



## Dog Scouts of America Evaluation Criteria

## Art of Shaping

**PURPOSE:** This badge shows that the handler has taught his/her dog to paint using shaping and operant conditioning. Artwork is created with the dog by asking for the shaped painting behavior on cue while wearing a Paintin' Paw or another bootie.

**DOG REQUIREMENTS:** Dog must be able to comfortably and confidently paint while wearing a bootie using only the predominant paw by stroking the paper "canvas" on cue multiple times per cue. The dog should use the paw with the bootie on it much more than the paw without the bootie. The dog should not show stress behaviors (pulling away, avoidance, etc.) during any part of the process. The ratio of cues to strokes should be reasonable and the handler shouldn't need coaxing, begging, or luring during the badge test to get the required behavior.

### HANDLER REQUIREMENTS:

The handler must always keep the safety and the physical and mental well-being of the dog as a top priority. The handler must understand the concept of operant conditioning and shaping. Handler helps the dog create a "masterpiece" using a positive reward-based method. If the dog is having a bad day or if either member of the dog/handler team is getting overly stressed, the session should be stopped and tried again later. The handler must always clean up after his/her own dog when the painting session has finished.

### EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- Non-Toxic, Washable Paints (Tempera or watercolors)
- Paper or canvas to create the painting on
- Food tray, cookie sheet, wood or some other smooth surface to use as an "easel"
- [Paintin Paw](#) , baby bootie or child's sock to hold the paint and minimize the effects of the dog's claws on the surface and in the final product.
- A piece of cardboard or disposable plate to use as a palette to hold paint
- Clean-up area with running water for rinsing out paint from dog paws, Paintin Paw, etc.
- A place to secure paintings while they dry
- Plastic tarp or painter's tarp to protect the floor if working indoors and to minimize the debris picked up by the paint if working outside.

**PROCESS:** The introduction of foot handling and the Paintin' Paw must be introduced slowly, so as not to create a fearful association. Painting should always be fun and rewarding for the dog, not scary! Dogs that show hesitation should be given the option to pull their foot away (but not get a reward) or to allow the foot handling (and get a really special reward). Force in the form of pulling on the dog, his foot or his leash/collar/harness may not be used to get a dog to stay in the area, to allow the boot or paint to be applied, or to perform the painting behavior. If the dog understands clicker training, you can get him to WANT you to touch his foot or to dip it in paint by first clicking and rewarding the dog for looking at the boot or allowing you to reach toward the foot, then click and reward for allowing contact, then rewarding for lifting the paw or partially putting on the boot, etc.

If the dog pulls his foot away or moves away, the handler probably moved too quickly to the next step



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and needs to go back to a step the dog is comfortable with and build on that in smaller increments (less lift, shorter contact duration, etc.) If it is the dog's decision to paw at the paint tray before they paw at the canvas, that's even better! While it's great fun for the handler to have something the dog painted hanging on the wall, it shouldn't represent that the dog was stressed in creating the painting.

**ALLOWED:**

- Multiple cues, within reason
- Dog in sitting or standing position

**NOT ALLOWED:**

- Using a lure to get the behavior
- Random scratching or walking on the canvas