2–Dog Care and Training, General
Basic Information

Dog Care and Training, General

There are many ways to develop youth and train dogs. The suggestions, lessons and sequence are suggested primarily for those who desire to establish a comprehensive leadership, knowledge and skill-based program. We do not recommend changing a successful training program.

The design team wants to encourage expanded youth knowledge and thus suggests that you conduct general subject matter lessons in conjunction with the training lessons.

Dog Care and Training achievement testing will be utilized to assist members in gaining a broader leadership, knowledge and skill base. It is hoped that members will develop a mastery of each level (Step) before advancing to more complicated knowledge and skills.
CLOVER COUNTY 4–H KENNEL CLUB ENROLLMENT FORM

Name ________________________________________ Phone ______________________________________
Address ______________________________________ City _____________________ Zip ______________
4–H Club ____________________________________ Age on Jan. 1 ______________________________

Dog’s Name __________________________________ Dog’s Age ___________________________________
What breed is your dog? _________________________ Age when you got the dog ______________________
Where did you get your dog? ___________________________________________________________________

Has your dog ever broken your skin with its teeth?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

Has your dog bitten another person?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

I certify that any dog we bring to class for training will be current on all vaccinations, (Rabies and Distemper/
Parvo) and healthy. (See Health Form.)

I release the Clover County 4–H Kennel Club, its leaders and parents committee, and the Clover County Extension Service from any responsibility for accident or injury to my dog(s) or child(ren) while attending 4–H Kennel Club classes.

Note: Vicious dogs will not be allowed to participate in classes.

If you attend training classes, you and your parents are expected to help clean up at least twice. Please sign for convenient dates. If you choose not to sign up for specific dates, we will assume that you are willing to help anytime, and we will assign you dates as needed.

__________________________________________ __________________________________________
4–H Member’s Signature   Parent Signature

Date ______________________
WHERE TO HOLD THE CLASSES?

**Outdoors**—You can hold classes outdoors in all but the most inclement weather. A yard, playground, park, or parking lot can be used. If the area is surrounded by fencing you will be able to train off leash exercises with little danger to the participants but you can adapt if a fenced area is unavailable. Livestock areas will present special training opportunities as the dogs will be quite distracted by manure and other odors but they can be used. The surface should be free of tall grass, trash (especially glass and metal), and sand burrs. Be cautious of hazardous chemicals such as antifreeze, oil, fertilizer, etc. It should have some provision for shade although the working area may be in the sun. Beware the surface temperature of blacktop, concrete, sand, etc. If it is too hot for your hand, don’t train on it! Consider the lighting available at the time you’ll be holding classes. Be aware of the noise level in the area. The members need to hear your instructions when they are 10 to 20 feet away. If water is not available require the members to bring water for their dogs—a good practice, anyway. You must have owner permission to use the site and your members will keep it clean of trash, feces, etc. This may mean you will bring a trash bag. You may be permitted to use an outside area free of charge.

**Indoors**—You can hold classes indoors any place dogs are permitted. Fairground buildings, gymnasiums, recreation departments, schools, churches, large garages, basements, and similar areas could be considered. The area used for training should be at least 25 feet long (for recalls) with at least 5 square feet per dog. It will need a non-slip surface or you will need to buy matting to cover the areas used for heeling, etc. Polished concrete and gym floors will need to be matted. When you teach jumping for the open level of obedience, matting will be necessary on most surfaces. When training indoors you will need to bring clean-up materials for the surface: paper towels, vinegar-based cleaner or odor-killing cleaner, carpet cleaner and towels if on carpet, etc. It is most important that male dogs are not allowed to mark any surface indoors. This usually happens when the member is not watching the dog. If this happens the member must clean the surface thoroughly. If it happens a second time you may consider requiring the member to use a one-foot long leash to keep the dog by their side at all times. The members will need to sweep the area after training as well as pick up after their dogs outside the building. If you want to continue to use the site it is important to keep the owners happy with no reason to complain about the dogs. This also emphasizes the need for responsibility on the part of the members. There will most likely be a rental fee for an indoor training site.

YOUR EQUIPMENT:

You will find a list of supplies with each lesson. You should also have: a First Aid Kit, a supply of water and soap (washing in case of a dog bite), a list of phone numbers and emergency numbers for any member without a parent staying for the lesson, an extra leash (in case one breaks), access to a telephone, dog treats, a garbage bag (for collecting trash). If you are outdoors you may need bug repellent and if you are indoors you may need to bring clean-up supplies for indoor surfaces.

CLASS RULES:

Be firm about the things you set up as rules and do not establish too many. For a rule to be a rule there must be consequences—otherwise it is simply a guideline. Logical consequences may include coming early to “police” the area if they neglect to clean up feces, sitting out a lesson if they have their dog running around off-lead, or figuring out three things to do instead of hitting the dog and presenting them to the other members.

Rule suggestions are:

- Everyone cleans up after their own dog—inside the building and outside.
- You may not hit your dog.
• You must have your dog under control and not allow it to bother other dogs.
• Your dog must be on a leash except during off-lead practice in class.

CLASS SIZE/ASSISTANTS
Ideally, the class will have 12 or fewer trainers, with one adult for every six trainers. Consider splitting the class if it grows to 14 or 15 trainers. If this is not possible try to get another adult assistant. In addition, older, more advanced members can be a great help. Depending on the members and their experience and reliability you can have them demonstrate the exercises, examine/pet dogs (unless you have a dog that you suspect may need extra work to tolerate strangers), serve as a distracter during proofing, evaluate performances, call heel patterns, etc.

TRAINING EQUIPMENT (SEE ALSO THE LESSON ON CHOOSING EQUIPMENT)
Leash: This must be of fabric, leather, or nylon—not chain. The member needs to be able to hold the entire leash in his or her hand. It should be of appropriate width for the size of the dog being trained. To show in Pre-Novice the member will need a 6 foot leash. However, a shorter leash of 2 or 4 feet will give the member better control of the dog during class. Six feet means the dog has a 12 foot area to roam if not under control! When you get to the lessons on heeling where the leash is to be over the shoulder, the trainers with shorter leashes could tuck the end into their waistband. Lightweight long lines of 20 to 30 feet will be needed for distance work. These may be made of cord and snaps from a hardware store.

Collar: A pinch, also known as a prong collar is highly recommended—it is “power steering” for the child handling the dog. It is adjusted by adding or removing links. Use the smallest size pinch collar possible. A smaller collar is more effective for corrections and will be easier for the members to put on the dog, however, larger dogs may spring out the links. See diagram for fitting a pinch collar. Beware of putting a pinch collar on a potentially aggressive dog. (See section on aggressive dogs.)

A choke collar can be effective if the handler has very good timing on corrections. It is very easy for novices to nag the dog with a choke collar until the dog no longer pays attention to it. A choke should be the shortest length possible that will still slip over the dog’s head, about 2 to 3 inches beyond neck size. It is essential that a choke is put on the dog properly. If it is on backwards it will remain tight even when the handler is not pulling on it. See diagram for the proper way to put on a choke collar.

There should be no tags attached to a chain training collar. If you see tags it is a good indication that this collar is left on the dog at all times which is very dangerous for the dog.

Bait Bag and Bait (Treats): Food treats, referred to as “bait,” will be used in the course of training. They need to be readily accessible. A sandwich bag attached to the waistband with a clothespin, or a small bag pinned to the clothes will work. A nail apron is also a good choice. Bait is very small pieces of easily eaten food. Dry dog food, cat treats, bit of cooked liver, sliced or microwaved hotdogs, cereal, and cheese are all good treats if your dog likes them. When training with bait the food used should count as part of the dog’s mealtime ration.

Plastic Sandwich Bag: Require all members to carry a sandwich (or larger) bag for pickup of feces.

Water and water bowl: Members should always consider their dog’s needs and carry water for them. When traveling they cannot be sure that water will be available and some dogs react to changes in water.

Voice: The member’s voice, inflection and tone, is very important to training. It would be worthwhile to have all members practice praising their dog and commanding their dog.

INSTRUCTOR VS. TRAINER
You are the dog obedience instructor—the child is the trainer! This means that you are only teaching the members what to do and it is up to them to teach their dogs. If the members do not practice at home, their progress will be very slow. If you have stressed the importance of the practice and guided the members in developing their own practice schedule, this is all you can do. You may wish to require them to maintain a practice record. If you have several members training their dogs, it is not fair to hold them all back because of one that has not practiced. However, since these lessons are progressive, in many cases the members will be able to proceed at their own (and their dog’s) pace.
UNINTENTIONAL TRAINING
Our dogs, when they are awake, are always learning something. Unfortunately we sometimes teach them something we didn’t mean to. This is called unintentional training. It usually occurs when the trainer is attempting to calm and soothe their dog. If the dog is fearful and shaking, frequently the trainer will be petting the dog and telling it “it’s okay” in a nice sweet voice. What the trainer is actually doing is rewarding the fear behavior—indicating to the dog that its behavior is correct. This can happen if a door slams and the dog startles, or during a thunderstorm (some dogs have enough problems with storms without any extra reinforcement). To avoid unintentional training the trainer should be very matter-of-fact and ignore the behavior. If the dog has learned a sit, the trainer could give the dog something to do and then praise that action.

POSITION OF THE COLLAR AND LEASH
Any collar is more effective if it is up high on the neck. The dog has less muscling there and will feel corrections more readily. The rings of the collar should be in a line with the trainer’s hands. If the dog is at the trainer’s left, then the rings should be about with its right ear. If the dog is in front of the handler, the rings should be below the chin. When first learning sit-stays and also practicing automatic sits the rings should be at the back of the dog’s neck, between the ears. The position of the collar is most important when teaching a skill since it makes the collar more effective. Otherwise, it is helpful to have the collar positioned correctly, but not vital. With some collars and some haircoats it is very difficult to keep the collar in place without constant readjustment.

The leash should be contained at all times. This means that the end is not left dangling or worse, that the trainer is not swinging it around. Depending on what you are doing it may be held in either or both hands. The loop is hooked over the thumb, excess length is gathered up in the hand, and the dog-end comes out the bottom of the fist. Control position is when the leash is held in the right hand which is on the right thigh and then held by the left hand which is on the left thigh. Between the left hand and the dog there is just enough slack so that the clip of the leash is perpendicular to the floor. This position maximizes the trainer’s strength, allowing him or her to use their whole body as a pivot in moving the dog. Leash-hand positions are taught in lesson 1.

PREVENTING DOGFIGHTS:
Do not hesitate to dismiss a dog from your class. (See section on Aggressive dogs). However, you are dealing with animals and they can be unpredictable so teach your assistants and members on how to prevent dogfights and be alert for potential problems. The first night with dogs is usually the worst. The dogs will be stressed, coming into a new environment and making contact with new dogs. The trainers will be communicating their stress/excitement/nervousness to their dogs and will likely be unsure on how to handle their dog. More advanced trainers may be casual about letting their dog wander around at the end of its leash.

The trainers should have their dogs in control position. This will give the trainers maximum control of their dog and makes sure that dogs are not running up to each other. If two dogs are staring at each other the trainers should turn them away from each other and move further apart. Do not pull up on the leash—if a dog is trying to look dominant it will raise its body posture. Pulling the dog up puts it in this dominant posture when likely it doesn’t want to be. Beware of reinforcing growling or barking (see section on Unintentional Training).

If the trainers keep their dog under control and if you dismiss any dogs showing obvious aggression it is unlikely you will ever have to deal with a dog fight. If you do have a dog fight send the other trainers and their dogs to the other side of the area. Do not reach for the dog’s collars or let anyone else attempt to do so. It is a guaranteed way to get bitten. If the dogs are on leashes grab one leash and have another adult grab the other and attempt to pull the dogs apart—being aware that they may, in their frenzy, turn and bite you. If there are no leashes you and another adult can attempt to pull them apart by their back legs.

AGGRESSIVE DOGS: If a member brings to class a dog that attempts to attack other dogs or bite people, it will be a danger to have in class. Unless you have confidence that the member is able to control the dog and your training area is large enough to give the dog plenty of space and it was an unusual occurrence (such as the dog was chased into a corner), this dog should be dismissed from class. It is too dangerous to have around children. Never put a pinch collar on a potentially aggressive dog. Use a choke collar which can be used to stop a dog by choking it.
ARRANGEMENT OF THE TRAINERS

Only the trainers and their dogs (and the Instructor and Assistants) should be in the area you have designated as the training ring. Have Mom and Dad and baby brother take their lawn chairs off to the sideline to watch.

Sit on the Leash: When the leash is in their hands, the trainer needs to pay total attention to the dog and should expect total attention from the dog. However, the beginning trainers need to be focused on you when information is being presented. A solution is to have them sit on the floor (which gives them a place to be) and sit on their leash. If it is not possible to have the trainers sit on the ground (they will need to kneel down later) then have them stand on their leash. The dog may sit/stand/or lay down but, for the first lessons, is not under a command. (Remember, if a command is given the dog must comply.) The trainer cannot listen to you if they are trying to make their dog do a down-stay. The trainer may pet their dog if the dog is behaving—waiting calmly. If you notice two dogs that want to get at each other—to play or to fight—separate them to opposite ends of the ring.

For much of the instruction and demonstrations have the trainers arranged in a semi-circle facing the center so they can be as close to you as possible but your back is not turned to them. They can also practice the stationary exercises (Sit, Down, Stand, Stay) in this formation. In a circle or semi-circle no dog has another dog behind it. Occasionally you will arrange them into one or two lines facing the same direction and will demonstrate with your back to them. This arrangement is useful on some of the lessons which require a right/left orientation such as turns in place and finishes. Another arrangement is to have two lines facing each other from opposite sides of the ring. This is useful when adding distance to Sit-Stays and Down-Stays.

For group heeling exercises it is helpful to begin in a clockwise direction. This will put the dogs on the outside which gives them a little more space as they are warming up. Later in the lesson you may have them move counterclockwise.

Heeling at the “normal” pace should be brisk; however, brisk for a Pekingese is a different speed than brisk for a Labrador Retriever. You can deal with this in several ways. You could split your class for heeling practice, fast dogs and slower dogs. Everyone gets less practice this way but they could all move briskly. You could have everyone move at the same pace (as in Showmanship). The slow dogs would be practicing “fast,” the medium dogs would be “normal,” and the fast dogs would be “slow.” You could set a guideline that trainers may pass the dog ahead of them if they pass on the inside. This works if the training ring is not too crowded.

TRAINING COMMANDS

Whenever possible in these training sequences the command given to the trainers, identified as (Instruct: “Sit”) will be the command they will most likely hear from the obedience judge.

The commands presented in the training sequences for the trainers to use are all allowable commands and are fairly standard as used by dog obedience trainers. However, a trainer may use whatever command they wish. As an example, “Down” is used as the command for a dog to lay down but many people use the word “Drop” or the German term, “Platz.” It is much easier on the instructor if everyone uses the same terminology but trainers are not wrong if they use different words as long as:

1. They are consistent with the word. It has one meaning and the dog must always obey.
2. The word is not confusing the dog. If “Sit” is used for sit, it would be confusing to use “Hit It” for down. The words sound too similar.
3. The command is short. The judge will penalize a double command so if two words are used it must be as a single command with no pause between them.

USE OF THE DOG’S NAME

Generally, the dog’s name is used before a movement exercise such as “Come” or “Heel” and not for stationary exercises such as “Sit,” “Stay,” or “Down.” This is not a rule—just accepted practice.

PRAISE

Suit the praise to your dog. Exuberant praise will likely excite your dog—quiet praise may be more appropriate for some. Practice different ways of verbally praising dogs. “Good, excellent, atta-dog” are some ideas. Don’t let the praise become monoto-
nous. Change your voice to praise. You could also praise the action, such as “Good Sit” or “Good Stay.” This can reinforce your command but don’t let it become double commands.

**PRAISE DON’T PET**

Praise is used to let the dog know that what it is doing is what you wanted it to do. It should be verbal and adjusted to the individual dogs. Use quiet soothing praise for a boisterous dog. When a dog is lacking confidence, the praise may be more pronounced. Do not quit praising too soon in the training program. Continue to praise each time the dog obeys a command when you are teaching and reinforcing the exercises. Just before a show you can practice dropping the praise during an exercise but praise is allowed between exercises.

Petting should be reserved for when the dog has completed an exercise. It can be used in the early stages of teaching a recall—pet the dog when it gets to you. It can also be used after a release command.

**PARENTS—HOW CAN THEY HELP THEIR CHILD?**

Parents can help their child to get the proper equipment for training and grooming their dog. They can help with the trickier parts of grooming such as toenails. Parents can take the dog to the veterinarian for a checkup so their child is working with a healthy dog. They can bring their child and the dog to the training classes and listen to the lesson. Parents can review with their child (or have their child review for them) the trainer’s guide for each week. They can work with their child to plan their training schedule for the week and provide time to practice. As the lessons progress parents can be the person that examines the dog (in the stay exercises), the distracter, and a post for the Figure 8. They can take their child to different areas to practice (parks, playgrounds, parking lots, etc.) As competition time approaches they can videotape practice sessions for their child to self-evaluate. Above all, parents can encourage their child to keep training (this includes suggesting they take a break when they are getting frustrated or when the dog is being “impossible”) and praise/recognize their hard work and accomplishments.

**USE OF FOOD**

There may be some objections to the use of food with comments like “I want my dog to do it for me, not the food” and “You can’t use food when you show.” These folks may not understand the role food has in the training program. First of all, you will not always be using food nor will you be using food for every exercise but it certainly can make training more humane and efficient. Food can help you accomplish what was once done by sheer force.

Sometimes what they really mean is “I can’t control my dog when I have food.” Now this can be a real problem but it can and must be solved—even if the trainer never uses food for training at all. The dog that “eats your fingers” to get at the food or is so distracted by food that it can’t work needs to be taught control. If control is not learned you will run the chance of the dog biting someone. An excellent example of teaching this control is in the Ian Dunbar video, "Sirius Puppy Training." The key is for the trainer to pretend to be very sensitive to even a tooth touching their skin—making a big deal of it. Offer food and if the dog grabs for it, command “Off” and push the nose away. Offer again and repeat if the dog grabs for the food or if its teeth touch fingers, say “Ouch!” and pull back your hand. Offer again, if it waits and is gentle it gets the food with praise. You are training the dog not only to take food gently, but also that it can ignore food.

Food can be used as a bribe, a motivater, a lure and a reward. In these lessons it is used primarily as a lure—to show the dog where to go. It is also used as a reward when the dog completes an action. A bribe is the promise of a reward and is not part of these lessons. Food as a motivater will probably not be needed for these obedience classes. It is often used as a motivater (and it is called “bait”) in conformation showing. Food will be phased out as a lure as the training advances.

**TRAINING THEORY**

These training lessons are based on inductive training. Generally, the first step in teaching a behavior is to place the dog in position gently as we introduce the command. Next, the dog is lured into position as the command is given. Praise and a reward are given when it is accomplished. Then you add some compulsion (force) along with the lure. Finally, if the dog is
not offering the behavior on command, compulsion is used alone. If we are using force the dog knows what we want. In the practicing phase, distractions are added for the dog to learn by trial-and-error exactly what a command means. As an example, the dog may be doing a Sit-Stay, but does it know that it must Sit-Stay even if another dog walks by? What if someone has cookies or a tennis ball? Distractions are a way to teach your dog the commands and also to ignore everything but you while under command.

CORRECTIONS:
A correction is given when the dog chooses not to obey, either because it chose to pay attention to something else or just doesn’t want to obey. The trainer must be certain that the dog understands the exercise and that it is not afraid. A collar correction is a quick pop or snap of the collar (with the leash) and an immediate release. It will not work unless there is slack in the leash! The release is the important part of the correction. It can be used with any collar but cannot be carried out with a tight leash—there must be some slack. A slow pull is not effective and is just nagging the dog. Once a dog is in correct position it should be praised.

LEARNING PLATEAU
After about 5 weeks of training, dogs will typically go through a LEARNING PLATEAU. This may last a day or as long as a week, and during this time it will seem that the dog has forgotten everything it has learned up to this point. Don’t despair!!This is normal, and once the dog is past this plateau it will “remember” everything. The learning plateau is more noticeable in some dogs than in others. It is most noticeable with dogs which have been doing quite well up to this time and that have had regular practice sessions. When the dogs are in the learning plateau, continue your training, but be patient. You may need to repeat easier lessons or ease off on distractions, but keep working.

DISTRACTIONS:
A distraction is something that could tempt the dogs into making a mistake. When the dog makes a mistake, it is the trainer’s opportunity to show it again what it should be doing. This is not meant to tease the dog. Trial and error is how dogs learn.

Beginning level distractions would include a person walking nearby or children playing within sight of the dog. Second level distractions would include someone talking to the dog (not commanding or using their name). Third level distractions depend on the dog. It could be someone petting the dog, a tennis ball rolling by, another dog, or food. Almost anything is fair for distractions EXCEPT things that may panic or hurt the dog, or calling the dog’s name. The more planned distractions the dog can learn to ignore in the training, the better it will behave around unplanned distractions.

THE LEADER NOTEBOOK LESSONS
There are many different methods used to teach dogs. All methods will work with some dogs, most will work with most dogs, but few will work with all dogs, and those depend on the trainer for this success as much as the particular method. The lessons contained in this leader notebook will work with most dogs. They are based on the work and writings of Jack and Wendy Volhard, Dianne Bauman, Barbara Handler, and Ian Dunbar. However, these do not represent the only way to train a dog and it is not required that 4-H Dog Obedience classes use them.

The Pre-Novice lessons prepare the member for showing in Pre-Novice Competition, but they are also the foundation for teaching Novice. The Novice lessons, combined with the Pre-Novice lessons prepare for showing in Novice, but are also the foundation for teaching Graduate Novice and Utility. Advanced skills are being taught at each level to lay a foundation for advanced training, to provide variety to the training, and to improve performance at the current level.

The Pre-Novice lessons include a detailed Trainer’s Guide, describing step-by-step the exercises for that particular week. There is a lot of information being provided with each lesson and this is to be a refresher for the member (and parent) of all of the details. Require the members to keep these guides so they will be able to refer to them when they need to review the steps in teaching an exercise—even when they are working at advanced levels. Pre-Novice also includes a training record for each lesson. The planning that is done before a training session—exactly what they are going to work on—will double the effectiveness of any time actually spent in training the dog. Then the evaluation of the session provides input for the exercises they will work on the next session. Stress
the planning and self-evaluation—these are skills that will carry over to all areas of their lives.

The lessons for Novice and beyond do not have trainer’s guides or training records. At this level the responsibility goes to the member. There are not as many new things being taught. The upper levels of obedience basically build upon the skills taught in Pre-Novice. It is very important, however, that the members create a training plan/record for their training sessions, one of which is the actual lesson. You may decide to require them to bring this training log to each lesson. The lesson might be recorded like this: Date—Place Trained—Time Spent—Plan for session—Notes (what actually happened). In the “Plan for Session” column they would put “Lesson #”, and then could add the exercises that were on your plan for that lesson. The “Notes” column would include their self-evaluation of the lesson—especially the exercises they need more work on.

The structure of the lessons are such that the exercises are generally listed in the same order for all lessons. It is recommended that you follow this order for the first three Pre-Novice lessons. The stationary exercises are first, while the dogs are still a little nervous about being with strangers and the members are most attentive. The motion exercises are second, after the dogs have relaxed and are more likely to be under control. After the first three weeks, you may want to begin the lesson with some heeling, work on the stationary exercises, and then do some more heeling to experiment with a different order.

RESOURCES
Ian Dunbar. Sirius Puppy Training video. c1987
Obedience Training Without the Dogs
Dog Care and Training, General

What Members Will Learn . . .

ABOUT THE PROJECT:
• Obedience handling techniques

ABOUT THEMSELVES:
• Each member of a team has a role to play

Materials Needed:
• Folding ruler
• stuffed dog
• hula hoop or loop of rope
• tape or other markers for the floor
• 2 (or more) dog dumbbells
• an obedience jump
• a whistle or a clicker.

ACTIVITY

ESTIMATING DISTANCE:
6 FEET (Levels I, II or III): Place a stuffed dog, book, traffic cone, or similar object in “Heel Position” to simulate a dog. On direction, “Leave your dog,” the handler is to go 6 feet away and turn and face their “dog.” Mark the spot where the handler’s toes end up. It should be 6 feet away from the dog.

35 FEET (Levels I, II or III): Repeat the activity above but go 35 feet.

Leader Notes
These activities should be used at the suggested level or when members are actually involved in the related exercises. This could also be adapted as a competition, or single activities could be used as warm-up activities prior to a non-dog meeting. All of these activities can be repeated throughout the year(s) as these are all skills that can be improved with practice.

In the Pre-Novice, Novice, and Graduate Novice Stand for Examination exercise the handler is to go 6 feet from their dog. Although the regulations read “about 6 feet” the closer to 6 feet the better off the handler is.

For a Novice, Graduate Novice, and Open classes the handler is to go 35 feet from their dog before a recall.
Obedience is a team sport. If the trainer is not doing their part by walking straight, the performance will suffer.

The second time, tell each member to focus on a spot or some object directly across the ring before they start. Compare results.

Again, obedience is a team sport. In this activity the “dog” knew what position was correct (shoulder-to-shoulder) and understood all of the directions and could anticipate the action. Your members will see that even with all of this understanding it can be difficult to stay in heel position. What can they as a trainer do to make this easier on their dog—pretend or real?

In Open Obedience the trainer throws the dumbbell for the dog to retrieve. The more accurate the throw, the more control the trainer has over the variables affecting their performance.

**HEELING**

**STRAIGHT LINE (Levels I, II or III):** This can be done individually or with several members starting side-by-side. On the direction, 'Forward" they should walk forward until directed to “Halt.” How straight a line did they walk?

**FROM THE DOG’S POINT OF VIEW (Levels I, II or III):** This activity is done with a partner, one person is the trainer, the other pretends to be the dog. The trainer holds his/her left elbow bent with left hand about at his/her stomach. The “dog” holds onto the crook of the elbow. Heel Position is shoulder-to-shoulder. Direct the team, “FORWARD.” The trainer commands “HEEL” and begins to heel with the “dog” staying in heel position. Direct through an entire heeling pattern including forward, halts, right turn, left turn, about turn, fast, normal, slow. For an extra challenge add the Figure 8. The team that maintains Heel Position the best is the winner!

**TARGETS**

**DUMBBELLS (Level IV):** You will need two or more dumbbells (or similar, non-rolling objects). Set up a target circle on the floor 20 feet away from the throwing line. (A hula-hoop makes a great target.) The object is to throw the dumbbell so it lands and stays (watch out for the bounce!) in the target. A variety of this activity is to have no target—mark each person’s throw—the one closest to but not less than 20 feet wins. Yet another variation is to throw the dumbbell over a jump—it should land at least 8 feet beyond the jump.
COMMUNICATION
PLACE AND SHOW (Levels I, II or III): What if you were in a situation where you couldn’t understand the language but someone was telling you to do something? When we teach our dogs a new command they don’t understand what we want them to do. Let’s try teaching a command to someone who doesn’t know what the command means. The rule is that the only thing the trainer may say to the learner is the command and praise.

SHAPING (Levels I, II or III): We are lucky when training dogs because we can actually show them what we want them to do by placing their bodies in the position we want. But what if you were training an animal that you couldn’t place into position? This activity will show you how you could train a chicken, a killer whale or even your dog. This also works with people! What we will do is reward the subject every time they do the first steps of the action. A reward could be a word for a person, or food for an animal. Many animal trainers use a whistle or another noise that the animal associates with food so their reward is the whistle which means that food is coming!

Choose a subject and send them out of the room. Select a trainer and a behavior to be shaped such as sitting down on the floor with legs crossed. Call the subject back into the room and have them move about the room. Each time the subject makes a move toward the desired behavior the trainer blows the whistle as reinforcement. For the first few reinforcements the subject needs to return to the starting point (probably the doorway). Once a behavior is reinforced the next reinforcement should come when the behavior is one step closer to the desired end behavior. No commands or directions are given (beyond telling the subject what the whistle indicates)—just the whistle reinforcement.

Leader Notes
Choose a member to be the learner and have them leave the room. Choose a member to be the trainer or you may be the trainer for the first time you do this activity. If a member is the trainer they will have the opportunity to learn how to train by trial-and-error. They should have the opportunity to consult privately with other members on training strategy and/or to choose another member to take over as trainer. Explain the activity to the rest of the members. You will have a nonsense word such as “ooblah.” Choose an action that you will identify as “ooblah.” An example would be to sit down on a chair and raise the left arm & hand. The rule is that the only thing the trainer can say to the learner is “ooblah” and praise, “good.”

Once the command is taught—or when trainer or learner gets to a frustration level then have the participants share what they experienced.

Some observations to elicit from the members.
1. A way to teach the action for the command is to place (guide) the learner.
2. It is important to identify (by praise) when the learner is doing something right.
3. Just repeating the command does not help the learner.
4. Saying the command louder does not help the learner.

When training a dog it is too easy to forget that the commands are foreign and saying them more often or louder doesn’t help understanding. It also does not help to give corrections when the dog doesn’t understand what you want. Building communication between trainer and dog is what brings training success.

This activity will illustrate the importance of timing in reinforcement. If praise/reward/reinforcement is mistimed the trainer may actually be reinforcing a different behavior. Both communication activities should also give the members a new perspective on training—especially for the members who play the role of the “dog” or subject. It is likely that they will no longer blame their dog for not learning.
Leader Notes

**ACTIVITY**

**DIALOGUE FOR CRITICAL THINKING:**

**Share**

1. How did you feel about doing this activity?

2. What was the most difficult part of the activity? Why?

**Process**

3. What did this activity teach you about dog obedience training?

4. Why is it important to experience something from another's view?

**Generalize**

5. What are some changes you could make to improve your teamwork?

6. What is the significance of communication in teamwork?

**Apply**

7. How can learning to work as a team with your dog help you in your life?

8. When and where will teamwork be important in your life? in the future? (See how many examples can be listed—discuss why?)

**GOING FURTHER:**

1. Use communication games with other groups or at a regular club meeting.

**RESOURCES:**


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**Reviewed by:**

Dog Care and Training Design Team

*15–Dog Care and Training, General*
Agility—An Introduction for Leaders

Leaders—Please read this information before beginning the Agility Lessons.

Agility is an exciting, fast-growing dog sport that is well within the abilities of the 4-H members and most dogs. These lessons are an introduction to Agility. Before you can teach agility you will need to acquire agility equipment. Equipment can be purchased from a number of companies (listed at the end of this lesson), or others.

Some of the equipment can be improvised but before long you will want some “real stuff.” If you have some volunteers with carpentry skills they can construct many competition-quality obstacles of wood and PVC pipe. Add someone who can weld and you’ll be able to accumulate an entire set! You can put your members to work sanding, painting, cleaning PVC, and taping stripes. This equipment will represent quite an investment of time and money but you will find that it is worth it! Obstacle instructions may be found in the "Kansas 4-H Agility Dog Show Rule Book." (S-124)

It is very important that whatever equipment you use for training is safe for the members and the dogs. It should have no exposed nails, screws, or splinters and be sturdy enough that it won’t collapse or tip when a dog is using it.

There are several organizations that sponsor agility trials and each has its own specifications for agility equipment. When planning your equipment you will need to decide if you will follow the standards of one of the agility organizations or make obstacles to your own specifications. You may want to investigate the agility trials available to your members in your area so your members could potentially compete. Books are available describing the construction of obstacles and each organization outlines the specifications in their rule books. The State 4–H Dog Care and Training Action Team provides basic information in the "Kansas 4-H Agility Dog Show Rule Book" (S-124).

Obstacles may include:

- Contact Obstacles**: 1.A-frame, 2.Dogwalk, 3.Teeter-totter (Seesaw), Swing Plank*, Sway Bridge*
- Pause table/box
- Open or Pipe Tunnel, Closed Tunnel or Chute, Crawl Tunnel*, Hoop Tunnel*
- Jumps or Hurdles: Hoop, Tire, Bar, Double Bar, Rail Fence, Triple Bar, Spread, Long or Broad, Brush, Window, Log.
- Weave Poles

*These obstacles might only be encountered in UKC Agility.

** Teach the contact obstacles in this order. The other obstacles may be taught in any order.
As many clubs begin their agility program by constructing or buying one piece of equipment at a time, the lessons in this notebook will cover one obstacle each. If you have access to several pieces of equipment the recommendation is to combine instruction on several obstacles in a single lesson. As an example, a single lesson might include reviewing the A-frame, then beginning the dogwalk, and then working on tunnels and jumps. Even after all of the available obstacles have been taught agility lessons can continue with different lay-outs of obstacles for practice.

RESOURCES

AGILITY ORGANIZATIONS
United States Dog Agility Association (USDAA)
P.O. Box 850995
Richardson, Texas 75085-0955
(241) 231-9700

American Kennel Club (AKC)
5580 Centerview Drive, Suite 200
Raleigh, NC 27606-3390
(919) 233-9767
Dogs must be purebred and AKC-registered to compete

North American Dog Agility Council (NADAC)
HCR 2, Box 277
St. Maries, Idaho 83861
(208) 689-3809
Includes mixed-breeds, dogs must be NADAC-registered to compete

Australian Shepherd Club of America (ASCA)
6091 East State Highway 21
Bryan, Texas 77803-9652
(409) 778-1082
not limited to Australian Shepherds
United Kennel Club (UKC)
100 East Kilgore Road
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001-5593
(616) 343-9020
Includes mixed-breeds, dogs must be UKC-registered to compete

AGILITY EQUIPMENT COMPANIES
Action K9 Sports
27425 Cataluna Circle
Sun City, CA 92585
(909) 679-3699

EconoJumps
1517 N. Wilmont Road, #!!!
Tucson, AZ
(520) 751-1077

J & J Dog Supplies, Inc.
P.O. Box 1517
Galesburg, IL 61402
(800) 642-2050

On Course
P.O. Box 4186
Wyane NJ 07470
(800) 942-5216

Pipe Dreams
35 Walnut Street
Turner Falls, MA 01376
(413) 863-8303

Woulf-Fab
N1750 Buchanan Road
Kaukauna, WI 54130
(414) 788-6706