



## Dog Scouts of America Evaluation Criteria

## Manners

**PURPOSE:** This badge is intended to help the dog be more pleasant to live with and teach him useful skills for day to day living.

**DOG REQUIREMENTS:** Dog must be able to complete each of the requirements to the satisfaction of the Evaluator, following the instructions outlined in 'PROCESS' below.

**HANDLER REQUIREMENTS:** Handler must demonstrate an understanding of operant conditioning in teaching the dog the required behaviors. Dog may be treated following the end of each exercise. Luring, or any attempt to make the dog think there is a treat is not allowed. Handler must be able to describe 2 or 3 ways each behavior is useful in day-to-day living.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Minimal equipment is required beyond a mat or pad along with a suitable place to test.

**PROCESS:** For most of the exercises it should be clear that the dog intends to remain in place until a release cue is given. Repeated cues are allowed but it should not take multiple cues to demonstrate complex behaviors, e.g. the dog is not told to move forward and then sit on a separate cue when demonstrating "go say hi". It must be clear to the Evaluator that the dog understands the cue.

Whenever possible, the exercises should be demonstrated for the evaluator as they would be used in the "real world" by using actual furniture, doorways, etc.

For "go to place" the dog must be able to go to a target place when sent from 10' away. Dog must go to the target and lie down without being given an additional cue to do so. The dog must clearly understand that the cue means, "go to your place, lie down and remain there until I release you."

When the dog is asked to lie on his side, the side of his head, shoulders and hips should all touch the ground. The dog should be able to go to the prone position from a sit, down or stand, when given a verbal and/or non-contact hand signal. It's important for the dog to comfortably go to this position in order to examine the dog's skin or feet.

When asked to "go say hi" the dog should confidently move towards a stranger and sit in front of him/her as if to get a brief pet or scratch. After the dog has responded to the cue the handler may step forward beside the dog to offer support to the dog as he/she would when meeting an actual stranger in public. The dog should act on a single cue, moving forward AND sitting in front of the stranger. The dog needs to sit close enough to the stranger to be reached without the person needing to stretch.

The "stand-stay" exercise is similar to a stand for exam. The handler must cue the dog to stand and stay and then step away from the dog, allowing the Evaluator to approach the dog, offer his/her hand to the dog to sniff and then gently touch the dog on the top of his head and shoulders. The dog should not move his feet until after the evaluator has moved away.

Both of the exercises that take place at the threshold of a doorway should be completed with an actual doorway that leads to the outside. For the first, the dog is simply required to remain in place as the handler moves outside. Multiple cues can be given within reason. The dog must clearly understand what is being asked of him without the handler overmanaging the dog with body language and/or cues.



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For the second doorway exercise the dog may move through the door either before or after the handler but only when cued. Before the exercise the handler must let the Evaluator know whether the dog will be asked to move through the door first or second. This allows the Evaluator to clearly see if the dog understands what is being asked of him.

When demonstrating hand targeting the handler should be able to get the dog to move several steps using his/her hand as a target for the dog to follow. The dog should be clearly focused on the hand, following the hand close enough so that the dog could press his nose into it as he follows. The handler needs to minimize any changes in his/her body position so that it is clear that the dog is following the hand and not responding to shoulder movement or other body cues. For this reason, having the dog move in a figure 8 pattern is a good demonstration of the skill.

Since it's not safe for a person to routinely step over a dog while moving about the home, the dog must be taught to move out of the way of a handler moving towards him. The dog must be able to move out of the way from a settled position as he sees a person approaching him. It should be clear that the dog is responding to the cue by moving just as the handler gets in range to trip over him. It works best to demonstrate this skill when the dog is tired and wants to stay in place but will get up when asked.

The "off" exercise can be demonstrated in a couple of ways. The dog may be asked to get up onto a surface such as a chair, couch, bed or other raised surface. After it's clear that the dog wants to stay where it is the handler should ask the dog to get off. Alternatively, the dog may be asked to put his paw on a person's lap before the handler asks him to move off. However the skill is demonstrated, it must be clear that the dog understands and responds to the cue by moving quickly and without complaint.

### ALLOWED:

- Repeated cues
- Leash at doorway
- Reward following exercise

### NOT ALLOWED:

- Overmanaging the dog with voice or body
- Multiple cues for complex behaviors
- Hard or elevated surfaces for "place"
- Luring or "tricking" the dog by making him think a treat is available