

PUPPY APTITUDE EVALUATION

Breed: _____ **Sex:** _____ **Whelped:** _____ **Name:** _____

Date Tested: _____ **Testers:** _____

Social Attraction

Purpose: Degree of attraction to people.

Method: Place pup in testing area 4 feet from tester, who coaxes puppy to her/him.

Score: Comes readily, tail up, jumps bites at hands.....1, Comes readily, tail up, paws licks at hands.....2, Comes readily, tail up.....3, Comes readily, tail down.....4, Comes hesitantly, tail down.....5, Does not come at all.....6,

Comments: Explores before; Sits & waits before; Excited: Hesitant; Fearful; Ignores; Avoids; Runs off afraid of new surroundings

Following

Purpose: Degree of willingness to follow human leadership.

Method: Stand up and walk away from puppy, encouraging verbally.

Score: Follows readily, tail up, gets underfoot, bites at feet.....1, Follows readily, tail up, gets underfoot.....2, Follows readily, tail up.....3, Follows readily, tail down.....4, Follows hesitantly, tail down.....5, No follow or went away.....6

Comments: Playful; Explores; Sits & Waits; Fearful; Ignores; Avoids

Restraint

Purpose: Degree of dominance or Sub- mission. Response to social/physical dominance.

Method: Gently roll the pup on his back and hold it for 30 seconds.

Score: Struggles fiercely, flails, bites.....1, Struggles fiercely, flails.....2, Settles, struggles, settles with eye contact.....3, Slight struggle, then settles.....4, No struggle, taile tucked.....5, No struggle, strains to avoid eye contact.....6

Comments: Relaxed; Stiff; Slight squirming; Vocalises

Social Dominance

Purpose: Degree of acceptance of human social dominance. How "forgiving" the pup is.

Method: Pup sits facing tester at a 45 angle. Tester strokes pup and put his/her face close to pup.

Score: Jumps, paws, bites, growls.....1, Jumps, paws, licks.....2, Cuddles up to tester, tries to lick face.....3, Sits quietly, accepts petting, nudges/licks hands.....4, Rolls over, no eye contact.....5, Goes away and stays away.....6

Comments: Indifferent; Avoids; Displacement-stares off; sudden interest in other things. Eager; Hostile;

Elevation Dominance

Purpose: Degree of accepting dominance while in a position of no control

Method: Cradle the pup under its belly, fingers interlaced, and elevated just off ground for 30 seconds.

Score: Struggles fiercely, bites.....1, Struggles.....2, No struggle, relaxed, tail wags.....3, No struggle, relaxed.....4, No struggle.....5, No struggle, froze, tail/rear legs tense.....6

Comments: Undulates; Slight stiffness; Vocalizes; Slight struggle.

Retrieving (Obedience & Aptitude)

Purpose: Degree of willingness to work with humans. High correlation between ability to retrieve and successful guide dogs, obedience dogs, and field trial dogs.

Method: Attract pup's attention with crumpled paper ball. When he is watching, toss paper 4 feet away. When pup goes after it back up two feet and encourage him to come back.

Score: Chases object, picks it up and runs away.....1, Chases object, stands over it, does not return.....2, Chases object, picks it up and returns to tester.....3**, Chases object, returns without object to tester.....4, Starts to chase, loses interest.....5, Does not chase.....6

Comments: Enthusiastic; Slow to catch on; Distracted; Repeats; Reluctant to leave person; Hesitant about area; Interested; Avoids objects; Disinterested

Touch Sensitivity

Purpose: Degree of sensitivity to touch.

Method: Take webbing of one front foot and press between finger and thumb lightly, gradually increasing pressure on a scale from 1-10. Stop as soon as the puppy shows discomfort.

Score: 9-10 counts before response.....1, 7-8 counts before response.....2, 5-6 * counts before response.....3, 3-4 * counts before response.....4, 1-2 counts before response.....5

Comments: No response at all; Slight response; Very sensitive; Vocalizes.

Sound Sensitivity

Purpose: Degree of sensitivity to sound

Method: Place pup in center of testing area and make a sharp noise a few feet away. A large metal spoon struck sharply on a metal pan twice works well.

Score: Locates the sound, walks towards it.....1, Locates sound, barks.....2, Locates sound, shows curiosity, walks towards it.....3, Locates the sound.....4, Cringes, back off, hides.....5, Ignores sound, shows no curiosity.....6

Comments: Startles; Whines softly; Hears but disregards

Sight Sensitivity

Purpose: Degree of response to moving object; chase instinct. Drive to pursue. Useful for Schutzhund & hunting.

Method: Tie a string around a toy (use bright battery operated toy that makes a noise and has flashing lights) and drag in front of the puppy from left to right.

Score: Looks, attacks, bites.....1, Looks, barks, tail-up.....2, Looks curiously, attempts to investigate.....3, Looks, does not go forward, tail down.....4, Runs away, hides.....5, Ignores, shows no curiosity.....6

Comments: Notices but no chase; Enthusiastic; Tentative; Loses interest; Becomes more confident as attacks,

Energy Level

Purpose: Degree of physical energy.

Method: Observe pup on the other sub-tests and score according to most frequent activity observed. Check with breeder for confirmation.

Score: Continually runs, pounces, wiggles, paws.....High, Mostly trots, occasionally runs, pounces, wiggles.....Medium, Walks slowly, sits quietly, remains in position usually.....Low, Stand rigidly, eyes roll, tail down, ears back.....Stress

Scoring: 1 2 3 4 5 6

** Indicates desirable behaviors for training

Interpretation:

Mostly 1's - Very dominant animals with definite aggressive tendencies, may be quick to bite. Not good with children and elderly. If touch sensitive, it may be difficult to train. Not a dog for the inexperienced or timid handler. Owner must establish dominance and provide leadership. A candidate for schutzhund work might have son 1's, especially in sight and touch; but 1's in restraint and in touch promise a very difficult job in training.

Mostly 2's - Dominant and can be provoked into biting. Responds to firm, consistent, fair handling and are loyal and devoted to humans it respects. May be too boisterous, outgoing and active for elderly, and too dominant for small children.

For most breeds, mostly 3's are the best prospects for the average owner. Looks to humans for leadership, adapts well to new situations. If calm, it is generally all right with children and elderly but may be too exuberant and active. This makes the best obedience prospect. The exception in our experience is with the nordic breeds, such as Akitas and American Eskimos, which seem to be skewed toward the lower end of the scoring. An Akita here may be equivalent to a mostly-one-scorer in an other breed, German Shepherds, for instance.

Mostly 4's are submissive and adapt to most households. They may be slightly less outgoing and active, but usually get along well with children and train well. On the other hand, they are not suited to very assertive people, especially, or to particularly loud, active families. He may need a little more exposure to develop confidence and should be treated gently.

Mostly 5's are extremely submissive and need special handling to build confidence. Coddling and catering to his fears will only reinforce them. He does not adapt well to change and confusion and needs a very regular, staple, structured environment. May not be safe around small children, since he can be a biter when severely stressed. It also not a good choice for a beginner, since the tent to reward fearful behavior by attempting to reassure the dog.

Mostly 6's are independent dogs. They are not affectionate and may dislike petting and cuddling. Establishing a relation with him may be difficult, especially a working one. Not recommended for children who may force attention on him. Not a good choice for a beginner. When coupled with 1's especially in restraint, he is likely to bite under stress. With 5's the dog is likely to hide from people or freeze when approached by a stranger. The independent puppy needs a lot of individual attention from an owner to encourage bonding with humans. If he is left to his own devices, such as being put out in the back yard and generally ignored, he will remain very aloof and unattached. The behaviors one associates with a human-loving dog may be missing. Likewise, if left with other dogs, he will form allegiances with them and never truly bond well with humans. Most nordic breeds tested are independent and submissive.

This test is adapted from the Wendy Volhard PAT testing method by Pamela Byrne and Sherry Wallis.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS: Inhibited, Excitable, Normal for breed-yes; no; Curious; Bold; Timid; Fearful; Cautious; Careful; Reckless; Friendly; Aloof; Sleepy; Too Immature; Needs-exposure; Calming; Individual attention;
OTHER: _____

COMMENTS: Pamela Byrne and Sherry Wallis have both bred German Shepherd Dogs. Sherry has also bred Akitas and Alaskan Malamutes. Pamela breeds Cardigan Welsh Corgis. We have tested all these, Belgian Sheepdogs, Australian Cattle Dogs, Shetland Sheepdogs, Papillons, American Eskimos, Bullmastiffs, Bichons Frises, Weimaraners, and others to date. Feedback from purchasers and breeders has generally been favorable for testing as an indicator of later personality. When your dog is grown, give one of us a call and let us know how he has developed. We really would like to hear from you.

Where we have been able to test a lot of dogs in a breed, we have noted they tend to be similar in behavior. They do not, however, represent as a group the norm which is pictured by those using these to select obedience dogs. This is, breeds like Akitas, which are not noted for their trainability show a definite skewing upward on scores because they are highly independent. Thus, an Akita scoring mostly 2's would be highly abnormal. In fact the two dogs I had that were mostly 3's both attacked guests in the owner's house. Therefore, we have a spot to check whether the dog represents behavior we regard as normal for the breed in our experience. Hopefully, this will become much broader and better with time.

Interpretations must always be done with an eye toward the breed. If you will devote some time to thinking about the implications of the test results and observations with regards to training methods (of which there are as many as there are trainers), you can maximize the effectiveness of your program as well as compensating for your dog's individual temperament quirks.

If you are interested in reading further: Wm. Campbell's **Behavior Problems in Dogs**, Fox's **Understanding Your Dog**, Pfaffenberger's **New Knowledge of Dog Behavior**, Scott & Fuller's **Genetics and Social Behavior of the Dog**, Barwigs's **The German Shepherd Book**, the **AKC Gazette** March 1979, March 1985, May 1987 and Off-Lead an obedience magazine are excellent sources. Any book by Carol Benjamin is good for general training.

Tested by: _____

Observed by: _____ **Date:** _____