

# Canine Life and Social Skills®



## Student Handbook

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## Purpose of the Student Handbook

The *Student Handbook* supplements the *C.L.A.S.S. Overview Handbook*, and is designed as an additional resource for students participating in the C.L.A.S.S. program. The *Student Handbook* expands on how students can benefit from C.L.A.S.S., and contains the “Study Guide for the Student Knowledge Assessment,” extra tips for a successful evaluation, and practical guides for preparing for the evaluation.

Please see the *C.L.A.S.S. Overview Handbook* for a complete outline of the C.L.A.S.S. program, including the Rules of What is Acceptable and What is Not Acceptable, criteria definitions, test items of each evaluation, as well as the history of C.L.A.S.S.

## C.L.A.S.S. Components

As noted in the *Overview Handbook*, C.L.A.S.S. is more than an assessment of real-life skills. Here is an explanation of additional components and objectives of C.L.A.S.S., through which students and dogs can benefit.

### *Education*

At its core, C.L.A.S.S. is an educational tool, providing resources that promote understanding in dog training methods that focus on using positive reinforcement. Canine Life And Social Skills is not just about training dogs; it is about training people, too. Education is essential, as dog behavior is often misunderstood, and myths have been perpetuated regarding their behavior. Dogs are not furry little people, and problems can arise when humans apply human characteristics to explain dog behavior. Dogs should be studied and understood as a distinct species.

The more we understand dogs, the better the relationship we can have with our dog. For instance, most dogs are not behaving “badly” in a dog sense; they are just using normal dog behaviors to get their needs met or to resolve conflict. They use those behaviors because it’s what they know, and in dog culture, they usually work. Dogs do not feel guilty in the human sense of the word since dogs do not think in terms of right and wrong, but in terms of what works and what does not work for them. Dog behavior is driven by doggy needs, not human emotion or judgments.

Through the C.L.A.S.S. program, students can find resources for learning about dog behavior, including locating training professionals dedicated to advocating dog-friendly techniques.

### Choosing a Trainer

While working with a professional trainer is not a requirement to participate in C.L.A.S.S., getting an expert’s guidance can be an excellent investment for a pet owner. Quality professional dog trainers are educated and experienced in scientific training methods, dog behavior and body language, and problem solving, and can patiently help pet owners understand and train their dogs effectively. Professional trainers are passionate about working with dogs and maintain their skills through continuing education.

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C.L.A.S.S. is a program of the Association of Professional Dog Trainers (APDT), which is primarily an educational organization whose mission is to represent and advance the dog training profession through education and advocacy. The APDT offers a Trainer Search Directory for pet owners to locate APDT-member professional dog trainers by city, state, or within a specific mileage range of a zip code. The Trainer Search feature also allows a search to be filtered by services offered, which include expertise in aggression, obedience, service dogs, fun and games, in-home training, agility, behavioral consultations, clicker training, group classes, and multi-species training.

It can be confusing for a dog owner to figure out how to hire a dog trainer. To make an informed decision, pet owners are strongly encouraged to understand the various training methodologies in dog training today. Please refer to the guidelines in “Choosing a Trainer / Using the APDT Trainer Search Directory” in the Appendix of this handbook before selecting a dog trainer.

Here are further educational resources and information, in addition to those already available through the Resources tab of the online student account, for C.L.A.S.S. students.

### **C.L.A.S.S. Blog**

Through the C.L.A.S.S. web site, students can access a blog with dog training tips, training uses in real-life, and other dog behavior topics geared specifically toward C.L.A.S.S. students. The blog can be accessed at <http://blog.mydoghasclass.com/>.

### **Articles for Pet Owners**

On the APDT web site at [www.apdt.com/petowners](http://www.apdt.com/petowners), there is an array of free educational articles for pet owners, as well as for the veterinary community, general public, shelters, and dog trainers. Some of the topics include:

- Tips for Common Dog Behavior Issues (e.g. barking, chewing, housetraining, crate training)
- Common Myths about Dog Training
- Socialization
- Pet Safety
- Bringing a New Dog into your Home
- Dog Park Information
- Training Equipment Options
- Understanding Trainer Certifications (not all certifications are the same)
- Dominance Myths and Dog Training Realities
- Recommended Book List for Pet Dog Owners
- Cat Behavior

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## Webinars

Pet owners can participate in live webinars or access previous-recorded webinars on a variety of topics related to dog training. While many webinars are related to the dog training profession, there are also webinars designed for non-trainers, many of which are free. There are free webinars on training and behavior issues, dog sports, bite prevention, and more. Visit [www.apdt.com/education/webinars](http://www.apdt.com/education/webinars) for a current list of available webinars.

## National Train Your Dog Month

National Train Your Dog Month, another program of the APDT, is designed to promote the importance of training dogs. Visit [www.trainyourdogmonth.com](http://www.trainyourdogmonth.com) for more training tips and ideas to promote training.

## *Promote Positive Reinforcement Training*

C.L.A.S.S., through its evaluation, curriculum, and training resources, advocates the use of reward-based training. Positive, reward-based training minimizes the use of punishment and is fun for you and your dog! C.L.A.S.S. promotes healthy relationship-based training, training in which the communication is two-way, the mutual trust is strong, and the student (i.e. dog owner) gets to know the dog as an individual to help him reach his potential. It is training that is instructive, telling the dog, without anger or force, what we would like the dog to do.

The human tendency is to notice and react when a dog (or person) is doing something we *don't* like. Yet we would have much better relationships if we rewarded the dog (and person!) for doing things we *do* like. Help set the dog up for success by giving feedback and rewards for behavior you like, and by arranging the learning environment to make it easy for the dog to do the appropriate behavior as well as NOT to do the behavior you dislike.

Positive, reward-based training does not mean that your training is indulgent or without restraint. Clear boundaries and rules still need to be set for our canine companions. For one, dogs feel more secure with clear boundaries, because they know what is expected of them. Two, boundaries are necessary to maintain harmony in the human household. With positive, reward-based training methods, those rules and boundaries can be established without creating a confrontational atmosphere.

## Does Positive, Reward-Based Training Work?

Positive reinforcement—rewarding a desired behavior—is an effective and reliable method of teaching new behaviors or changing current behaviors in any physically and mentally healthy animal. Dogs are more likely to repeat behaviors that get rewarded, which is why positive reinforcement works.

Furthermore, learning occurs readily in a reward-based training program in which the dog feels safe and relaxed. Training that relies on the use of physical and emotional punishment creates stress, hinders the learning process, and can harm the relationship.

Positive reinforcement training is not based on using only food as a reward—it is about understanding the science behind positive reinforcement. It is a simple rule that behaviors resulting in pleasant consequences will be repeated, and behaviors with no payoff will decrease. Positive consequences can be anything from massages and belly rubs, to going for a walk, to sitting next to you, to playing games. The trainer who understands dogs as individuals with unique personalities, likes, and dislikes, can effectively use a variety of rewards in addition to food in training.

### ***Strengthen Dog/Student Relationships***

Another objective of C.L.A.S.S. is to strengthen relationships between students and their canine companions. A positive approach develops and safeguards harmonious relationships by maintaining a mutual trust between dog and student. The C.L.A.S.S. program strengthens relationships through effective communication, understanding, and quality time spent together.



Effective communication is essential to any relationship. Training is communicating to help a dog learn what we want him to do, not forcing him to do it. Dogs and humans are born speaking different languages. When a dog is brought into a human household, it is up to the human to communicate in a way the dog understands. Similarly, dogs have an expressive and well-developed system of body language for communication. If we expect the dog to listen to us, we should listen to what the dog is telling us.

The dog/student relationship is also strengthened through shared activity. With positive, rewards-based training we spend quality time with the dog, resulting in the dog learning so that he has the social skills to spend more time with people.

Dogs are living, emotional beings who thrive on social interaction; they require human attention to be well-adjusted, not to mention to learn appropriate social behavior. A dog left out in the yard is not only deprived of required human attention and a sense of belonging but the skills needed to live with humans, as dogs will do whatever works for them if left to their own devices.

### ***Encouragement of Ongoing Training***

With its emphasis on teaching and maintaining reliable life skills as well as opportunities to earn B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. certificates, the C.L.A.S.S. program supports continual training and encourages owners to engage in more shared activities with their dogs. Dogs are continually learning with every behavior, so why not use training to be proactive in what your dog does learn?

There are so many reasons to continue training with your dog:

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- Training redirects your dog's natural behaviors to acceptable outlets
- Training builds your dog's behavioral repertoire
- The more acceptable behaviors a dog learns, the less room there is for undesirable behaviors
- Training is fun
- Training increases the odds that a dog will stay in the family for his lifetime rather than be given up due to behavior issues
- Training makes it possible to engage in many more activities with a well-trained dog, such as:
  - Advanced training classes
  - Dog sports and games
  - Animal-assisted activities (i.e. visit nursing homes)
  - Outings
  - Vacations
  - Search and Rescue

### ***Support for Shelters and Rescues***

Another component of the C.L.A.S.S. program is to support training efforts of animal shelters and rescues. The lack of training or improper training is a primary reason for pets being relinquished to a shelter. C.L.A.S.S. can be used to promote adoption through training basic life skills, to provide dogs with mental and physical enrichment, to reduce kennel stress and behavioral problems, and to help keep dogs in their homes. C.L.A.S.S. can also provide a framework for a shelter volunteer program. The C.L.A.S.S. web site will feature dogs for adoption that have passed at least one level of the C.L.A.S.S. assessment, thereby giving adoptable dogs more visibility to potential adopters looking to bring home a new canine friend. For more information on using C.L.A.S.S. in a shelter, see the *Shelter Handbook*.

### **Study Guide for the Student Knowledge Assessment**

As stated in the *Overview Handbook*, all students shall take a short test, the Student Knowledge Assessment, to assess their understanding of dog behavior and training. Passing the Knowledge Assessment is a requirement to qualify students to start earning C.L.A.S.S. certificates with their dogs.

The questions in the Student Knowledge Assessment are based on the following information. We recommend that students use this information to prepare for and refer to during the test. This Study Guide is in a question and answer format covering basic dog information that is helpful for every pet owner to know, from Dog Training and Learning, to Communication and Body Language, to Dog Ownership.



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**Student Knowledge Assessment Study Guide****DOG OWNERSHIP*****Where can a student take a young puppy (8 – 12 weeks) who is current on all required vaccinations?***

Socialization of young puppies ages 8 to 12 weeks is a very important part of having a well-rounded dog. At this age they should have received a minimum of their first series of vaccines for protection against infectious diseases, and all puppy classes should require this at the very least for admission. The risk of a dog dying from exposure to diseases should be weighed against the risk of a dog being relinquished to a shelter or euthanized because of behavioral issues that develop due to a lack of socialization. This period of puppy learning is a critical period to help influence good behavior of dogs. Places that you can take your puppy include your veterinary clinic, a puppy class that observes proper sanitization and vaccines protocols, and locations where your puppy can meet people and see new things without meeting strange dogs.

***Why is picking up after my dog important?***

Part of responsible dog ownership is being a good neighbor. Nobody enjoys the chore of picking up after their dogs in our own backyard. Imagine how your neighbors would feel if they had to pick up after dogs they do not even own! Picking up after or “curbing” your dog is a law in many places but perhaps more importantly you should be a good neighbor and good citizen no matter where you are with your dog; always carry waste bags with you.

***Do dogs really need to be walked every day?***

Dogs need exercise every day just like humans do. Taking a leash walk with your dog is not only great physical exercise for your dog, but it also provides great mental stimulation and helps with ongoing socialization to new places and scents. Taking leash walks with your dog can also contribute toward the two of you building a strong relationship as you walk and (work / explore) together.

***What do I do if my dog is uncomfortable greeting another person?***

It is common courtesy to have a person ask to pet your dog. As a responsible student you should always be proactive in protecting your dog from situations that may make them uncomfortable. This means that you might need to take the first step to help ensure that approaching people are respectful of your dog’s space. Simply ask them to wait before reaching for your dog. You need to determine when—or if—your dog is comfortable enough for petting from a stranger. There is no need to be embarrassed or to feel rushed. Remember that just as there are some people who are a bit more shy and stand-offish, so are there dogs who may need to take some extra time to get to know a stranger. Some dogs may never enjoy meeting strangers and may need extra time and socialization to get used to a new person before allowing themselves to be touched. Always move at your dog’s pace and comfort level.

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***How do I keep my dog safe if someone is trying to bring a dog over to greet and my dog is reactive?***

Never rely on the actions of another person to keep your dog (and dogs around you) safe. As a responsible dog student you need do whatever it takes to immediately create distance between your dog and the other dog. Do not feel uncomfortable informing the other dog owner to please keep their dog away from yours and explain that your dog does not care for other dogs. If you have not already done so, consider consulting an expert in canine behavior modification to address your dog's reactive issues, too. Visit the APDT Trainer Search at [www.apdt.com/petowners/ts](http://www.apdt.com/petowners/ts) to find a trainer near you who can be of assistance.

***Why is crate training beneficial?***

Having a doggie safe area such as a crate will provide your dog with his own personal space and is essential to many aspects of your training. Your dog's crate will be used during times when you cannot supervise him or when you just need a break. Dogs are den animals so when they are properly introduced to the crate they usually love them. Crate training can keep your dog out of trouble when you are away from home too. You will not have to worry about him chewing on your furniture, shoes or other valuable items and you will not need to worry about him having an accident in your home. Crates can also be a safe place when traveling. Your dog's crate can be a safe and fun place to be!

***What is the best way to pick out treats or food for my dog?***

There is such a variance of products available on the market. Marketing and advertising are very alluring to humans, but that does not mean the ingredients are as good as the package may look. As a responsible pet student you will want to be aware that some ingredients may not be good for your dog. It is important to educate yourself as to what it takes to maintain good health for your pet for a long and healthy life. Talk to your veterinarian about your dog's nutritional needs and about what ingredients you should look for, and which you should avoid, when selecting a brand of food for your dog.

***Do I really need to trim my dog's nails if my dog does not like it?***

Proper nail trims ensure that your dog maintains a healthy, natural gait. There is no need for this to be a stressful event for your dog! By hiring a positive reinforcement-based dog trainer, you can learn humane, low-stress methods that will help your dog to accept nail trims, regardless of whether they are done by a veterinarian, a groomer, or you.

***If my dog does not like the leash, is it okay for me to just let him run loose?***

Responsible dog ownership includes keeping your dog safe from environmental hazards; many city and state laws also require dogs to be on-leash when in public. Even if you live in a rural area where environmental hazards are minimal or city and state laws do not apply, it is wise to prepare your dog to happily accept a leash. This can be quickly achieved with reward-based, positive reinforcement training.

***Why should a student check their dog's entire body every month?***

There are many health issues that may go unnoticed if not checked for regularly. Dogs are also masters at hiding their discomfort or pain. Going over your dog's entire body closely once a month, including looking at his teeth and gums, can potentially help you identify a health issue early in its development which may save you from a large veterinary bill later. Noticing the small things early on in many instances may even save your dog's life. Going over your dog's body regularly is also useful for checking that your dog is at a healthy weight.

***How is a dog's sense of smell and hearing different from a human's?***

Dogs observe the world much differently than humans. We rely mostly on our sense of sight, followed by our sense of hearing. Dogs, on the other hand, have a much keener sense of smell than humans. Therefore, they gather much more information about their surroundings by sniffing. They also have a much greater sense of hearing than humans and can hear sounds from up to a mile away or deep in the ground. Dogs can hear a mole traveling underground and can smell a minute amount of explosives / drugs hidden in an entire warehouse.

***Do all dogs of the same breed act the same? Are some breeds of dog inherently vicious and aggressive?***

Each breed of dog has their own unique personality, individual quirks and some are genetically predisposed to certain behaviors such as retrieving or tracking. Within any breed, there will be a range of calm to high energy dogs. Contrary to popular opinion there are no inherently "bad" breeds, but there are irresponsible owners that allow antisocial behavior to develop whether due to indifference or actually teaching or allowing the dog to behave in an antisocial manner.

***Student Knowledge Assessment Study Guide***  
**COMMUNICATION AND BODY LANGUAGE**

***Why do dogs bark and how should I talk to my dog when he is barking?***

Barking is as natural to a dog as eating, sleeping, and scratching. There are many different reasons why dogs bark. They bark to alert, out of frustration, because they are frightened, bored or even out of excitement during play. Many people do not realize that they may actually be contributing the barking by yelling or scolding their dog. Your dog may think you are joining in and will take the attention as a sign that you agree with his actions. Barking can be very frustrating to a person. If your dog is barking, it is important to first get his attention to interrupt the behavior. Using a cheerful, happy tone will help to get your dog focused on you rather than what he is barking at. When your dog responds to your cheerful voice, reward him with a high value treat for being quiet. The next step would be to redirect your dog's attention to an appropriate, quiet behavior, such as fetch, chewing on a bone, or playing with a toy.

***Why does my dog turn away when I hug him?***

Although humans love hugs, it does not necessarily mean that a dog will be comfortable with one. Dogs do not hug each other; in fact, dogs are very respectful of each other's space. There are many other ways to show affection to your pet. If your dog turns away when you hug him, your dog is politely letting you know he does not want or enjoy the hug. Hugging can be stressful for dogs to accept as he may feel trapped by the embrace. If you must, keep it short and sweet.

***How should someone greet a dog?***

When greeting a dog try to use slow, casual body movements. You should not be closer than two feet from the dog. If the dog does not approach you, turn your body slightly sideways to the dog, which is a nonthreatening posture, rather than squaring off / directly facing the dog. Always allow the dog to take the first steps to approach you and wait before you reach out to pet the dog. Once the dog feels comfortable enough to approach you, the first physical interaction you should have is to pet the dog under the chin, or along his side rather than reaching over the dog's head. If the dog does not want to approach you, simply respect the dog's choice and walk away politely.

***What is the best way to let my dog approach and greet another dog?***

In terms of canine social behavior, appropriate greetings are nose-to-tail. Nose-to-nose greetings in the dog world are not only impolite, but they increase the risk of your dog being bitten by a dog who may *not* love other dogs.

***What are calming signals and why does my dog use them?***

Dogs do not have the ability to use verbal language like humans. They rely on body language to communicate with each other and other species. One aspect of their body language is called *calming signals*. They use these signals to share their intentions with other dogs and with us. For instance dogs use their tail as a way to communicate their feelings. Just because the tail is wagging does not necessarily mean the dog is happy. Depending on how he is carrying his tail as well as other body language will tell you whether the dog is in the mood to play, nervous or in the mood to fight.

When a dog wants to show another dog that he means no harm, he will turn his head and sometimes entire body away from the imposing dog. Dogs may also scratch, yawn or lick their lips as a way to signal they are feeling too much pressure. With humans, dogs will display these same behaviors in an attempt to communicate they are uncomfortable in their current situation. We should "listen" to these behaviors and give our dogs a break from the situation at hand. Just like people, dogs cannot work effectively if they are under too much pressure.

Of course, dogs also scratch when they have an itch, and yawn when they are tired or bored, so the signals must be read in context.

***What are the best ways to communicate with my dog and why is understanding dog body language important?***

Many people feel their dogs understand every word they are saying and then are frustrated when their dog does not respond to something they are asking them to do. While dogs can learn to associate many words with items or actions, they fall far short of understanding everything people are saying.

They are, however, quite good at understanding your tone of voice. For instance, a happy, high pitched, cheery voice indicates that you are pleased or that you want to play. Your tone of voice is important in order to begin good communication with your dog, and to let him know what you expect from him and when. Dogs are also very good at communicating through body language, including facial expressions.

Once you start to understand your dog's body language you can start to communicate with your best friend in a way they can understand. The signs dogs use to communicate with each other include facial expressions, body postures and movements. Dogs specifically use their faces, ears, tails and eyes to communicate.

Students need to learn how dogs use different body movements to communicate, as a dog's body language is often misinterpreted. For example, we commonly think a wagging tail means a dog is friendly, but depending on the speed of the wag and the stiffness and posture of the body, it can also mean that a dog is potentially in a defensive or offensive threatening mode.

***How do dogs tell each other that they want to play?***

Since dog-dog play can sometimes be confused by people as fighting, it is important to understand their body language so no harm may come to either of them. Dog play is often initiated by a play bow which tells the other dog that he is doing this for fun. Dogs will often bark and growl a bit while playing. Typically they use a higher-pitched bark than a warning bark. Dogs will also take frequent quick breaks or pauses lasting just a couple of seconds during play. You will also likely see a lot of give and take during play. The dogs will essentially take turns with one dog leading and then the other. It is important to supervise the play sessions in case one dog has had enough, you can intervene if the other dog persists. For instance if one dog is consistently hiding underneath a chair or crying to get away it may be necessary for you to step in to protect the dog who does not want to play anymore.

***Student Knowledge Assessment Study Guide***

**TRAINING AND LEARNING**

***What kind of rewards can be used in positive reinforcement training?***

There are many types of rewards that will provide the necessary praise and positive reinforcement for your dog. Dogs have varied temperaments and interests. Not all dogs are food motivated in every context or environment. Other types of rewards can include a favorite toy, a game of chase or tug, petting, verbal praise and even teaching the dog a special trick he enjoys making the training fun.

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***What is clicker training?***

Clicker training is a type of positive reinforcement training that is a simple and very effective. The student uses a clicker, which is typically a small plastic box with a metal strip inside of it that makes a clicking sound when pressed. The clicker is pressed to mark the desired behavior, indicating to the dog that he did the right behavior and that a reward is on its way!

***What does “capturing” a behavior mean?***

Capturing a behavior can be one of the fastest ways to train a new behavior. For example if you want to teach your dog to lay down using the capture method you would simply wait for your dog to decide lie down and then reward him the moment he does the behavior. Timing is crucial for capturing a behavior. Think of it as a camera – you want to take a picture of the exact moment your dog does the behavior. You are not asking, commanding or luring him into the action. You are waiting for your dog to offer the behavior on his own. Capturing works best for teaching a behavior that your dog does naturally, such as sit, lying down, barking on cue, sniffing, or holding objects. The primary difference between capturing and other positive reinforcement training techniques is that the dog is making the decision to offer the behavior without being asked or prompted.

***Can my dog be trained positively if he does not like food as a reward?***

A reward is quite simply anything that your dog finds intrinsically rewarding. Some examples of rewards include toys, access to the outdoors, a car ride, or attention/affection from people. Food is often used because many dogs are motivated by it and food is also quick and easy to deliver to your dog. However; if your dog just ate his dinner, using a food reward may not be your best option. The key is to know what is rewarding to *your* dog in that moment! Make a list of 20 things that are rewarding to your dog including food, toys, treats and other life rewards such as belly rubs or playing with another dog!

***If my dog is not able to execute a behavior he has been trained to do reliably, what should I do?***

Ideally a dog should respond to a cue asked of him on the first time. If your dog does not respond to your cue within a few seconds of you asking him one of a few things is likely occurring – either he does not know the behavior as well as you may have originally thought, he may not be motivated enough to execute the behaviors or there is something in the environment that is distracting him from executing the behavior successfully. There is also a possibility that there may be some underlying medical condition that is preventing him from completing the behavior. If the problem persists you should consider checking with your veterinarian to rule out any medical issues. Do keep in mind that dogs are not robots and may become distracted or become unmotivated at some point. Keep consistent in your training and remember that occasionally rewarding your dog from time to time will be the best way to keep him motivated for a reliable response.

***What is positive reinforcement and why should I use it?***

The most effective way of teaching a new behavior is using positive reinforcement. Using positive reinforcement provides a win-win situation for you and your dog. The dog learns that doing what you want gets them what he wants – i.e., food, toys, affection. There are various ways to positively reinforce behavior. You can “lure” your dog into the desired behavior and then reward. You can wait for your dog to offer the desired behavior and then reward. You can use a marker signal, such as a clicker, to “mark” when a dog does something you want and then reward. Whatever behaviors you reward (or positively reinforce) are the behaviors that you will see increase.

***How important is consistency in training?***

Consistency is one of the most important aspects of training your dog. For instance, you do not want your dog on the couch. When you are home, you are able to enforce that rule. While you are not home, other people in the house may tell your dog it is ok to be on the couch. This can lead to obvious confusion for your dog. This also applies to many other behaviors such as barking, pulling on the leash, chewing, jumping, etc. Consistency simply means that everyone uses the same rules for the dog all of the time for clear training results.

***How do you reward a dog when teaching him a behavior that has multiple steps?***

An example of a behavior with multiple steps is fetch. The steps might be chasing after the ball, picking up the ball, and bringing the ball back to you. The trainer would teach each behavior step by step and reward each successful step. Eventually the student can gradually ask for more of the sequence of steps for the dog to achieve the reward. The steps might look something like this: Dog chases after the ball and gets a reward. Dog picks up the ball and gets a reward. Dog brings the ball back and gets a reward. Then, the dog chases the ball and picks the ball up which gets him a reward. Finally, the dog chases the ball, picks up the ball and brings the ball back (the complete behavior) to get the reward.

***What should I do if my dog is barking in his crate?***

You should first figure out why your dog is barking. There may be a number of reasons why he is barking in his crate including he is trying to get your attention, because he is stressed about his crate or perhaps because he needs to go to the bathroom? The most common answer is that he is barking because he wants your attention. There is a simple solution—ignore your dog. Do not look at him, do not say anything to him, you might even walk away. Once he stops barking wait a few seconds and then give him some attention which will be a reward for being quiet. By ignoring him your dog will quickly learn that being quiet, not barking, is the way to get your attention. If you think your dog needs to go to the bathroom, the answer is obvious. Let your dog out! If you think your dog is barking because he is stressed, speak with your trainer about ways to help him become better acquainted with his crate or what alternatives you can explore for containing your dog.

***What do I do if my puppy is jumping up and scratching me and leaving welts on my arms and legs?***

Teaching a puppy how to respect a human's space is an important life lesson. Lest the puppy think we do not ever want them to come into our space to relate, this life lesson must be taught in a positive fashion. It is helpful to redirect your puppy's attention to an alternative behavior instead of using you as a scratching post. Rewarding an alternative behavior such as "sit" instead of jumping all over you is one way to train the puppy to get his paws "off" of you. If the jumping, scratching and space invading is attention-driven, then a student must think about whether or not the puppy is getting meaningful, appropriate attention and exercise throughout the day. It is also important to make sure that your puppy's nails are well trimmed at all times.

***What should I do if my puppy is biting my hands every time we play?***

Puppy biting is a natural behavior for puppies. They explore their environment with their mouths. There are a few things you can do to minimize or eliminate puppy biting. During playtime make sure you are playing with a toy and not with your hands. A larger toy is better than a smaller toy and will help teach your dog to use his mouth appropriately during play. If your puppy's mouth comes into contact with your skin at any time the best reaction you can have is to say "ouch" and remove all of your attention for a few moments – just walk away, turn your back and ignore him. It will not take long before he learns what level of play is and is not acceptable. Consistency will be very important for your success. That means everyone needs to play the same way. Playing rough with your puppy, even if it's just with one person, will teach him that it's ok to play that way. It's also very important to make sure that your puppy is getting enough exercise. Try games like hide and seek with his favorite toy, set up a treat hunt, take him for a short jog in the park or give him a dog puzzle or brain game to wear him out mentally when you cannot wear him out physically.

***Do dogs automatically learn to generalize new behaviors they have learned to every person and every situation?***

Generalizing new behaviors is something dogs do not do well. You have to send a consistent message to your dog in all circumstances and keep it simple for your dog to avoid confusion. This means that everybody who comes into contact with your dog has to send the same message. For instance to teach your dog not to jump, you ask for and reward a behavior that you want instead, such as sit. To help him generalize the behavior you would ask him to sit when greeting you, family and friends. You would also need to ask him to sit in a variety of places and situations i.e. at the front door, while out for a walk, etc.

***My dog does not understand training. Is he just being stubborn or dominant?***

Training your dog can sometimes require patience. Dogs learn quickly what works and what does not work. Dogs are often called stubborn or dominant when they seem to ignore our requests. What they are truly displaying is confusion or a lack of not understanding what you're asking them to do. Perhaps your dog has not generalized the behavior to that situation, or your dog is stressed, distracted or perhaps your dog has not made the connection between your cue and the behavior you are seeking yet.

*(End of Study Guide)*

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## Preparing for a C.L.A.S.S. Evaluation

The following are possible ways to help a team prepare for an evaluation.

### ***Group Class***

As stated in the *C.L.A.S.S. Overview Handbook*, a practical way for students to prepare themselves and their dogs for the C.L.A.S.S. Evaluation is to take a training course from a dog training instructor to learn and practice the C.L.A.S.S. skills. Group classes help to structure the training process, allow a student to practice in mock evaluations with a professional trainer providing feedback, and add an element of distraction for which the student can train with other dogs, people, and smells. The training classes are optional; the student is not required to attend a C.L.A.S.S. class in order to take the evaluation. To join a group class, locate a trainer with the C.L.A.S.S. Instructor search ([www.mydoghasclass.com/instructors/search](http://www.mydoghasclass.com/instructors/search)) or Evaluator search ([www.mydoghasclass.com/evaluators/search](http://www.mydoghasclass.com/evaluators/search)).

### ***Evaluation Run-Throughs***

Before taking an evaluation, it is a good idea to do some practice run-throughs. Practice run-throughs help the student become familiar with the evaluation, establish a baseline of skill, and help assess training progress. Students can download sample evaluation forms for each level from their Student account to use in evaluation run-throughs.

### ***Generalize Skills***

Since dogs do not generalize well, we recommend that students practice each test item with their dog in a variety of locations and situations to help the dog and student generalize the skills rather than simply learn a single pattern. Even if a dog can perform the necessary skills in his home or training class room, the dog may not be able to perform the skills in other locations or environments. Practice your dog's skills in the back yard, the front yard, a park, a friend's house, a dog-friendly business, while on a walk, when around a variety of people.



## Evaluation Day

### ***Check-In Process***

For the check-in process, the Evaluator will request the Student and Dog ID numbers to note on the Evaluation Form. If these ID numbers are unknown or not yet registered, the student will need to provide this information to the Evaluator before the evaluation scores may be reported to the C.L.A.S.S. Office.

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Next, the Evaluator will perform the following checks:

1. For a B.A. Level evaluation, the signed Veterinarian Certificate will be requested (unless this certificate has been presented to the Evaluator prior to the evaluation.)
  - a. If available, the Evaluator shall keep this certificate with the student's evaluation.
  - b. If not available, the student may still take the evaluation; however, when the Evaluator reports the team's score, it will be noted that the Veterinarian Certificate requirement, and therefore the B.A. Level, is not yet complete. The student will then be required to send the completed Veterinarian Certificate to the Evaluator or C.L.A.S.S. Office to fulfill this requirement.
2. Required Equipment
  - a. Permissible collar or harness
  - b. 6-foot non-retractable leash
  - c. Doggy clean-up supplies (waste bags, poop scooper, etc.)
3. If the student is a Junior Student, a "Waiver and Release" form must be signed by the parent or adult mentor, and the parent or adult mentor must be present during the evaluation.

### ***Checklist of Student Supplies***

Here is a checklist of the required and recommended supplies for students on the day of the C.L.A.S.S. Evaluation. It is a good idea to prepare these items the day before the test to have everything in one place on the evaluation day.

#### **Required Supplies**

- ☐ Permissible collar or harness
- ☐ 6-foot leash
- ☐ Doggy clean-up supplies (waste bags, poop scooper, etc.)

#### **Recommended Supplies**

- ☐ C.L.A.S.S. Student ID and Dog ID Numbers
- ☐ Signed Veterinarian Certificate (B.A. Level only)
- ☐ C.L.A.S.S. Evaluator contact information
- ☐ Address and directions to evaluation site
- ☐ Water and water bowl
- ☐ Training treats
- ☐ Mat or bed for your dog's comfort
- ☐ Toy, chew, and/or stuffed Kong for B.A. Settle and B.A. Give and Take tests (Evaluator also provides this)
- ☐ Optional: Crate for B.A. Settle test
- ☐ Evaluation fee, if applicable



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## ***Tips for Success on Evaluation Day***

Here are some tips to keep in mind to help make the C.L.A.S.S. evaluation the positive experience it is intended to be.

### **Potty your dog prior to the evaluation**

Even though allowances are made for dogs to potty during the Warm-Up Time, giving your dog ample time to potty beforehand will help everyone feel more comfortable.

### **Arrive promptly**

Allow time so that you and your dog have time to acclimate to the evaluation site without rushing around.

### **Be prepared**

Use the “Checklist of Student Supplies” above so that you arrive prepared.

### **Maintain a positive attitude**

Visualize what an Excellent performance looks like for each evaluation item. If you cannot see that in your mind’s eye or doubt that it’s possible, you are probably right. If mistakes happen, be encouraged to learn from those mistakes rather than be discouraged from trying anymore; mistakes happen to all of us.

### **Actively listen**

Turn your attentions off of yourself and focus on others (including your dog). Listening is not only courteous but if we open our ears, we can learn a lot in the process. Before you talk, listen.

### **Relax with your dog**

While an evaluation does not represent the final verdict of the student’s or dog’s behavior, it is a testing situation which may cause stress for the student. Worrying about the test will not help and may cause distress in your dog. Here are some tips to help the human de-stress so that both the student and dog may enjoy the evaluation process.



- Look at the evaluation from the dog’s point of view. The dog does not care that he is being evaluated. See the evaluation as just another opportunity to work together as a team and enjoy spending time together.
- Breathe deeply and release the tension in your body. Your dog reads your body language and will see your raised shoulders, tight lips, and short breaths as a sign of your stress. Since dogs do not understand the concept of a test, your dog may react to your stress by disconnecting from you or becoming stressed himself. If your dog sees you relaxed with a loose body and normal breathing, he will be more likely to feel at ease, too.

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- Relax your mind by focusing on what you are thankful for. Leave worries, grudges, and insults in the past. Connect with your dog in the present.
- Take your time and don't get in a hurry. Doing the skills correctly is more important than trying to rush through the evaluation quickly.
- Have FUN! Your dog doesn't care if you have to re-take the evaluation a few times. Focus on having fun with your dog throughout the process. In this way, you help create a positive association for your dog with the evaluation, and no matter what score you receive, you will both leave happy.

## **C.L.A.S.S. Office Contact Information**

Ann Allums, Special Programs Coordinator

[class@apdt.com](mailto:class@apdt.com)

Office 800-PET-DOGS (800-738-3647)

Fax 864-331-0767

104 S. Calhoun Street

Greenville, SC 29601

## **Appendix**

## ***Selecting a Trainer / Using the APDT Trainer Search Directory***

The APDT's mission is to promote caring relationships between dogs and people by educating trainers in canine behavior while emphasizing professionalism and reward-based training. The APDT, as an association, promotes professionalism for dog trainers and provides educational opportunities for new and experienced trainers and behavior consultants. The APDT Trainer Search Directory ([www.apdt.com/ts](http://www.apdt.com/ts)) is provided as a free service for pet owners to locate dog trainers in their area.

APDT members reflect a variety of methodologies and training philosophies, not all of which may reflect the APDT's mission and vision statements and guiding principles; therefore, the APDT does not endorse its members listed on the online Trainer Search. The APDT does not advise choosing a trainer based simply on the information in the APDT Trainer Search Directory or the trainer's web site, as often this information can be incomplete. The list below is provided to help you find the right person for you and your canine companion when interviewing prospective trainers.

### **1. What education and continuing education has the trainer had?**

You want to make sure the trainer has pursued a valid dog training education and understands how learning occurs. The trainer should also understand the science of reinforcement and punishment (known as "learning theory") and be committed to using the least aversive methods possible.

In addition to how they became educated to become a trainer, they should indicate that they regularly attend continuing education opportunities. A conscientious trainer will stay informed about innovations in dog training and behavior tools and techniques. (APDT Professional members all are required through their individual certifications to get a certain number of continuing education hours to maintain their status.)

### **2. Does the trainer hold any certifications?**

While certification is not required to be a dog trainer, trainers who have gone the extra step to become certified demonstrate a commitment to knowledge and professionalism. You can review "What Do All Those Letters After Everyone's Names Mean?" at [www.apdt.com/petowners/choose](http://www.apdt.com/petowners/choose) for more information on specific certifications. Remember that not all certifications are created equal! Certifications that are recognized for APDT Professional Membership require regular continuing education in order to maintain the certification and the tests are independent of any school or program and are based on testing an established body of knowledge.

### **3. Can the trainer communicate well with both people and the dogs?**

You want to make sure that the trainer communicates kindly and effectively to your dog, and yet also explains procedures well enough to you, the dog owners, who will need to maintain training once the trainer is gone. One of the biggest misconceptions dog owners have is that they are hiring someone to train their dog. A good

dog trainer should really be teaching and coaching you on how to train your dog. Even a trainer who does board and train, or "day training" (where they train the dog initially for you) needs to be able to show you how to work with your dog in the end. If the trainer does not seem to explain things well, or has poor people skills, this could impede your ability to learn effectively.

A skilled trainer, whether in a private or group class setting, should:

- Provide a clear explanation of each lesson.
- Demonstrate the behavior(s) that you will be teaching to your dog.
- Give you ample time to practice the lesson.
- If in a class setting, assist students individually to ensure that training is being performed properly.

#### **4. Does the trainer answer questions in terms you can understand?**

Make sure that you can comprehend and connect with a dog trainer you are working with. You should feel welcome to ask questions and feel that you are learning more about your dog.

#### **5. What methods and tools does the trainer use?**

You want to make sure you are comfortable with the trainer's methods of working with dogs before he or she works with your dog. You should feel comfortable asking for references from veterinarians or former clients. A skilled and professional dog trainer uses humane training methods which are not harmful to the dog or the owner, and does not use practices such as hanging, beating, kicking, shocking, and all similar procedures or training devices that could cause the dog great pain, distress, or that have imminent potential for physical harm. Remember that you have the absolute right to stop any trainer or other animal care professional who, in your opinion, is causing your dog undue harm or distress.

When speaking with a trainer about their tools and methods, they should be willing and able to answer any questions you have about them and how they relate to the training of your dog. Be wary if the trainer is evasive or seems unable to answer your questions.

If you still feel unclear about how a particular trainer trains, ask them how they would teach a simple behavior, such as "sit" or ask them how they let the dog know they did something right and what would they do if they asked a dog to sit and the dog did not comply.

You can also review "Understanding Training Methods" at [www.apdt.com/petowners/choose](http://www.apdt.com/petowners/choose) to help you decide.

**6. If you are looking for a trainer who teaches classes, keep the above questions in mind but also make sure to look at the following:**

Ask the trainer if you could observe a class. While you are there, look for a few things like:

- How big is the class? In general, up to ten dog/student teams is a good number to follow, unless the trainer has assistants and can handle a larger class.
- Are the dogs happy? The dogs should look like they are enjoying the class – remember training should be fun!
- Are the people enjoying themselves? Look for a class that encourages all family members to attend and participate.
- Is there a good ratio of trainers to people and their dogs? You want to make sure the trainer gives people and dogs individual attention as well as communicates to all on a group level. For larger classes they may enlist the help of assistants to manage the class and ensure that you and your dog are still receiving some one on one attention.
- Does the class facility or outside area look appropriate? Make sure that the area is secure, clean and sanitary. Is there enough room for all the people and dogs to participate in all of the activities comfortably?
- Are all family members encouraged to participate, especially in the puppy classes? Class attendees should be encouraged to participate, invited to join in the activities, and the trainer should be able to incorporate all significant figures in the dog's life.
- Must all participants present proof of a dog's vaccinations before starting the class? A good trainer will always require proof of vaccinations before a group class in order to ensure all participants are healthy and safe!

**7. Does the trainer guarantee his or her work?**

Because of the variables in dog breeding and temperament and owner commitment and experience, a trainer cannot and should not guarantee the results of his or her training. Be wary of any trainer who gives you such a guarantee. However, a trainer can and should be willing to ensure client satisfaction with her or her professional services.

**8. Does the trainer ask you information about your pet?**

A trainer should ask you some basic information about your dog, particularly if you are calling regarding resolving a behavior problem. The trainer should at least ask you some information about your pet's behavior, what you have done to resolve it, and other background information. Be wary of a trainer that does not ask you any questions but presses you to make an appointment, or that explains solutions for the problem before they've gotten any background history from you, or even worse, recommends euthanasia for a pet!



## 9. What will the trainer's availability be for follow-up?

Look for a trainer that is open to follow up questions regarding your pet, whether via telephone or email. Particularly with a dog with a behavior issue, you want to find a trainer who is reasonably accessible if you have questions regarding the training program.

In addition to the above questions, some other things to look out for when looking for a trainer are:

- Trainers who spend an inordinate amount of time either on the phone and/or on their web site and marketing materials denigrating other trainers and training methods. A trainer should spend their time telling you in a positive manner why you should hire them and not bashing the competition.
- Trainers who use and rely on an overuse of marketing spin, i.e. "natural dog training," "whispering," "red zone dogs," etc. A trainer should be able to explain what they do in clear and simple language.
- Trainers who use scare tactics to intimidate you into hiring them. If your dog has an aggression problem, then obviously yes, this is a serious issue and you need to work with a professional, but you should work with someone that you feel comfortable with and who is supportive.
- Trainers who appear to dislike your particular breed, or mixed breed, of dog. While it's obviously unlikely that every trainer in existence loves every breed of dog equally, and every trainer has their preferences and breeds they do not care for, a trainer should not express openly their dislike for your breed of dog and indicate that they may treat your dog differently because of this dislike.
- Trainers who describe using food as bribery. While many good trainers do use other forms of reinforcement such as toys, play, tug, etc. instead of food, calling the use of food "bribery" indicates that the trainer does not understand the basic concepts of learning theory in regards to animal behavior. This is one of the values of a trainer continuing their education through regular attendance at seminars, workshops, conferences and online education, as well as being a member of the APDT.
- Trainers who do not want your children involved in training. While it is of course acceptable to restrict certain interactions between children and dogs due to their age and safety issues, a trainer should be willing to work with the children in your family to teach them how to interact with their pet. Avoid a trainer that indicates that he or she does not want to work with your children or any other members of the family.

## Are You Ready for the B.A. Evaluation?

Use this 3-page checklist to assist you in determining if you and your dog are ready for the B.A. Evaluation.

### OVERVIEW

Are you familiar with the rules for when you can use food treats, petting, and toys/games during an evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you familiar with the rules of What is NOT Acceptable during an evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you understand the difference between a cue and praise?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What is your release word or gesture?	
Can your dog respond reliably if you are not holding a treat or wearing a treat pouch?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How do you use your voice to reward your dog for performing a behavior you cued?	
Are you in the habit of providing verbal rewards (praise) but not treats, toys, or touch until the test item is complete?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have a plan if your dog has trouble focusing at any point?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you seen a C.L.A.S.S. Evaluation performed, either live or by demonstration video?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

### 1. WAIT AT THE DOOR

What cue(s) do you use for this behavior?	
Can your dog wait without getting out of position while you open a door?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you practiced successfully with doors at different locations, and not just doors at home?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does your dog wait on one cue, without depending on your body or hand gesture hovering or blocking him/her from moving out of position?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you understand when to release your dog from the wait?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

### WARM-UP TIME

How will you use the warm up time to your dog's benefit?	
Do you have a way to differentiate to your dog when it's ok to absorb the environment and when it's time to attend to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you practiced exploring unfamiliar places?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you trained your dog not to eliminate?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

### 2. COME AND LEASHING UP MANNERS

What cue(s) do you use for these behaviors?	
Have you practiced having your dog come while attached to an unfamiliar long line?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does your dog come right away after one cue, including in unfamiliar environments?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you practiced attaching your leash before removing the long line?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

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### 3. LOOSE LEASH WALKING AND ATTENTION

What cue(s) do you use for these behaviors?	
What words and gestures do you use to reward your dog for loose leash walking?	
Have you practiced successfully in unfamiliar environments, especially where unfamiliar dogs may have been walking just before you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you practiced with cones and other unfamiliar objects so these will not distract you or your dog?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you trained your dog to keep the leash loose when you're moving together or making 180 degree turns?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will you perform the eye contact/attention exercise before, during, or after the loose leash walking?	

### 4. MEET AND GREET

What cue(s) do you use for these behaviors?	
Has your dog had lots of positive associations with politely meeting a variety of strangers in a variety of locations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you practiced with people who move tentatively, make direct eye contact with your dog, or speak to your dog?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How will you decided whether to grant permission to the stranger to pet and/or to give a treat?	
Is your dog most likely to be at ease and successful in a sit, down, or a stand?	

### 5. LEAVE IT

What cue(s) do you use for this behavior?	
Have you practiced after your dog watches someone else place the Leave It items?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you practiced with different kinds of crumpled paper, plush toys, and chews?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you practiced with objects your dog has never seen before or have unfamiliar scents?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can your dog successfully respond to "Leave It" even when he's encountering an object "cold" as opposed to having warmed up with it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can your dog Leave It without the leash ever tightening?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How will you handle it if your dog is already focusing on one of the objects just before you begin the test item?	
At what point in walking past the objects will you cue your dog to leave it?	

### 6. WAIT FOR THE FOOD BOWL

What cue(s) do you use for this behavior?	
Can your dog maintain position without you blocking him/her with a hand signal or your leg, hovering with your body or hand signal, or reminding him to stay in position by hesitating or stopping while lowering the bowl?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can your dog to wait without leaving position when the bowl touches, until you release him?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

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**7. STAY**

What cue(s) do you use for this behavior?	
How will you decide whether to have your dog do a sit or a down?	
Have you practiced in unfamiliar locations and surfaces?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you practiced with someone standing near you and talking with you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can your dog stay for 1 minute without needing multiple verbal reminders or hand signals?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How will you use praise during this test item?	
Do you understand when to release your dog from the stay?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**8. SETTLE**

What cue(s) do you use for this behavior?	
Have you taught your dog to truly relax on a mat or in the crate, or does he/she show signs of tension or stress?	
Have you practiced sitting in a chair beside your dog, and in unfamiliar locations where there might be smells of other dogs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can your dog settle without your physical touch?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you understand when to release your dog from the settle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**9. GIVE AND TAKE**

What cue(s) do you use for this behavior?	
Do you reward your dog, more often than not, when you take something away?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can your dog Give It without first seeing a treat in your hand?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How will you decide which chew object you will use?	
Have you practiced with a high-value object so your dog will engage with it for 10 seconds?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have a plan for how you will take the object after cuing Give It (e.g. have the dog deliver it to your hand, take it from his mouth, or have him drop it on the floor)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you practiced in different locations where there may be scents of other dogs and another person nearby?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**BONUSES**

What trick will you choose for Bonus 1 (rollover, spin, fetch, speak, or paw)?	
What cue(s) do you use for Bonus 1?	
What trick will you choose for Bonus 2?	
What cue(s) do you use for Bonus 2?	
Have you faded any lures (as well as pretending to hold a treat) so your dog does the tricks on a clear verbal or hand signal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

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## **C.L.A.S.S. Student FAQ's**

### **How do I find my Dog ID Number?**

You may look up your dog's Dog ID Number at any time by logging in to [www.mydoghasclass.com](http://www.mydoghasclass.com) with your Student ID Number and password.

### **Do I have to begin with the B.A. Level Evaluation?**

Yes, all student/dog teams begin in the B.A. Level. While the higher levels build on some of the skills in the B.A., there are different skills tested in each level. After passing the B.A. Level, teams are eligible to be evaluated at the M.A. level. After earning their M.A., they may enter the Ph.D. level. If a student takes a higher level evaluation without passing the previous level, their score for the higher level will be invalid. For example, if you enter the M.A. before passing the B.A., you will have to re-take the M.A. after you pass the B.A. Level.

### **Do I need a Veterinary Certificate for the M.A. and Ph.D. Levels?**

No, the Veterinary Certificate is only required for the B.A. Level.

### **Do I need to register my dog for each level in which I would like to be evaluated?**

Yes, a dog must be registered separately for the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. at [www.mydoghasclass.com](http://www.mydoghasclass.com). You are allowed to take more than one level of an evaluation in a single day if you pass the previous level.

### **Do I need to register my dog again to retake the Evaluation?**

No. Students only register their dog one time for a particular level, except when renewing their certificate. If a team gets a non-passing score and would like to retake an Evaluation, the student only needs to contact the Evaluator to reschedule an evaluation. They will use same Dog ID assigned when first registered for that level.

### **Do Award Certificates expire?**

Certificates are valid for 3 years.

### **How do I renew my certificate?**

To renew a certificate that has expired, there are three steps: 1) renew your dog's registration for the highest level of C.L.A.S.S. certificate your dog has earned, 2) pass the C.L.A.S.S. Evaluation, and 3) pass the online Student Knowledge Assessment.

### **When my certificate expires, do I need to renew all levels that my dog has earned?**

Students only need to renew the highest certificate earned. For example, if a dog has earned his Ph.D., after 3 years, he only needs to take the Ph.D. level to renew.



**How long does the evaluation take?**

The evaluation process takes about 30 minutes, but may vary depending on each situation. Plan to arrive early to allow yourself and your dog time to acclimate to the testing environment so you are not rushed on the day of the evaluation.

**Do I have to repeat the entire evaluation or can I just retake the test items we missed?**

If a team receives a non-passing score and would like to try again, the entire evaluation must be repeated. This ensures validity of the testing process.

**What is a C.L.A.S.S. Evaluation like?**

Watch a short video at [www.mydoghasclass.com](http://www.mydoghasclass.com) for a preview of what to expect when you and your dog go through a C.L.A.S.S. Evaluation.

**How do you define a No-Pull Harness?**

No-Pull Harnesses are devices designed to manage a dog's pulling. They differ from standard harnesses in that standard harnesses are made so that the dog can safely pull without putting pressure on the dog's neck. There are different styles of No-Pull harnesses—some are made for the leash to clip in front of the dog's chest and work with the dog's natural opposition reflex, and some are made for the leash to clip on the back and put tension under the front legs if the dog pulls. These harnesses do not teach the dog not to pull; they are a management tool.

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# **[www.mydoghasclass.com](http://www.mydoghasclass.com)**

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