

ACADEMY OF CANINE BEHAVIOR

Word List

The following list of words are some of the vocabulary taught to dogs that are enrolled in our training program. This is just a sampling of words - not all dogs will need to learn every word on the list. Some of the words also have hand signals that can be used. When saying most of these words to your dog,, please keep in mind that you are requesting that the dog do something for you. *Give the command in a calm, authoritative voice.* It helps if you remember to say the word as it is spelled, e.g., the word “sit” is a three-letter word - do not say it as if it were spelled with more letters “s-s-i-i-i-i-t-t”. To get a little more authority in your voice, you may say the word “sit” as “SIT”. But this should not be done with an increase in volume. It is an authoritative TONE that should be used. The commands you use should also be used in praising the dog for a job well done. Tell the dog what it did that made you happy, e.g., “GOOD SIT!”

GOOD: This word is used to communicate with your dog that he has made the right choice. It is said with a pleasant tone, and sometimes accompanied by physical praise (treats or pats). When your dog hears this word, there should be no doubt in his mind that you are happy with him. Be genuine with your praise!

NO: This may be the hardest word to use properly. When you use this word, the dog should NOT feel a sense of dread. Rather, it is used to let the dog know that he must *THINK*, as he has made the wrong choice. If he puts his mind in gear and pays attention to you, you will help him figure out what he can do to make you happy. It is in conjunction with this word that you are allowed to give the dog a correction. Please make sure you understand this concept completely before you work with your dog.

OKAY: Okay is the word that lets the dog know that she is done doing whatever you just asked her to do; the *release*. It is important for you to learn to use this word consistently, as it helps the dog understand the difference between one command and the next.

RIGHT HERE: An informal version of the command “Heel”. When your dog is on leash, it is both the dog’s job and your job to make sure there is no tension on it. Most dogs do not seem to be bothered by a tight leash, even if it causes them constant pressure on their necks. This command means that you can walk with your dog not pulling on the leash *and have their attention on you*. If your dog does pull against the leash, simply use your “No” and say “Right Here.” Make sure that you are not the one guilty of tightening the lead, thus causing the dog to pull against it. This command does not require the dog to sit when you stop. It does require that the dog walk on a loose leash, at your left side, with his shoulder roughly aligned with your leg. This makes for a more controlled walk with your dog and should not be used the entire length of the walk.

LET’S GO: This command is used when moving from a stationary position. It is a courtesy command, letting your dog know, “I’m moving, move with me.” The only rule for your dog in a “Let’s Go” is that the leash be kept loose at **your** pace. Once you have established your “Let’s Go”, you can say “Right Here” and get your dog into position.

SIT: This command is used to get your dog into a sit position. The hand signal for “Sit” is raising your hand, open and flat, palm up, over the dog’s head.

DOWN: This command is used to get the dog into the laying down position. It is NOT used to make the dog get off of something. The hand signal for “Down” is moving your hand, palm down, towards the ground in front of the dog.

OFF: This command means that the dog should get all four paws back on the ground, off of you, off of someone else, or off of the furniture. Remember, negative attention is still attention. Use your leash or your body to get your dog off of you, NOT your hands.

WAIT: Often thought of as the most useful of the commands, this word means respect the boundary. It is used at doorways to let the dog know he must wait for permission to go through. It is also used when the dog is getting into or out of the car, and when you want your dog to wait in a certain area or room of the house. **It does not require the dog to hold a position, such as “Sit” or “Down”.** It only requires that the dog wait for your permission to cross over the boundary at which the “Wait” was given.

STAY: This command is an absolute. The dog must stay in the spot *and* position he was placed in, regardless of what is going on around him. Praise includes both the dog’s position (usually sit or down) and the word “Stay”, e.g., “Good Sit-Stay!” You do NOT call your dog off of the “Stay” - you MUST return to the dog to release him, with a tap on the head given simultaneously with the word “Okay”.

LEAVE-IT: This command is used when the dog is paying attention to anything you do not want him to. If there is food on the floor or on a table, if a cat or another dog has his attention, or if he is bothering another person, tell him to “Leave it”. Keep in mind that he may think that you only want him to disregard the object for the moment, and may return his attention to it shortly. If your goal is to get him to always leave something alone (i.e. the garbage), you will have to use this command many times under many conditions until he generalizes that you never want him to pay attention to what ever it is.

QUIET: This command simply means to stop barking.

RUG and WAIT ON YOUR RUG: This command means the dog should go to his special, pre-designated “reserved parking spot” in your house. It is your responsibility to first show your dog what his rug is, and ensure that the dog remains undisturbed when he gets there. Guests and children should not be allowed to pester the dog while he is on his rug, so the rug will be seen by your dog as a restful and desirable place to be. The dog is not required to hold a position, such as “Sit” or “Down” while he is on the rug. The command is “Wait”, so he must simply respect the boundary.

COME HERE: We use the command “Come” in conjunction with the word “Here” so it is said as “Come here!” This is the most fragile command most owners will ever attempt to use with their dog. It takes months to get this command properly conditioned, and it can be ruined in a matter of moments by a thoughtless act on the part of the owner. It is a word that needs to be reinforced many times a day. To reinforce it, it is important to understand what you are really asking the dog to do. To the dog, the word “Come” is not the process of *getting* to you - it is the end result of *being* with you. You can reinforce this word by simply petting your dog and telling him what a “Good Come Here!” it is when he is with you. That way, the dog hears the word in a positive format many times a day. If the only time the dog hears the word “Come “ is when you are yelling at him to stop doing something that he is enjoying doing (such as leaving the park), he will resent the command. “Come Here” must always have a positive association, especially when being introduced.

YOUR DOG’S NAME: Please use your dog’s name with respect, the same as you would like your own name used. His name is not a command - it is simply used as a courtesy to let the dog know you are talking to him.