



Puppy Temperament Test

Directions for Testing

The testing area should be an area with conditions similar to what the pups are used to, such as same type of flooring, etc. there should be nothing in the area to arouse the puppies curiosity or otherwise their attention away from the testing. Only the scorer and tester should be in the area, with no other pets or humans that could distract the puppy.

Tester should be someone unfamiliar to the puppy for the “Social Attraction” and “Following” parts of the test. It is important to select a person who is not intimidating to the puppies so choose a helper dogs are normally comfortable with.

Puppies should be tested when they are awake and playful. Test before they have a meal rather than when they have a full tummy. If vaccinations are to be given the same day, test before the vaccinations are given.

Materials

- Small stick or object unfamiliar to puppies for retrieving
- Metal dish and spoon
- Dry clean mop or other dragging object
- Umbrella
- Step stool
- Puppy fence panels

Social Attraction

Place the puppy about four feet in front of the tester who is sitting on the floor. The tester will call the puppy to them with a happy, excited voice.

Came readily, bit at hands	1
Came readily, tail up, licked	2
Came readily, tail up	3
Came readily, tail down	4
Came hesitantly, tail down	5
Did not come at all	6

Following

The tester will rise from the sitting position and start walking away while coaxing the puppy to follow.

Followed readily, bit at feet	1
Followed readily, got underfoot	2
Followed readily, tail up	3
Followed readily, tail down	4
Followed hesitantly, tail down	5
Did not follow at all	6

Restraint

Tester will gently turn the puppy over onto its back on the floor and hold it in that position for a count of ten. Have the scorer do the ten count while the tester continues to speak reassuringly to the puppy.

Struggled fiercely, bit	1
Struggled, did not settle	2
Struggled, settled, struggled	3
Struggled, then settled	4
No struggle, calm	5
No struggle, froze	6

Social Acceptance

After releasing the puppy from the “Restraint”, tester will look for the pup’s immediate reaction to the tester. Tester should continue to speak reassuringly to the puppy.

Jumped, bit, growled	1
Jumped, pawed	2
Licked tester’s face or chin	3
Squirmed, licked tester’s hands	4
Rolled upside down	5
Ran away and stayed away	6

Retrieving

Use an object unfamiliar to the puppies but which would normally entice a fetching response. For example, if the puppy is acquainted with balls, use an appropriately sized small stick. Get the puppy to focus on the object and toss it. Tester can use language such as “Go get it”, “Bring it”, to encourage the puppy.

Chased object and ran off with it	1
Chased object and stood over it	2
Chased object, returned with it	3
Chased object, returned without it	4
Chased object, lost interest	5
Did not chase object	6

Sound Sensitivity

Tester will make a very loud noise, such as by banging a metal spoon on a metal dish.

Listened, located sound, ran to it barking	1
Listened, located sound, walked to it	2
Located sound, showed curiosity	3
Listened, located sound,	4
Ignored sound	5
Was fearful of sound	6

Sight Sensitivity

Tester will drag an enticing object across the floor in front of the puppy.

Attacked and vigorously bit at object	1
Tried to play with object	2
Investigated object, tail up	3
Investigated object, tail down	4
Showed no interest in object	5
Showed fear of object	6

Stability

Tester will use a pop up type umbrella, opening it quite suddenly and putting it down on the floor.

Ran to umbrella, attacked it	1
Cautiously checked out umbrella	2
Investigated confidently	3
Looked but did not investigate	4
Showed no interest	5
Showed signs of fear	6

Confidence

Tester will place a step stool between them and the puppy and call to the puppy in such a way that the puppy will come toward the step stool.

Attacked step stool, or barked	1
Investigated but did not climb	2
Climbed on stool, tail up	3
Climbed on stool, tail down	4
Did not investigate or ignored stool	5
Stayed far away from stool, fearful	6

Problem Solving

Tester will place puppy inside a triangle of puppy fence which has an opening at the back. A person familiar to the puppy will call from the front of the triangle. After allowing time to see if the puppy will look for a way out, tester should walk along the fence toward the exit opening to see if the puppy will then find it and exit. Caller should continue to coax from front and after about 30 seconds, tester can walk to the exit opening while caller remains at front.

Bit, pawed or barked at fence	1
Paced along fence, not exiting	2
Searched for a way out, promptly exited	3
Exited only when tester walked toward exit	4
Sat quietly, did not look for exit	5
Showed fear, backed off from fence, did not exit	6

Interpreting the Scores

The scores give a basic overview of your puppy's temperament. To understand the scores, the lower numbers (1s, 2s) indicate more independent temperaments, the higher numbers (4s, 5s) indicate more mellow temperaments, with mostly 6s indicates a fearful or very shy disposition.

The most easily trained pups are the ones with scores between threes and fives, with threes being more active and fives more mellow. Most puppies will have a range of different scores, so look for overall average scores. If you want an active, spirited dog, choose one with mostly twos and threes. If you want a calm family dog, look for one with mostly fours and fives. If you want something in between those that will be very easy to train, choose the dog with lots of threes and fours.

Average Score

Best Fit

1	A home with well experienced dog people
2	Very active and experienced owners
3	Great family dog with older children, or young adults
4	Best choice for a first dog and/or for family with older and younger children
5	Excellent choice for older, less active people, family with babies
6	Loving family willing to help puppy gain confidence