



## Dog Scouts of America Evaluation Criteria

## Animal Actor

**PURPOSE:** This badge prepares the dog/handler team to explore a career as a working animal actor team, should they choose. The required behaviors are designed to challenge most dogs and test the handler's ability to understand everything that needs to be considered in making a good "film". Though challenging for both dog and handler, the process of working toward and meeting the requirements for the badge is quite rewarding, leaving the handler with a great sense of accomplishment.

**DOG REQUIREMENTS:** This badge requires the dog to demonstrate some fairly advanced behaviors and dogs should have considerable experience under their belt prior to attempting this badge. The distance variable required is what challenges most dogs with the required behaviors. It is recommended that the dog has earned the Tricks badge prior to attempting this one.

The dog is required to respond to verbal cues given quietly as well as hand signals in performing a send out to a mark, behaviors performed at a distance and when retrieving objects and taking them to a desired person and/or location. The dog must demonstrate sustained eye contact with another person and all behaviors must be performed off leash.

**HANDLER REQUIREMENTS:** There is a significant handler commitment with this badge since handlers are required to shoot and edit a video of around 5 minutes. Video have a story line and should be a "short feature" or "commercial". Additionally, video editing must include music, voice overs and on-screen text/graphics. Creativity in determining the video theme and in editing are highly encouraged.

The handler may ask for assistance in understanding the features of their chosen video editing program but is required to complete the video him/herself and not rely on someone else's skills in this area. Individuals may partner on the video production if their dogs are included in the same video, but each handler must clearly complete the requirements him/herself. This includes full participation in and significant contribution to the selection of the video subject and/or theme, planning scenes and camera angles, capturing video, and editing video to include music, voice overs and on-screen text/graphics.

The time required to work with the dog to accomplish the needed behaviors, plan and prepare necessary scenes and camera angles, capture them on video and produce a video is significant. Production of a 5-minute amateur video starts with approximately 150 minutes of raw footage.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** A phone or video camera is needed in order to capture necessary video clips. Most people elect to use a smart phone or tablet to capture video as the quality is excellent and it is extremely convenient.

A tripod is an essential tool when capturing video when no helper is available. Even when using someone else to film, a tripod eliminates the shakiness that often occurs when a video camera is held in the hand. It also makes it easier to set up shots and make sure that the action occurs within the shot and not out of frame.

A computer, tablet or phone loaded with a video editing software is required for production. There are many different video editing programs available at no cost. Many have similar features so the choice on which to use is up to the handler. However, the handler should ensure that the program they use had the features needed to produce a video that meets the requirements.



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Items to retrieve, something unobtrusive to mark the floor and any props needed both to demonstrate behaviors and to support the story line must be provided by the handler.

**PROCESS:** All of the dog requirements may be checked off prior to making the film. The Evaluator will take care to make sure that all distances are appropriate as defined in the badge requirements. The handler must behave as if he/she is on a working set as the dog is performing the required behaviors, working to make him/herself as invisible and inaudible as possible.

Treats may not be used to lure the dog in order to get the required behaviors but may be used creatively to get the dog's attention. The dog may be treated between exercises at the direction of the evaluator.

Any behavior that is taught using punitive tools or methods is disqualified. The dog must be kept safe both while demonstrating behaviors and while shooting video. When working outdoors care must be taken to ensure the environment is safe and free from anything that might cause harm. The physical and mental well being of the dog should be the top priority.

Because of the complexity of some of the required behaviors the dog should be given plenty of breaks during training and evaluation. Handlers are required to respond as asked if the Evaluator asks him/her to give the dog a break.

The determination of the appropriateness of any item used as props or retrieve items is the responsibility of the Evaluator. If there is any question about the handler's understanding of and ability to use the selected video editing program, the Evaluator may require a demonstration.

ALLOWED:

- Multiple dogs in the same film
- Costumes may be used as props
- Collaboration on ideas

NOT ALLOWED:

- Dog toys or dumbbells used for retrieve
- Behaviors performed on leash
- Loud or obtrusive behaviors "on set"
- Relying on someone else to edit video
- Partnering in such a way that allows one partner to avoid meeting the handler requirement for producing a video