



4-H Shotgun: First Time Shooting Trap

First Time Live Fire at the Shotgun Range

Time

30–45 minutes

Materials

- **Shotguns** to match a shooter's size (gauge, length of pull, etc.) one for each shooter up to a squad of five
- **Ammunition** of the proper gauge (one box of 25 shells per shooter with shot size limited to 7.5 or 8)
- **Clay targets** – 30 targets per shooter (one round of 25 with extras for breakage)
- **Trap range or portable thrower** for clay targets with safety cones or temporary station markers
- **Shooting vest** or shell pouches, ear, and eye protection
- **Portable gun rack** or permanent gun racks typically found at shotgun ranges

Space Required

- A formal or informal trap range with adequate distances for safe shotgunning (shot-fall zone) for five shooters at a time.
- A five station trap range is used for a squad of five youth to rotate through a full round of trap (25 targets). If an informal range is used portable markers should be used to simulate the series of five stations delineated by yard markers on a formal trap range.

Before the Meeting

- Equipment (trap or portable thrower) set up prior to start of session for stationary and moving targets.
- Ensure the range is prepped so that each shooter is provided the opportunity to complete a round of trap. Along with range prep bring the required safety equipment: ear and eye



Lesson Objective

- Youth will demonstrate the techniques needed to properly mount (high gun) a shotgun to ensure their first shotgun shooting experience is a positive experience.
- New shooters after undergoing a series of visual tracking exercises with flying clay targets will have early success in breaking moving targets.
- Shooters will demonstrate skills needed to break clay targets presented in the game of trap.
- New shooters will gain an understanding of shotgunning as a fun life-long family activity.



Background

Safety is paramount at the shotgun range. Having already learned and practiced the safety rules (Shotgun Lesson 1 & 2) expectations is that rules will be strictly adhered to. If at any time shooters, or range offices observe an unsafe condition a “Cease Fire” is to be called requiring all shooting to stop immediately with shooters opening actions and removing all ammunition.

The introductory clay target contest for our 4-H members will be trap and conducted at both the recreational and competitive levels.



Activity 1 Instructions (10 minutes)

1. Demonstrate how to identify flight of moving targets and the tracking of flying clay targets.
 - a. Determine the safe direction where the shotgun will be pointed.
 - a. A squad of five shooters on the trap line point a finger at the edge of the trap house and assume the shooter stance. One shooter calls “pull” to launch a clay target so all on the squad can follow the flight path and speed while pointing at the flying target.
 - b. Repeat this process with this squad of five and this time all are to shout “bang” at the point they would like to break the target.
2. Each group of additional new shooters will work through this exercise in squads of five or less.



Reflect and Apply Questions

1. Why is it important to determine the flight path of the targets prior to shooting?
2. What might happen if you call for a target and the shotgun is not mounted properly?



protection for shooters, puller, scorer, range officers, and other leaders working closely with shooters on the trap line when covering safety and stance fundamentals.

- Set up portable gun rack if a permanent rack is not available.
- Establish a safe zone with safety cones for shooters waiting for the next round and for spectators.



Activity 2 Instructions (35 minutes)

1. Demonstrate the basic shotgunning stance and techniques while shooting at clay targets.
 - a. With a high mounted shotgun, the range officer working with the shooter will chamber a single shell for the shooter and ask the shooter to close the action while maintaining muzzle control, keeping a finger off the trigger, and points at a stationary target.
 - b. The shooter calls "pull" and fires at a stationary clay target in a target stand.
 - c. Shooter and leader assesses the felt recoil, overall mount, and point of impact.
 - d. Repeat step 1a and explain the next target will be launched from the trap in the same flight path as in Activity 1. The muzzle should be started slightly above trap house.
 - e. The shooter calls "pull" and fires at a moving target. Emphasis is on the shooter's stance with forward balance, swinging on and following through a moving clay target.
 - f. Each member of the squad will take a single shot from their station with each shooter working through five shots from each station prior to changing stations (Lesson 2).
2. Each youth shooter will work through a series of 25 targets thrown on a constant flight path. If a shooter appears to be unable to complete the entire round comfortably, call a cease fire and walk the shooter to gun rack to place the open action firearm and ask the shooter to watch from the safe zone. The Range officer will then have the squad resume this round of trap.

Formal scoring on score sheets is not recommended for the introductory round put used later.

Reflect and Apply Questions

1. Why might a shooter miss a stationary target?
2. When shooting at moving targets, why is gun mount and keeping the gun moving important?

Other Related Resources:

Wyoming Shotgunning 4-H Leaders Booklet, WY State Development Training Team, Roy Kern

References

Georgia 4-H S.A.F.E. website – <http://www.georgia4h.org/safe/disciplines/shotgun>
National Rifle Association Basic Shotgun Shooting Course, NRA Washington DC
Wyoming Game and Fish Department Hunter Education Student Manual



4-H Shotgun: First Time Shooting Trap

First Time Live Fire at the Shotgun Range

REFLECT AND APPLY
ANSWER SHEET

Activity 1 Reflect and Apply Questions

1. Why is it important to determine the flight path of the targets prior to shooting?

With a moving target it is essential to determine the flight path to calculate lead required to break the targets thrown on varying flight paths effectively. This lead is sometimes called apparent forward allowance which is dependent upon the swing and follow through which each new shooter will establish with repeated practice.

2. What might happen if you call for a target and the shotgun is not mounted properly?

If a shotgun is not mounted properly with the shooter's cheek firmly on the stock and the dominant eye looking straight down the barrel two things will occur. The first is that target will not be broken which is the ultimate challenge of each shot taken by a shotgun shooter. The second result of improper mounting would be recoil from the shot will not be managed causing discomfort to the shooter with either the stock hitting the shooter's cheek or the butt of the shotgun smacking into a shooter's bicep. Both of these situations may become the start of long-term issues such as flinching or when a shooter closes both eyes upon pulling the trigger.



Activity 2 Reflect and Apply Questions

1. Why might a shooter miss a stationary target? A moving target?

Shooters are introduced to shooting stationary targets as a way to determine shot placement based upon gun fit, gun mount, and eye dominance. A miss on a stationary target is an indication of any or all of these three shotgunning basics not being addressed.

2. When shooting at moving targets, why is gun mount and keeping the gun moving important?

A shotgun which fits a new shooter coupled with proper mounting of the gun, and keeping the gun moving are the keys to increasing shotgunning proficiency. Not emphasizing or developing the skills for these three concerns may impede the inability of a new shooter to track, swing-on, and follow-through on a target resulting in low success rates at the trap range.