

- representing stable staff on racing industry committees
- negotiating the rates of pay and conditions of service of stable staff.

### **NATIONAL TRAINERS FEDERATION (NTF)**

The NTF is the trade body for racehorse trainers. It gives information, advice and support to trainers by:

- liaising and negotiating with other industry bodies and relevant national agencies and organisations
- providing up to date information to members about matters affecting their business
- providing legal advice on employment law, accountancy, insurance, veterinary matters etc..

### **~~NORTHERN RACING COLLEGE (NRC)~~**

#### **[National Horseracing College](#)**

The NRC was established in Doncaster in 1984. As a centre of excellence for the racing industry, it promotes high-class training for people working in the racing industry. It runs several types of training courses, including for stable staff, jockeys and trainers.

**NATIONAL STUD (NS)**

The NS was founded in 1916, and is a showcase for British Thoroughbred breeding. As the centre of excellence for the breeding industry, it promotes high-class stallion services and training for people in the stud industry. It achieves this through:

- providing a full range of services to the UK Thoroughbred breeding industry including stallion services, foaling, sales preparation etc.
- providing training for young people entering the industry or wanting to take higher qualifications
- raising public awareness and interest in Thoroughbred breeding.

**PROFESSIONAL JOCKEYS ASSOCIATION (PJA)**

The PJA is dedicated to supporting jockeys in all aspects of their profession and negotiates with all the racing authorities and other trade bodies to improve the jockeys' standing. Its mission statement is to promote, protect and represent the interests of professional jockeys both on and off the racecourse working with regulatory, industry and commercial bodies to secure agreements to the benefit of all and continually working in the best interest of British horseracing.

**RACECOURSE ASSOCIATION (RCA)**

The RCA is the trade association representing British racecourses. The RCA's aims are to:

- work with racecourses to increase and develop new income streams
- promote the highest professional standards in racecourse management, health and safety, and medical and veterinary practice
- promote racecourse interests within the racing industry
- provide information, training and support for racecourses
- assist racecourses in complying with regulations
- manage the Racegoers Club.

**RACEHORSE OWNERS ASSOCIATION (ROA)**

The ROA represents racehorse owners. It promotes and protects the interests of racehorse owners in Britain.

**RACING ENTERPRISES LIMITED (REL)**

The REL is responsible for bringing in commercial income for the whole of the industry. It has responsibility for selling the likes of runners and riders to customers including bookmakers and the media. Working with racecourses, it is also responsible for the Great British Racing marketing initiative.

**RACING WELFARE**

Racing Welfare is an important charity that provides help and support for people who work or have worked in the racing industry. It achieves this through:

- helping those who are in need
- giving support across the country through welfare officers and a 24-hour support line
- providing financial help to those who are injured or ill
- providing housing for retired workers or for young people who have just entered the industry.

**RETRAINING OF RACEHORSES (ROR)**

RoR is the official charity for the welfare of horses that have retired from racing. It does this by:

- raising funds from within the racing industry to help retrain and rehome former racehorses
- helping provide facilities for the care, retraining and rehoming of former racehorses
- running a programme of competitions and clinics to help riders to handle and ride former racehorses, and introduce them to new activities such as showjumping, dressage, eventing, and riding club activities.

Struggling to find any record of this...I don't think it exists anymore.

### THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION (TBA)

The TBA is the trade association representing Thoroughbred breeders in Britain. It has representatives on various racing industry groups and committees.

### WEATHERBYS

Weatherbys was established in 1770. It is the main organisation supporting the administration of racing. It also runs the General Stud Books for breeders in Britain and Ireland. Among other things, Weatherbys provides the following services under contract to BHA:

- registering ownership, racing colours and horses in training
- recording all race entries, declarations and jockey bookings
- issuing the final, official lists of runners and riders
- publishing the weekly Racing Calendar
- collecting and distributing prize money for all British races.

### CAREERS, TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Since the 1990s, the racing industry has developed a comprehensive structure of education, training and qualifications that support its workforce. The main organisations involved in the delivery include:

- BRS (training provider)
- NS (training provider)
- NRC (training provider)
- Haddon Training (training provider)
- 1st4sport Qualifications (awarding organisation).

There are a number of career opportunities in the racing and breeding industries including:

- stable staff
- stud staff
- trainers

- work riders
- gallops men
- racing secretaries
- travelling head lads
- jockeys
- racecourse officials
- groundsmen
- journalists
- valets
- administrative workers
- racecourse hospitality.

### WELFARE AND CARE OF RACEHORSES

Leading organisations in British Horseracing have got together to increase awareness of the high standards of equine welfare in the sport through an initiative called 'The Horse Comes First'. This initiative aims to improve understanding of the care given to racehorses throughout and after their careers in racing.

The campaign is supported by the British Horseracing Authority, the Racecourse Association, Racehorse Owners Association, the Professional Jockeys Association, the National Trainers Federation, The Jockey Club, the National Association of Stable Staff and Arena Racing Company.

British Racing is among the world's best regulated animal activities. The 14,000 horses registered in training at any one time enjoy a quality of life virtually unsurpassed by any other domesticated animal. British Racing employs over 6,000 people to provide constant care and attention for these horses.

An increasing number of racehorses go on to successful second careers after retiring from the track. There are currently over 11,500 horses registered with Retraining of Racehorses (British Horseracing's official charity for the welfare of former racehorses) as active in other equine disciplines outside of racing, including Polo, Showing, Dressage and Eventing, as well as those horses happily engaged in hacking and exercising.



# MAJOR RACES, RACE TYPES AND RACECOURSES IN BRITISH RACING

## MAJOR RACES AND RACE MEETINGS

### MAJOR JUMP RACES

#### Cheltenham Gold Cup

The most prestigious race in the jump racing calendar, this is a steeple chase for horses aged five years or older. It is run over a distance of three miles and about two and a half furlongs, with 22 fences to be jumped. The race takes place each year during the Cheltenham Festival in March. Sometimes referred to as the Blue Riband of jump racing, its winners include Arkle, Golden Miller, Mill House and Kauto Star. The Gold Cup is one of the most valuable non-handicap steeple chases in Britain.

#### Champion Hurdle

A Grade 1 hurdle race open to horses aged four years or older, it is run over a distance of two miles and about 110 yards. The race takes place each year at the Cheltenham Festival in March. As its title suggests, the Champion Hurdle is the most prestigious hurdling event in the jump racing calendar.

#### Triumph Hurdle

A Grade 1 hurdle race open to novice hurdlers aged four years, it is run at the Cheltenham Festival in March over a distance of two miles and about one furlong. It is the leading event in the jump racing calendar exclusively contested by horses aged four years.

#### King George VI Chase

A Grade 1 steeple chase open to horses aged four years or older, it is run at Kempton Park over a distance of about three miles, with 18 fences to be jumped. The race is scheduled to take place on Boxing Day. Desert Orchid won an impressive four times, but Kauto Star is the only horse to have won it five times.

#### Queen Mother Champion Chase

A Grade 1 steeple chase race open to horses aged five years or older, it is run over a distance of about two miles, and there are 12 fences to be jumped. It is the leading minimum-distance chase in the jump racing calendar, and is the feature race on the second day of the Cheltenham Festival, held annually in March.

#### Grand National

Held at Aintree, this is probably the most famous National Hunt race in the world. It is run every April over a distance of approximately four miles, two and a half furlongs with 30 fences. It is the most valuable jump racing handicap event, and offers a total prize fund of over £1,000,000. The race is popular among many people who do not normally watch or bet on horseracing at other times of the year. One of the most famous horses associated with the Grand National is Red Rum, who won it three times and was second twice.

## MAJOR FLAT RACES

### Gold Cup

The most prestigious event for long-distance horses aged four years or older, run over a distance of two miles and four furlongs, it is the flagship event of Royal Ascot, staged on day three of the five-day festival. Numerous horses have won the event multiple times, including Sagaro, Ardross and Le Moss, but Yeats has the record for most wins, four in a row from 2006–2009.

### King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes

Another major international event staged at Ascot, in late July, this race is open to horses aged three years or older, and run over a distance of one mile, four furlongs. It is Britain's most prestigious flat race open to horses of all ages from three years. It has a roll of honour that features some of the best horses of the sport's recent history.

### International Stakes

A comparatively new race, staged for the first time in 1972, it is the feature event at the York Ebor Festival in mid-August. Open to horses of three years old and upwards, it is run over one mile, two furlongs and 88 yards. The race has occasionally provided huge upsets – Brigadier Gerard had his unbeaten run ended by Roberto in the first running, and the Derby and Eclipse Stakes winner Golden Horn was beaten by 50/1 outsider Arabian Queen in 2015.

### Champion Stakes

This is the most prestigious end-of-season race in Britain for horses of three years old and older, and run over one mile, two furlongs. It was moved from its original home at Newmarket to Ascot in 2011 to become part of British Champions Day in mid-October. The great Frankel added his name to the race's roll of honour in 2012.

### Dewhurst Stakes

Open only to two-year-old colts and fillies, the Dewhurst generally attracts the season's best juveniles. It is run on the Rowley Mile at Newmarket over a straight seven furlongs and is staged on Future Champions Day in mid-October. The Dewhurst has a rich tradition of producing leading contenders for the following season's Classics.

## THE CLASSICS

Between 1776 and 1814, the Jockey Club established five important races for three-year-old horses designated as Classics: the 1,000 Guineas, 2,000 Guineas, Derby, Oaks and St. Leger.

### 2,000 Guineas

First run in 1809, the 2,000 Guineas is held in May at Newmarket for colts and fillies. It is run over a distance of one mile/1,600m.

### 1,000 Guineas

First run in 1814, the 1,000 Guineas is also held in May at Newmarket. It is for fillies only and is over a distance of one mile/1,600m.

### Oaks

First run in 1779, the Oaks is held at Epsom in June. It is for fillies only and is run over a distance of one mile, four furlongs/2,400m.

### Derby

First run in 1780, the Derby is also run at Epsom in June. It is open to colts and fillies and is run over a distance of one mile, four furlongs/2,400m.

### St. Leger

First run in 1776, and therefore the oldest Classic in the world, the St. Leger is held at Doncaster in September. It is open to colts and fillies and is run over a distance of one mile, six furlongs and about 132 yards/2,900m.

The Triple Crown is achieved by winning all three Classics open to colts – the 2,000 Guineas, Derby and St. Leger. The last horse to win the Triple Crown was Nijinsky in 1970.

## RACING FESTIVALS

A number of major race meetings throughout the year are often referred to as festivals. They can be flat or jump racing meetings.

The main festival meetings are:

- Cheltenham Festival
- Aintree Grand National
- Newmarket Guineas meeting
- Epsom Derby meeting
- Royal Ascot
- York Ebor
- Glorious Goodwood
- Doncaster St. Leger meeting
- British Champions Day.





## TYPES OF RACES

### Flat

- Flat races are run with no obstacles over distances from five furlongs to two miles, six furlongs (one furlong = about 200 metres). Most flat races are run on grass (known as turf), but six racecourses in Britain have an artificial surface and stage what is known as all-weather racing.

### Jump racing (National Hunt)

- A hurdle race is where horses run over hurdles (an obstacle smaller than a steeple chase fence). Hurdles are just over three and a half feet high, and races are over distances from two miles to three and a half miles.
- A steeple chase is where horses run over steeple chase fences. These are larger obstacles, normally about four foot, six inches. Fences include plain, open ditches and water jumps.
- A Hunter chase is a type of race run over steeple chase fences, open to horses trained and ridden by amateurs.
- National Hunt flat races (often referred to as bumpers) are for National Hunt horses to gain racing experience, prior to commencing a career hurdling or steeple chasing.

### Point-to-point

- Point-to-pointing is the other type of jump racing open to amateur riders. These races are run over steeple chase-type fences but often on country tracks and not necessarily a licensed racecourse.



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## RACECOURSES

The main types of racecourse in Britain are:

- flat racecourse, where only flat races are run (turf)
- all-weather racecourse (flat races only on an artificial, all-weather surface)
- jump (National Hunt) racecourse, where only jump races are run, i.e. hurdle, steeple chase and National Hunt flat races
- dual racecourse, which runs both flat and jump races
- Point-to-point – non-permanent racecourses.

See the racecourse locations map overleaf.

## RACECOURSE LOCATIONS



## REVISION TEST

1. Which was the first racecourse that was officially established during the reign of King Henry VIII?

2. What did the winners of early races win?

(a) Ribbons and bows

(b) Gold and silver bells

(c) Jewels and gems

3. Which royal set up regular race meetings in Newmarket?

(a) King Charles I

(b) Queen Elizabeth II

(c) Queen Victoria

4. When did the Jockey Club come into existence?

(a) Early 1400s

(b) Early 1700s

(c) Early 1900s

5. In which of the following are Thoroughbred racehorses registered?

(a) Rules of Racing

(b) World Horse Welfare

(c) General Stud Book of GB

6. Which of the following countries produces most Thoroughbred foals each year?

(a) Scotland

(b) Wales

(c) Ireland

7. Which of the following countries is the largest producer of Thoroughbreds?

(a) USA

(b) Spain

(c) Mexico

8. What does the acronym ROA stand for?

- (a) Racing Owners Abroad
- (b) Racehorse Owners Association
- (c) Racecourse Overview Authority

  
  

9. Find out four winning horses and jockeys in the last 10 years for the following:

- (a) Cheltenham Gold Cup
- (b) Grand National
- (c) Derby

  
  

10. Find out four winning horses and jockeys in the last 10 years for the following:

- (a) Cheltenham Gold Cup
- (b) Grand National
- (c) Derby

  
  

11. At which racecourses are the following races run?

- (a) Champion Hurdle
- (b) Grand National
- (c) King George VI Chase
- (d) 2,000 Guineas
- (e) Derby
- (f) St Leger

  
  
  
  
  

12. Which of the following statements is correct?

- (a) 'A classic' is a race for horses six years or older.
- (b) 'A classic' is for three-year-old horses.
- (c) 'A classic' is only held once a year and is for five year olds.



13. Which go together? Put the correct letter in each box.

- |                    |   |                          |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------|
| (a) Flat           | Non-permanent racecourse                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) All-weather    | Both flat and jump races                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Dual           | No jump racing takes place at these racecourses | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) Point to Point | Both flat and jump races                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (e) Jump           | Flat races run on an all-year round surface     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

14. Name four racing festivals.

15. In over how many countries around the world does the Thoroughbred exist?

- |         |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|
| (a) 45  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) 70  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) 100 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

16. When the Jockey Club came into existence in the 1700s, what was its main role?

# Make Your Passion

A woman wearing a dark riding helmet with goggles and a dark jacket is smiling and kissing a dark horse on the cheek. The horse is wearing a leather halter with a metal ring. The background is a dark, wood-paneled wall.

# Your Work

For information on careers, jobs and training in horseracing

**Job profiles • Career case studies • Live job board  
Education/curriculum resources • Taster days**

**[careersinracing.com](http://careersinracing.com)**

**[info@careersinracing.com](mailto:info@careersinracing.com)**