



# Avidog® Puppy Evaluation Test

*Helping Breeders Make the Best Match for Puppies and Owners*



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Avidog® International  
[www.Avidog.com](http://www.Avidog.com)

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## Introduction

The Avidog® Puppy Evaluation Test (APET) arose from our 20-year search for an evaluation tool to help us best match puppies to owners. Not only were we looking for a temperament test that would closely capture our puppies' characters and talents, but we wanted a tool to enable us to best inform and guide our owners as they started training and developing their new puppy. We started with the Volhard Puppy Aptitude Test, borrowed the philosophy of Sheila Booth's Positive Puppy Preview and others, and then added, tweaked and changed the exercises to create the test that worked best for us—the APET.

Today we use the APET as one of our four key tools for matching our puppies to their new homes. It is a vocational test for our pups; it helps us understand what work or living situation each puppy is drawn to. Of course, we take other things into account as we match puppies, such as structural/conformation evaluations, health examinations, and tests of natural working ability, but the APET is the foundation. It also helps us create the individual training plans that we create for each puppy to help its new owners make it the best it can be.

Finally, we also use the APET to examine each litter overall. Did we get what we expected from a breeding pair? If not, how did the pups differ from what we expected? What were the litter's overall strengths and weaknesses? If we see a consistent area that we are not happy with, is there something we can do to tweak our puppy rearing to address this?

Since its creation, we have used the APET to help breeders from many breeds evaluate and place their pups, as well as guide their owners. We created this e-book to help you use the APET to evaluate, match and place your litters. We hope you find it useful!

## Why Another Temperament Test?

With a number of temperament tests available to breeders, why did we create another one? The most important reason that we built the APET was that we wanted a more inclusive temperament evaluation that would both help us match our puppies to their new homes but also to provide valuable insights and guidance to each pup's new owner regarding their initial training plans for their puppies and what to expect over a lifetime. But the APET is also deeply connected to our philosophy about puppies and matching to their new owners.

**There Is No Perfect Puppy Only a Puppy That Is Perfect For You.** Despite what you read on the Internet or in dog books, there is no list of perfect canine temperament traits for all owners. So the APET does not identify “correct” or “ideal” scores on any characteristic because we do not believe there are any. What is “ideal” for you is likely to be far from ideal for me. In fact, each of us will thrive with a puppy with a different combination of traits even if we have the same goals for our dog.

However, there are patterns of temperament traits that work best for the kind of work a dog may do best and type of partner he may become. Dogs can be trained to do many things, but they do best those things that come naturally to them, that feel good to them.

At the most basic level, we know that a puppy that has eyes only for people may work well in an obedience home but would be at a real disadvantage in a hunting home. A high energy puppy is likely to be a poor match for a quiet pet home but is perfect for a search and rescue home. The sound sensitive puppy will thrive with a quiet elderly couple but might struggle in a home with young children.

Yet it is at the more complex level, where multiple traits are combined into patterns where the best matching between owners and puppies occurs. An ideal dog-owner partnership depends upon many complementary characteristics rather than just one or two. The APET helps breeders and owners capture these characteristics in an object way so they can be used to place puppies with the owners they will do best with.

**Puppy eHarmony.com!** Not only does the puppy's future "work" dictate which traits are most important but its new owner's characteristics and desires do, too. Some people love an intense, opinionated dog while others would be overwhelmed by such an animal. Some owners are loud, excitable trainers while others are quiet and unemotional. In addition, each of us has traits in dogs that we do not care about and others that we cannot live without. For example, I love a dog with an intense, natural desire for birds but do not care if that dog naturally brings a retrieve object back to me. A highly independent puppy is likely to fit companionably with a similarly independent owner but will confuse a more physically demonstrative owner.

The APET allows breeders and buyers to examine each puppy in detail to see what traits will work well with owners and which will not. At the same time, it enables breeders and owners to examine their own needs and desires in a dog because the goal is a good match, not a perfect puppy (...because, see above, there are no perfect puppies there are only puppies that are perfect *for you*.) So APET is sort of like a puppy eHarmony.com, helping owners find deep, meaningful dog love!

**Some Puppy Traits are Stable.** Second, we also believe that there are no perfect matches between puppies and new owners across all temperament traits. Some canine temperament traits are relatively stable, even as early as seven and eight weeks. These traits, such as energy level and forgiveness, will change little over the puppy's lifetime. Thus the pup's new owner must either want a puppy with that trait or be willing to adapt to it. Because the APET lays out traits without judgment, it paints a rich picture of the puppy for breeders and new owners so the best possible match can be made.

**But Puppies Can Also Be Tweaked.** Other traits, such as play drive and sight sensitivity, can be influenced with well-designed training and development opportunities early in the puppy's life. These traits are most easily changed during the Sensitive period, before sixteen weeks of age. However, with concerted effort on the owner's part, tweakable traits can be further influenced up till six months of age and then again, to a lesser degree, till twelve months of



age. After that, a dog's personality is relatively rigid and can only be influenced slightly through experience, training and socialization.

Thus if there is a mismatch between puppy and owner on tweakable traits, the new owner can influence the trait somewhat as soon as it gets his pup home. In these cases, the APET helps breeders create training and development plans that will allow new owners to tweak these more flexible traits in the direction that they want using thoughtful, focused development, socialization and training experiences. The most important thing to remember is that one size does not fit all in developing young puppies. Instead, tailoring development to the match will produce the best outcome for puppy and owner.

### A Little about the APET

The APET evolved from our philosophy that the match between puppy and owner is essential to the long-term success of their relationship. Furthermore, owners armed with good training plans can help mold some of their puppy's less-than-ideal characteristics to increase the likelihood for lifelong canine-human bliss.

The APET differs in a number of ways from earlier temperament tests. Here are a few distinguishing APET characteristics:

**23 Test Components.** The APET consists of 23 subcomponents or tests that flow easily from one to another. Some are brief, taking only a second or two, while others are longer, typically taking around 30 seconds. All are easy to do for experienced dog people who are comfortable engaging with puppies.

**33 Temperament Traits.** Since our puppies go to a wide array of homes from active pet homes to National-level dog sport competitors, we wanted an aptitude test that would examine a broader collection of puppy characteristics than found in other temperament tests. So rather than the more common dozen traits, the APET examines 33 distinct characteristics. Some of these traits are important for most owners while others are very specific to a single type of home. For example, every match between puppy and home should consider the pup's energy level. However, three-dimensionality is an interesting trait that it is only important

when placing pups in search-and-rescue and hunting homes. Thus, the APET can be tailored to the type of pups and the homes they will be going to.

**Long and Distracting.** Although quick tests with no distractions are easier to conduct and interpret, they are not able to evaluate a puppy's stamina or its response to a more realistic environment that is filled with distractions. The APET seeks to evaluate both of these things. It is relatively long, typically 20 minutes per puppy so requires more of a commitment from breeders. But as a result, puppies get all the time they need to warm up to the tester and test environment. Slow starters are still able to show their strengths. Sprinters will usually show if they lack the ability to concentrate for long periods. If stress is going to build in a puppy without a release through play or relationship, it will show during the APET.

Once it goes to its new home, a puppy will live in a stimulating and distracting environment. The APET enables breeders to see if pups are over stimulated, overwhelmed or unduly stressed by distractions. In addition, a puppy's engagement with specific distractions gives important clues to what will attract or repel it over the long term. Puppies that love to smell interesting scents are likely to make great tracking dogs but challenging agility dogs. Avid retrievers that stop chasing as soon as food appears give their new owners a strong hint at where to focus their early training efforts.

**The APET's First Product—Individual Trait Profiles.** Like all temperament tests, when you have finished the APET you will have a temperament trait profile for each puppy in the litter. Combined with your other assessment tools, such as structural or conformation evaluations, APET trait profiles will help you match puppies to homes.

**The APET's Second Product—A Tailored Training Plan.** Unlike most temperament tests which seek only to place puppies in their new homes, the APET has a second outcome. Equal to (and possibly more important than) the right match is the written training plan. This plan provides long-term guidance to puppy buyers regarding their pup's unique temperament and how they should either adapt to or work with it. Although relatively short, each training plan



highlights the most important aspects of a pup's temperament and how they may show up in daily life. This focuses each owner's efforts in training and developing their pup, as well as reminds them of why they might be facing specific challenges.

**The APET's Third Product—Litter Trait Profiles.** Taken together, the trait profiles for all of the puppies in the litter gives breeders an idea of the temperaments they got in the litter as a whole. Breeders can see if there is consistency across the litter in some areas. Or perhaps there is wide variation among pups in the litter, showing a lot of heterogeneity. These results can help breeders consider future breeding decisions, as well as tweak their puppy rearing processes.

# Who and What You Need for an APET

Now that you know a little about the APET, let's get started preparing to put one on. Here are the details you will need to test your litter.

## When to Test

There is no right answer to the question "When should I test my litter?" but there are some wrong ones. In our experience, no puppies are mature enough to be tested on or before 49 days of age. Although this has been the standard for decades, it is based on a misinterpretation of Scott and Fuller's ground-breaking research at the Jackson Laboratory in Bar Harbor, Maine.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Ed Bailey wrote an excellent explanation about how the results of these studies were misinterpreted and how we should more correctly interpret them.<sup>2</sup> You can read Dr. Bailey's [Why Not Seven Weeks? The Forty-Ninth Day Revisited](#) on our website.

So if we should not test puppies 49 days or earlier, when should we test? From our experience, the date is breed dependent. The majority of sporting, working, terrier, non-sporting and herding breeds do well if tested between 52 to 55 days. Toy breeds and some spaniels need more time to mature so can be tested up till 70 days. We have not tested puppies of all breeds and crosses however, so talk to others in your breed to pinpoint when most breeders feel their pups are "mature" enough to evaluate. Then experiment to see what works best for your breed and lines.

Because of the APETs flexibility, it is also fine to test larger litters over two consecutive days. We have found that splitting litters of nine or more ensures the test and resulting evaluations are more consistent. Everyone, pups and people, wear out after many hours of focus so do half your litter one day and half the next to get the best results.

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<sup>1</sup> Scott JP and JL Fuller. 1965. [Genetics and the Social Behavior of the Dog](#). The University Of Chicago Press.

<sup>2</sup> Bailey, E. 1994. [Why Not Seven Weeks? The Forty-Ninth Day Revisited](#). *Gun Dog* 13:5. Apr/May.

In addition, do not test sick puppies. Even if it is inconvenient for all concerned, reschedule the APET when the pup or pups are feeling better.

Do not hesitate to retest a puppy whose test results really surprise you. Set up yet another strange place with a new stranger and try again. If the first results were really who the puppy is, you will see them again. If they were due to illness, the puppy will have the chance to show you.

### People and Roles

***Ideally the APET is done with three to four people but it can be done with as few as two people, the breeder and stranger. The key roles are:***

1. Breeder
2. Stranger
3. Scribe
4. Videographer

***Each person's role is as follows:***

1. **Breeder** is a person well known to the puppies and with whom they feel safe.
  - a. Breeder potties each pup before bringing into the test area.
  - b. Breeder carries each pup to the test and quietly sets it down inside the testing area before closing the gate.
  - c. Breeder calls the pups in the Exercise 22: Breeder Recall.
  - d. Breeder manages the feeding schedule so no pup is tested when it is extremely hungry or so full it is sleepy. We try to test every pup between 45 minutes and 4 hours of a meal.
2. **Stranger** is someone who has never interacted with the puppies at any time in their lives.

- a. Ideally, the stranger is a dog-savvy person who can read puppies well.
  - b. However, if a dog-savvy stranger is not available, Exercises 1 through 5 can be done by a stranger and the breeder can complete the rest of the exercises.
  - c. The stranger handles the puppy for Exercise 22: Breeder Recall.
- 3. Tester** is person (stranger or breeder), who does each exercise in the APET.
- a. Tester ensures test area is set up appropriately for the facility and size of pups.
  - b. Tester conducts each exercise in the APET.
  - c. Tester shares information with the scribe during the test, particularly things that the scribe cannot see, such as touch sensitivity, eye contact, bite inhibition, etc.
  - d. Tester assists in the analysis of the test results.
  - e. The APET Sequence Poster at the end of this report can be printed and pasted in the test area for the Tester to reference during the test.
- 4. Scribe** takes **written** notes on each puppy during its test.
- a. Scribe annotates the Scribe Sheet with descriptions of each pup's reactions during each exercise.
  - b. Scribe quietly asks Tester for more information during the test about things that she cannot see, such as touch sensitivity, eye contact, bite inhibition, etc.
  - c. During the discussion following each puppy's test, the Scribe completes the puppy's Score Sheet.

- d. The Scribe assists the tester by dropping the cookie tin in Exercise 15, passing equipment as needed, and handling the Friendly Dog in Exercise 17.
5. **Videographer videos** each puppy's APET and discussion.
  - a. If the breeder is interested in having the test recorded, the videographer videotapes each puppy's test and, if desired, the discussion.
  - b. Videographer properly labels the video media (tape, disc, drive) for each puppy.

### Time

1. The full APET takes 20-30 minutes per puppy while a Pet Litter APET takes about 12 minutes each.
2. Discussion of each pup's results and time for the breeder to wake and potty the next puppy to be tested typically takes 10-15 minutes so plan for 30-45 minutes per pup.
3. Puppies should be tested within 45 minutes and 4 hours between meals so breeders may need to feed individual puppies at different times during the testing day.
4. Large litters (more than 9 pups) can be tested over two days.
5. Don't forget to plan breaks and meals for your testers and observers.

### Plan the Pups' Meals

We have found it best to test puppies that have eaten within 1 and 4 hours. If you have toy dogs, you should not go longer than 3 hours between meals. Many puppies this age are sleepy after meals and too hungry to concentrate when their next meal is less than an hour away. Consider your puppies' mealtimes and lay out a plan so you avoid testing too full and starving puppies.

On temperament test day, decide the order in which you will test the puppies and then plan each puppy's meals around that schedule. Feed puppies individually, as needed. Use 45 minutes per puppy test, including discussion, as your planning figure. Don't forget to figure in lunch for you, your tester and any observers, too!

Speaking of the order in which you test your puppies, we test in birth order to avoid bias. If we have a litter born via Caesarian section, we test in the order the pups were listed at birth. However, you choose your testing order, do it in an unbiased way rather than starting or ending with your presumed best or worst pups.

### Testing Area

1. The testing area **MUST** be a place the puppies have never been before, not even as neonates or for a minute or two earlier in their lives.
2. Select an indoor area for testing. We have successfully tested litters in living rooms, dens, bedrooms, well-lit basements, training facilities and even barns but we have never seen a successful test done outdoors.
3. Testing area can be square, rectangular or round.
4. Minimum space for a good test is about 14' x 16'.
5. Good testing options are:
  - A. Living rooms, dens, bedrooms or dining rooms.
  - B. Dog obedience or agility training rooms.
  - C. Clean, dry, well-lit basements.
6. The APET has distractions in the testing area so do not look for a distraction-free space. However, larger spaces provide more open space away from the distraction of the test items while smaller test areas make distractions more evident to the pups so take that into account when evaluating your puppies' responses.



7. Although we want distractions in the test area, testing outdoors usually results in less-than-successful evaluations that do not truly represent the puppies' temperaments.

### Defining the Test Area

1. Use exercise pens (ex-pens), walls or doors to enclose the testing area.
2. If using ex-pens, cover them with sheets so pups do not get focused on items outside the ex-pen.
3. Be sure the sheet is even with the floor on the interior of the testing area. Try not to have too much excess material inside the test area or it will be too distracting to pups.
4. Use clips to secure the sheets on the top of the ex-pen.
5. Stabilize the ex-pens so the puppies cannot pull them over.

### Entry and Exit

The entry/exit area should be easily accessible for the breeder to set pup down at the beginning of the test and call the puppy at the end of the test. If a friendly dog is being used the dog may enter through this same entrance or through another access point into the testing area.

### Bring “Mom” Along to Avoid the “First Puppy Syndrome”

The first puppy tested often experiences what we call the “first puppy syndrome,” where it tests poorly simply because it has no familiar scent in the test area. To avoid this, let the dam spend some time in the test area—walking around, lying down and playing—before the test begins to scent the area for the first puppy.

### Test Equipment and Items

The APET uses many items commonly owned by dog breeders and owners. If you do not have some of these items, check with friends, fellow breeders or club

members to see if you can borrow them. Alternatively, we have provided links below to items and retailers that we use for our test equipment.

### Initial Set up

Set out testing items following APET Layout #1. Adjust the set up as shown to fit into your actual testing area. Note the potty box can be placed on either side of the area.

### Items to Have Outside Test Area

These items can be outside the test area if a helper can pass them into the tester unobtrusively. The links will take you to retailers who sell hard-to-find items.

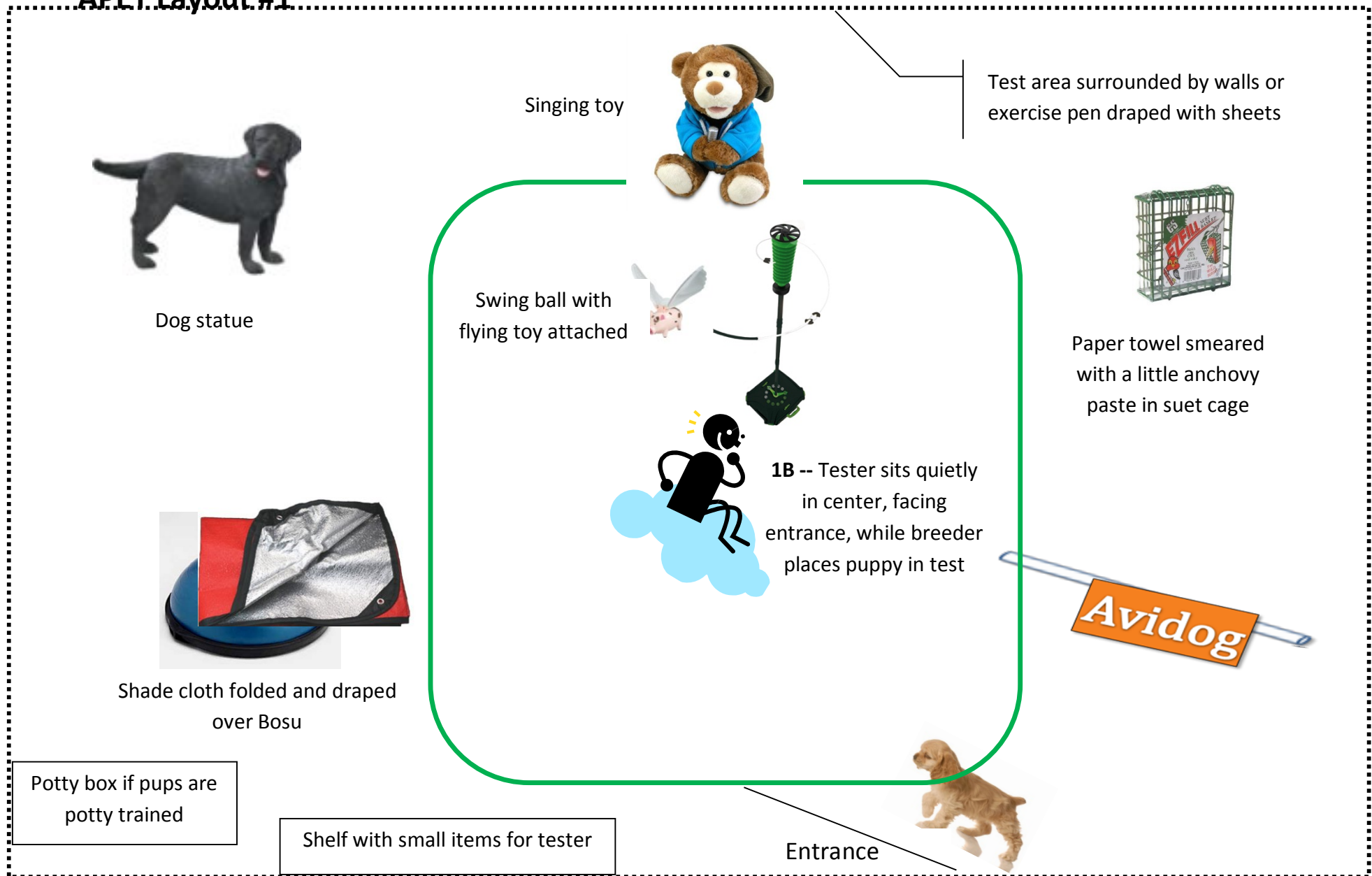
- ☑ Umbrella, automatic opening—hang this on the outside of the x-pen within reach of the tester
- ☑ Noisemaker—cookie tin with coins or rocks, packed with packing material or rags to soften the sound a little
- ☑ Friendly, quiet dog
- ☑ Jump Bump, size appropriate to pups—can be purchased from [www.cleanrun.com](http://www.cleanrun.com) or [www.Max200.com](http://www.Max200.com)
- ☑ Super Puppy Toys ([kids popper](#) and/or [mechanical toy](#))



### Equipment to Have Inside the Testing Area

These items should be in place in the test area following APET Set Up #1 before the first puppy is brought in. The items should be restored to their original positions after the completion of each pup. The links will take you to retailers.

## APET Layout #1



# Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

## Avidog® Puppy Evaluation Test (APET)—Revised 7/2016

<p><a href="#"><u>Bosu Ball</u></a></p> 	<p><a href="#"><u>Swing Ball</u></a> or other Flying Toy (we use a <a href="#"><u>Westminster Flying Pig</u></a> attached in lieu of the ball)</p> 	<p><a href="#"><u>Wobble Board</u></a> or sheet metal on wood or metal frame</p> 
<p><a href="#"><u>Battery-operated, Plush Toy</u></a>—singing toy that moves a little</p> 		<p><a href="#"><u>Shade Cloth</u></a></p> 
<p><a href="#"><u>Sitting or Standing Dog Statue</u></a></p> 		<p><a href="#"><u>Suet Basket</u></a> with paper towel with a smear of anchovy paste on it</p> 

## Small Items to Have in Test Area

Place all items tester will need on elevated surface in the testing area where the tester can reach them but not the puppies. A shelf is best, table is OK, but a chair is likely to be too low, depending on the puppies' size.

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

- ☑ 1 sheet of 8" x 10" plain paper per puppy
- ☑ 2-3 [Paint rollers, mini, ½"](#) (see photo to right)
- ☑ 2-3 tug toys, soft and puppy-sized
- ☑ High-value food, whose color contrasts color with the flooring in the test area so pups can see it. Meat and poultry that do not crumble or shred, cut into bite-sized pieces, kept in a sealed container work best. You'll need at least 15 pieces per puppy, but more is safer.
- ☑ 2-3 bird wings (optional for sporting breeds)



Paint Roller

### Do a Dry Run First

If you are just getting started using the APET or if you haven't done one in a while, take the time to do a dry run with a "pretend" puppy first. First, print out the APET Sequence from the Resource Page and hang copies in and around the test area so everyone can see what comes next. Then everyone, from breeder and tester, to scribe and videographer, should walk through their activities step by step.

Where will the puppy be put down and how will the breeder get out of the test area without distracting the puppy? Where will the tester be sitting? Can the videographer see all corners of the test area? Who will hand equipment in to the tester? Where will the friendly dog be kept between puppies?

Where will Exercise 23, Problem-Solving, be done? Where will the puppy be put down? Where will the breeder sit to call it? Who will time the puppy?

### Putting on an APET

The primary goal of the APET is that every puppy has a good experience during the test. This will be most pups' first time meeting a stranger in a strange place without their littermates or dam. No matter how stable the puppy, being alone in a new place while interacting with a stranger will be stressful. Regardless we want it to be as positive an experience as possible.

There are no right or wrong reactions from puppies in the APET. Every reaction a puppy makes is just information for testers, breeders and owners.

There are two versions of the APET: Full and Pet Litter. The only difference between the two tests is the number of exercises. Full APETs include all 23 exercises, while Pet Litter APETs consist of only 19 exercises. Full APETs are for litters that might include working and competition puppies or breeders that want to evaluate whether these types of puppies might exist in their litters, even if they only have pet homes for them. Pet Litter APETs are streamlined for breeders who only sell to pet homes and have no interest in working or competition puppies.

### Using a Pet Litter APET for Your Litter

If you sell only to pet homes and have no interest in performance or working traits, then you can reduce the number of exercises done in your APETs. Please note, these revisions are done for all of the pups in a litter, not just the ones you might think are pets.

A Pet Litter APET will take less time per puppy, typically closer to 12 minutes each. It does not test stamina or complex toy/retrieve desires but covers the key traits needed for companion dogs. We strongly feel that Pet Litter APETs should include Exercise 14: Friendly Dog, since dog skills are so important to companion dogs and their owners.

The exercises in the Pet Litter APET are:

Exercise 1. Entry and Greeting with Stranger

Exercise 2. Toy Play I with Stranger



- Exercise 3. Retrieve I with Stranger
- Exercise 4. Exploring and Sociability
- Exercise 5. Following with Stranger
- Exercise 6. Set Up Obstacle Course
- Exercise 7. Obstacle Course with Food
- Exercise 8. Obstacle Course without Food
- Exercise 9. Dismantle Obstacle Course
- Exercise 10. Toy Play II
- Exercise 11. Retrieve II
- Exercise 12. Disconnect from Puppy
- Exercise 13. Overhead Reach
- Exercise 15. Cookie Tin Drop
- Exercise 16. Umbrella Pop
- Exercise 17. Friendly Dog
- Exercise 18. Toe Pinch and Response
- Exercise 19. Food Presentation and Puppy Pushups
- Exercise 23. Breeder Recall

## TESTER INSTRUCTIONS

### *General*

- A. You may skip, modify or shorten exercises that you feel are frightening or overly stressing a puppy. For example, you should only do Exercise 21: Super Puppy Toys only with pups that are showing minimal stress at that point in the test.
- B. If a puppy becomes very frightened during an exercise, pick it up, cuddle and reassure it.

- C. Stop the test if a puppy is becoming overwhelmed and you are unable to calm its fears or distract it with play.

You should engage each pup as you would if you were meeting a friend's puppy—warmly and genuinely but adjusting to the puppy's response to your actions. You can be more boisterous with outgoing, active pups and quieter with more cautious, subdued puppies.

Your goal is to give each pup the opportunity to show who it is. Some pups take longer to feel comfortable in a situation so give those pups time.

If something goes wrong in the test, just pick the pup up until you get the situation straightened out. There is no harm in taking a break before restarting.

### **EXERCISE 1: ENTRY AND GREETING**

#### ***Exercise 1 Purpose***

Exercise 1 starts the APET and allows the puppy the opportunity to become accustomed to the test area, items and tester. How the puppy reacts to this new situation will tell you about how it engages novel situations and stimuli. Is it frightened, thoughtful, adventurous? In these early moments, does it focus primarily on meeting the person, engaging with the objects, or exploring the space?

#### ***Exercise 1 Procedure***

1. Tester sits on the floor in greeting area indicated on APET layout #1 at 1B.
2. Breeder gently sets puppy down in area indicated on APET layout #1 at 1A, backs quietly away and closes ex-pen.
3. Tester sits quietly for 30 seconds or until the puppy recognizes the tester as a person, whichever comes sooner.
  - a. The puppy does not have to touch or approach for tester to connect but must give some indication that it acknowledges the tester. Indications might include tail wag, eye contact, or greeting behaviors.

- b. If puppy remains stationary or explores test area, tester remains quiet for 30 seconds.
4. After 30 seconds or when puppy engages tester, tester greets puppy in a natural way.
  - a. Tester should verbally and physically greet the puppy, just as she would if she met a puppy elsewhere. Baby talk, cooing and petting are all appropriate.
  - b. If puppy is too frightened to approach, tester should lie down on the floor and encourage puppy to approach.
5. Tester should monitor puppy's behavior at all times and respond to the pup's stress level.
  - a. Fearful pups need quiet encouragement to engage.
  - b. While bolder pups often enjoy more enthusiastic greetings.
6. If puppy breaks off to explore the test area, tester should be quiet for 30 seconds or until puppy returns. Then tester should reengage.
7. Once puppy has 1 to 5 minutes to make a connection with the tester, tester will begin Exercise 2.
  - a. Some puppies bond quickly with strangers and can play immediately. With those puppies, the tester should proceed to Exercise 2 sooner to keep the puppy interested and engaged.
  - b. Other puppies take quite a while to bond. Here testers should give puppies the time and reactions they need to connect and only then proceed to Exercise 2.

### ***Exercise 1 Troubleshooting***

1. The puppy tries to escape from test area.
  - a. Observers and breeder should firmly hold x-pens stable and closed so puppy cannot escape.
  - b. Tester should reassure the puppy that it is safe.
  - c. Tester should cuddle puppy if it cannot calm itself.
2. The puppy does not approach the tester.
  - a. Because the tester is sitting quietly without moving, many puppies will not realize that there is a person in the room. Puppies this age do not have acute sight so may not be able to see what the tester is.
  - b. The tester should give the puppy 30 seconds before calling the puppy to her.

- c.If the puppy still does not approach tester, the tester should go and get it.
- 3. The puppy sees tester but explores the entire test area without approaching the tester.
  - a. Some puppies have a high need to examine their environment before connecting with people.
  - b. The tester should give the puppy 30 seconds to explore before calling the puppy to her.
  - c.If the puppy still does not approach tester, the tester should go and get it.
- 4. The puppy greets the tester but then leaves to explore the environment.
  - a. Some puppies have a high need to examine their environment before connecting with people.
  - b. The tester should give the puppy 30 seconds to explore before calling the puppy to her.
  - c. If the puppy still does not approach tester, the tester should go and get it.

## EXERCISE 2: TOY PLAY I (CHASE AND TUG)

### *Exercise 2 Purpose*

Play is an important way that people and dogs engage. In this exercise, we see if the puppy will play with the tester very soon after meeting. In addition, we get an idea of the kind of play the puppy naturally enjoys—chase, tug, catch, bite, shake, pounce, etc.

### *Exercise 2 Procedure*

1. Tester introduces a soft rag or tug toy to the puppy by dragging it on the floor, wiggling it away from the puppy.
2. Make the toy come to life without moving it so fast that the puppy cannot catch it or loses interest.
3. Engage the puppy in a game of chase or tug-of-war at whatever level the pup can respond.
4. Allow the puppy to feel successful by catching or winning the toy.

### ***Exercise 2 Troubleshooting***

1. The puppy will not play with the toy.
  - a. Tester should be sure to drag the toy AWAY from the puppy rather than pushing toward it. Most puppies and dogs are uncomfortable when toys are shoved at them.
  - b. Some puppies have strong toy preferences while others will play with anything. One pup might prefer cloth toys while another loves rabbit skins. Tester should try another toy to try to find which the pup prefers.
  - c. Puppy may be too uncomfortable to play this early in the test. Move on to the next exercise if the pup will not play after 3-4 minutes of trying.
2. The puppy will not release the toy to the tester.
  - a. Tester should offer another toy to the puppy to see if it will drop the first in order to play with the second.
  - b. Tester can gently pick the puppy up. Most puppies will release the toy when picked up but if it does not, the tester should gently remove toy from puppy's mouth before starting to play again.

## **EXERCISE 3: RETRIEVE I**

### ***Exercise 3 Purpose***

For decades, retrieving has been used as an important indication of a dog's inherent willingness to work with people. However, not all dogs have been bred to work with people so not all puppies will retrieve. In addition, retrieving is a complex behavior chain that includes watching, chasing, grabbing, carrying, returning and releasing. Some pups show none of these behaviors while others show pieces of the chain. Understanding what portion of natural retrieving a pup has tells us quite a bit and helps owners determine where in the sequence they may want to focus.

### ***Exercise 3 Procedure***

1. While engaged in toy play, the tester should take a single sheet of paper and crumple it on the ground to attract the puppy's attention.

2. Once the puppy has disengaged from the Exercise 1 toy, toss the paper 2-3' so the puppy sees the toss. If necessary, gently turn the puppy to face the direction of the toss.
3. Remain quiet while puppy is going out to the paper. Verbal encouragement at this point often distracts puppies.
4. When puppy picks the paper up, encourage it to bring the paper back to you by praising and cheering.
5. If it does, praise and pet but let the puppy hold the paper!!!!
  - a. Scratch the puppy's butt, tell the puppy how brilliant she is but do not take paper out of the pup's mouth for 10-15 seconds.
  - b. Then gently pick her up so the paper should fall out of her mouth.
6. If the puppy doesn't return with the paper even with encouragement, crawl over to the puppy as if playing.
  - a. Engage in a little game of tug or otherwise play with the puppy so it does not learn that you coming over means it loses the prize.
  - b. Gently pick it up so the paper drops out of its mouth.
7. Repeat the paper retrieves 2-3 times before switching to a mini paint roller.
8. Do no more than six retrieves total in this portion, fewer if the pup is worried or low energy.

### ***Exercise 3 Troubleshooting***

1. The puppy does not go after the retrieve item.
  - a. Tease the puppy with the paper and throw again.
  - b. Allow the puppy to tug on or chase the toy as in Exercise 2 before tossing it again.
2. The puppy goes out but does not pick up the retrieve item.
  - a. Crawl out with the pup and play with the paper encouraging the pup to grab it.
  - b. Toss another item to see if the puppy prefers that one.
  - c. Start over if it still will not pick it up.
3. The puppy gets the paper but does not return with it to the tester.
  - a. Verbally encourage the puppy to return, even just a little.
  - b. If you aren't successful, just go get the puppy and try again.

## **EXERCISE 4: EXPLORING AND SOCIABILITY**

### ***Exercise 4 Purpose***



This exercise gives the puppy time to explore the test area, if it has not done so already. It also shows us where the puppy's focus lies—on people, the environment, objects, scents or some combination of all of these.

### ***Exercise 4 Procedure***

1. Tester breaks off contact with the puppy, places all retrieve items and toys on the shelf, and stands quietly near 1A.
2. The puppy is now free to check out the testing area.
3. Tester should not make eye contact with the puppy, instead looking at the center of the room.
4. Tester is still and quiet for approximately 30 seconds or until the puppy reengages with you.
5. After 30 seconds or when puppy remains engaged for more than 5 seconds, tester should encourage puppy and begin Exercise 5: Following.

### ***Exercise 4 Troubleshooting***

1. Puppy does not leave tester but instead stays with her, even jumping up on or barking at tester.
  - a. Tester should be sure not to make eye contact, move or engage the puppy in any way.
  - b. If the puppy remains with tester for 5 seconds, tester should move on to Exercise 5: Following.
2. The puppy tries to escape from test area.
  - a. Observers and breeder should firmly hold x-pens stable and closed so puppy cannot escape.
  - b. Tester should wait to see if puppy stops within 10-15 seconds. If it does not, she should reassure the puppy that it is safe and move on to Exercise 5.

## **EXERCISE 5: FOLLOWING**

### ***Exercise 5 Purpose***

Natural following is a trait that lends itself to success in some arenas, such as competitive obedience or rally, but can hinder success in others, such as pointing

trials or spaniel tests. This test gives breeders some idea of a puppy's natural tendency to move with people.

### ***Exercise 5 Procedure***

Tester walks or shuffles around the green area indicated on APET layout #1, changing direction once or twice to see if pup will follow. Tester should enthusiastically encourage the puppy to follow by:

- Talking to the puppy and verbally encourage it
- Patting her leg
- Snapping her fingers

### ***Exercise 5 Troubleshooting***

1. Puppy does not follow tester but sits and watches.
  - a. Tester should enthusiastically encourage puppy to come to her.
  - b. Tester can run a few steps away from puppy to trigger some chase or follow.
  - c. If the puppy simply will not follow, tester should go on to Exercise 6: Setting Up Obstacle Course.
2. Puppy shows no interest in tester and either continues to explore test area or engage with test equipment.
  - a. Tester should enthusiastically encourage puppy to come to her.
  - b. Tester can run a few steps away from puppy to trigger some chase or follow.
  - c. If the puppy simply will not follow, tester should go on to Exercise 6: Setting Up Obstacle Course.

**NOW IS THE TIME TO CHANGE TESTERS, IF DESIRED**

## **EXERCISE 6: SETTING UP OBSTACLE COURSE**

### ***Exercise 6 Purpose***

This exercise allows the tester to move the test equipment for the next set of exercises. It also shows whether the pup is concerned by moving people or items, including sounds and sights.

### ***Exercise 6 Procedure***

1. If using a new tester, the new tester should greet the puppy so it recognizes the tester while the first tester quietly leaves the area.
2. The tester should chat with the puppy while quietly and carefully moving the following equipment so that it looks similar to APET Layout #2.
  - a. Move the folded shade cloth off of the BOSU, unfold it so it's about 3' x 4' and position it closer to the entry area.
  - b. Position the sheet metal so it is leaning on the metal base. It should move a little and make a slight noise when stepped on.
  - c. Reposition any other items that the puppy might have moved during earlier exercises.

### ***Exercise 6 Troubleshooting***

1. The puppy is frightened by the movement of items or the tester.
  - a. Tester should reassure puppy verbally and physically.
  - b. The tester should move the items more slowly and quietly.
  - c. If needed, the tester should get down on the ground to bolster a frightened puppy.
2. The puppy is frightened by the arrival of the new tester or departure of the first tester.
  - a. New tester should reassure puppy verbally and physically.
  - b. If needed, the new tester should get down on the ground to bolster a frightened puppy.
  - c. The first tester should NOT return to the test area but should remain out of sight and smell of the puppy.

## APET Layout #2



Dog statue

Singing toy



Paper towel smeared  
with a little anchovy  
paste in suet cage



Potty box if pups are  
potty trained



Shelf with small items for tester



Metal plate on PVC  
or wobble board

## EXERCISE 7: OBSTACLE COURSE WITH FOOD

### *Exercise 7 Purpose*

Dogs have developed an innate ability to follow a person's pointed hand and respond to verbal encouragement. This exercise shows how willing the puppy is to work to understand what the Tester wants and to engage with the items in the test area when asked by the tester.

Puppies are rewarded (not lured) with food after trying each obstacle so this exercise also evaluates how much the puppy can concentrate after smelling or eating food rewards.

### *Exercise 7 Procedure*

Tester encourages the puppy to follow as tester zigzags through the test area, encouraging the puppy to engage with each item they approach. If the puppy engages with the item, the tester rewards them with a few treats and moves to the next item. If the puppy does not initially engage, the tester can spend up to 30 seconds working with the puppy on that object.

Remember, the puppy is being rewarded for attempting each obstacle, not lured across them with the food. So the food treats come AFTER the pup engages with the object in some way.

The tester will ask the puppy to accomplish each obstacle but not in any specific order.

1. Shade cloth: tester encourages puppy with voice and hands to walk across the shade cloth lengthwise
2. Sheet metal on base: tester encourages puppy with voice and hands to walk across the metal lengthwise until it tips then continue to the end
3. Suet box with a folded paper towel inside that is smeared with about 1 tablespoon anchovy paste: tester encourages puppy with voice and hands to sniff box

4. Mechanical/Singing toy: tester encourages puppy with voice and hands to approach singing toy that is off. If the puppy does, the tester should turn the toy on and encourage puppy to engage with toy
5. Statue of dog: tester encourages puppy with voice and hands to engage with dog statue
6. BOSU, rounded side down: tester encourages puppy with voice and hands to get on the BOSU

### ***Exercise 7 Troubleshooting***

1. If puppy does not follow the tester at all and does not respond to pointing or encouragement to engage with objects, tester can give it a few treats in an attempt to get it to follow.
2. If the puppy is afraid of any object, Tester should use treats to decrease its fear. If the puppy is still afraid, the Tester should make the object easier by turning it off, steadying it, etc.

## **EXERCISE 8: OBSTACLE COURSE WITHOUT FOOD**

### ***Exercise 8 Purpose***

Dogs have developed an innate ability to follow a person's pointed hand and respond to verbal encouragement. This exercise shows how willing the puppy is to work to understand what the Tester wants and to engage with the items in the test area when asked by the tester without food rewards.

This exercise shows whether the stopping of food rewards decreases a pup's willingness to work to understand what the Tester wants and to engage with the items in the test area when asked by the tester.

### ***Exercise 8 Procedure***

Tester encourages the puppy to follow as tester zigzags through the test area, encouraging the puppy with her voice and hands to engage with each item they approach. If the puppy engages with the item, the tester praises and even pets the puppy before moving on to the next item. If the puppy does not initially



engage, the tester can spend up to 30 seconds working with the puppy on that object.

The tester will ask the puppy to accomplish each obstacle in the same order used in Exercise 7.

1. Shade cloth: tester encourages puppy with voice and hands to walk across the shade cloth lengthwise
2. Sheet metal on base: tester encourages puppy with voice and hands to walk across the metal lengthwise until it tips then continue to the end
3. Suet box with a folded paper towel inside that is smeared with about 1 Tablespoon anchovy paste: tester encourages puppy with voice and hands to sniff box
4. Mechanical/Singing toy: tester encourages puppy with voice and hands to approach singing toy that is off. If the puppy does, the tester should turn the toy on and encourage puppy to engage with toy
5. Statue of dog: tester encourages puppy with voice and hands to engage with dog statue
6. BOSU, rounded side down: tester encourages puppy with voice and hands to get on the BOSU

### ***Exercise 8 Troubleshooting***

1. If puppy does not follow the tester at all and does not respond to pointing or encouragement to engage with objects, move on to Exercise 9.
2. If the puppy is afraid of any object, the Tester should make the object easier by turning it off or steadying it.
3. If the puppy is still afraid, the tester can sit down with the object to make the puppy more at ease with it.

## **EXERCISE 9: DISMANTLE OBSTACLE COURSE**

### ***Exercise 9 Purpose***

During this exercise, the Tester moves the test equipment back into position for the next set of exercises with more vigor than in Exercise 6. This shows whether the pup is concerned by moving people or items, including sounds and sights.

### ***Exercise 9 Procedure***

When you have completed the obstacle course let the puppy watch you move items more dramatically than in Exercise 6:

1. Return the cloth back to the BOSU by folding it and letting it settle with it falling about 12 inches onto the BOSU.
2. Re-stabilize the sign so it cannot tip much if the pup walks on it. Bang it around slightly while re-stabilizing.

### ***Exercise 9 Troubleshooting***

1. If the puppy is frightened or unsure, the tester should move the items more slowly and quietly.
2. Tester should encourage a worried puppy and if needed get onto the ground to bolster a frightened puppy.

## **EXERCISE 10: TOY PLAY II (CHASE AND TUG)**

### ***Exercise 10 Purpose***

As the Tester and puppy play a second time, we get an idea of the puppy's stamina and how long it takes him to warm up to a person. We also get information about whether the puppy grows tired of certain toys or has strong favorites.

### ***Exercise 10 Procedure***

1. Tester introduces a soft rag or tug toy to the puppy by dragging it on the floor, wiggling it away from the puppy.
2. Make the toy come to life without moving it so fast that the puppy cannot catch it or loses interest.
3. Engage the puppy in a game of chase or tug-of-war at whatever level the pup can respond.
4. Allow the puppy to feel successful by catching or winning the toy.
5. If the puppy engages in tug, gently reach over the puppy's head to pet its back. Note if puppy stops tugging.
6. While maintaining tug, lightly tap the floor – note if puppy gets distracted.
7. Careful not to have too much fun 😊.

### ***Exercise 10 Troubleshooting***

1. The puppy will not chase or play with the toy.
  - A. Tester should be sure to drag the toy AWAY from the puppy rather than pushing toward it. Most puppies and dogs are uncomfortable when toys are shoved at them.
  - B. Some puppies have strong toy preferences while others will play with anything. One pup might prefer cloth toys while another loves rabbit skins. Tester should try another toy to try to find which the pup prefers.
  - C. Puppy may still be too uncomfortable to play this early in the test. Move on to the next exercise if the pup will not play after 3-4 minutes of trying.
3. The puppy will not release the toy to the tester.
  - A. Tester should offer another toy to the puppy to see if it will drop the first in order to play with the second.
  - B. Tester can gently pick the puppy up. Most puppies will release the toy when picked up but if it does not, the tester should gently remove toy from puppy's mouth before starting to play again.

## EXERCISE 11: RETRIEVE II

### *Exercise 11 Purpose*

As you repeat the retrieve exercise, we get an idea of how strong the pup's retrieve desire and stamina are.

### *Exercise 11 Procedure*

1. While engaged in toy play, the tester should attract the puppy's attention to either the crumpled paper or paint roller used in Exercise 3.
2. Once the puppy has disengaged from the Exercise 10 toy, the Tester tosses the retrieve object 4' to 6' ensuring the puppy sees the toss. If necessary, the Tester should gently turn the puppy to face the direction of the toss.
3. Everyone should remain quiet while puppy is going out to the paper. Verbal encouragement at this point often distracts puppies.
4. If the puppy picks the object up, the Tester should encourage it to bring it back by praising and cheering.
5. If the puppy returns with the object, the Tester should praise and pet but let the puppy hold the object!!!!
  - A. Scratch the puppy's butt, tell the puppy how brilliant she is but do not take object out of the pup's mouth for 10-15 seconds.
  - B. Then gently pick her up so the object should fall out of her mouth.
6. If the puppy doesn't return with the paper even with encouragement, crawl over to the puppy as if playing.
  - A. Engage in a little game of tug or otherwise play with the puppy so it does not learn that you coming over means it loses the prize.
  - B. Gently pick it up so the object drops out of its mouth.
7. Throw the item but restrain the puppy by holding its chest after item lands for 1-3 seconds before releasing.
8. Throw the item over a jump bump, placed as indicated on APET Layout #3. Initially release the puppy while the item is in the air. If that goes well, release the puppy when the object hits the ground.
9. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO NOT IMMEDIATELY TAKE THE RETRIEVE ITEM FROM THE PUPPY!! If the puppy will not drop the item when presented with another item simply pick up the puppy. Most puppies will drop anything in their mouth when picked up.

10. If the puppy has the desire, do 8 to 10 retrieves total in this portion. Do fewer if the pup is worried or low energy.

### ***Exercise 11 Troubleshooting***

1. The puppy does not go after the retrieve item.
  - A. Tease the puppy with the paper and throw again.
  - B. Allow the puppy to tug on or chase the toy as in Exercise 2 before tossing it again.
2. The puppy goes out but does not pick up the retrieve item.
  - A. Crawl out with the pup and play with the paper encouraging the pup to grab it.
  - B. Toss another item to see if the puppy prefers that one.
  - C. Start over if it still will not pick it up.
3. The puppy gets the paper but does not return with it to the tester.
  - A. Verbally encourage the puppy to return, even just a little.
  - B. If you aren't successful, just go get the puppy and try again.

## **EXERCISE 12: DISCONNECT FROM THE PUPPY**

### ***Exercise 12 Purpose***

This exercise evaluates the puppy's patience, as well as its people, object, activity, scent and/or environmental focuses.

### ***Exercise 12 Procedure***

Tester gathers the tug and retrieve item, places them on the shelf and starts up a conversation with one of the observers (or recite a favorite poem) for 15 seconds. The tester should completely disconnect from the puppy—not looking at or talking to it. Have the scribe note what the puppy does during this period.

1. Does the puppy stay with the tester? For the entire 15 seconds? Part of it?
2. Does it wait quietly or does it bark, jump or other behaviors to engage the tester?
3. What does it do if it leaves the tester? Where does it go and what does it engage with?

### ***Exercise 12 Troubleshooting***

There is no troubleshooting for this exercise because everything the puppy does is informative.

## **EXERCISE 13: OVERHEAD REACH**

### ***Exercise 13 Purpose***

To test for inherited handshyness.

### ***Exercise 13 Procedure***

Tester reconnects with puppy by leaning over the puppy and reaching over its head to pet its head or back before picking it up. Note if puppy has any reaction to the overhead reach.

### ***Exercise 13 Troubleshooting***

There is no troubleshooting for this exercise because everything the puppy does is informative.

## **EXERCISE 14: FLYING OBJECT (OPTIONAL)**

### ***Exercise 14 Purpose***

To test for inherited three-dimensionality. This test is valuable for puppies that may go to hunting, nosework, obedience, guide, and search and rescue homes.

### ***Exercise 14 Procedure***

Tester picks up puppy and holds it in her arms while moving to the pig attached to the Swingball.

1. Pick up puppy.
2. Show the pig to the puppy and turn the power on.

## APET Layout #3



Dog statue

Singing Toy



Paper towel smeared  
with a little anchovy  
paste in suet cage



Shade cloth folded and draped  
over Bosu



Place jump bump and toss retrieve  
items over it. Remove jump bump  
once done.



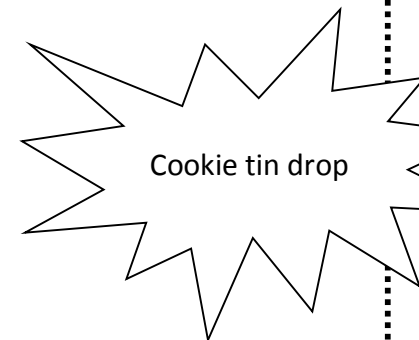
Puppy position for  
Breeder Recall.  
Puppy cannot see  
exit opening.



Metal plate on PVC  
or wobble board



Place jump bump and toss retrieve  
items over it. Remove jump bump  
once done.



Cookie tin drop

Potty box if pups are  
potty trained

Shelf with small items for tester

Exit opened just  
enough to fit puppy for  
Breeder Recall

Breeder Position  
for Breeder Recall

3. Launch the pig into flight away from the puppy and let the puppy see it fly for about one revolution.
4. Place the puppy on the floor and note if the puppy:
  - A. never looks up
  - B. glances up
  - C. looks up and watches the pig go round and round
5. Catch pig, detach it from the line and show it to the puppy.

### ***Exercise 14 Troubleshooting***

1. Puppy does not look at pig while in Tester's arms.
  - A. Tester should play with pig and make it interesting to puppy so it will watch the pig initially.
2. Puppy does not look at pig while on the ground.
  - A. This is simply an indication of a normal, non-3D puppy.
  - B. Tester should continue the exercise by catching the pig and showing it to the puppy.
3. Puppy looks up but is afraid of the pig.
  - A. This is an indication of a 3D puppy.
  - B. Tester should continue the exercise by catching the pig and showing it to the puppy, praising and petting while doing so.
4. Puppy does not look up and is afraid of the pig or the noise it makes.
  - A. Tester should continue the exercise by catching the pig and showing it to the puppy, ensuring the puppy has a good experience.

## **EXERCISE 15: COOKIE TIN DROP**

### ***Exercise 15 Purpose***

This tests sound sensitivity, threshold and/or recovery.

### ***Exercise 15 Procedure***

To isolate sound sensitivity from sight sensitivity, be sure the puppy does not see the tin drop. Remember to stuff the cookie tin with enough rags to make the sound



similar to a pot bang—not too quiet but not overwhelming. Most importantly, the tin should provide a consistent sound for all puppies.

1. Tester encourages the puppy to move across the room away from the Cookie Tin Drop area indicated on APET layout #3.
2. While puppy is looking away from the area of the drop, a helper will drop the cookie tin flat on the floor from approximately three feet up.
3. The tin should fall flat on the floor and not should roll.
4. The tin should make one loud sound, not multiple sounds.
5. HINT!! Practice this before testing the first puppy!
6. You may place a mat on the floor if using a hard floor to absorb some of the sound. You are not looking to terrify puppies, just test for sound sensitivity.
7. Tester then moves to the tin and encourages the puppy to check it out.
8. The Tester should pick up the tin and encourage puppy to it.

### ***Exercise 15 Troubleshooting***

1. Puppy does not respond to cookie tin drop. The sound did not hit the puppy's sound threshold so continue at Exercise 15, Step 7.
2. Puppy sees the cookie tin drop.
  - A. Repeat the test with the puppy looking away from the cookie tin.
  - B. Recognize that you may not get a truly valid sound sensitivity assessment.
3. The drop is too loud.
  - A. Move on to Exercise 16, if puppy is not too stressed.
  - B. If puppy is really stressed, Tester should spend some time calming puppy before moving on.
4. The drop is too quiet.
  - A. Repeat the test with the puppy looking away from the cookie tin.
  - B. Recognize that you may not get a truly valid sound sensitivity assessment.

## EXERCISE 16: UMBRELLA POP

### *Exercise 16 Purpose*

This tests sight sensitivity, threshold and/or recovery.

### *Exercise 16 Procedure*

This tests sight sensitivity, again threshold and/or recovery. To isolate sight sensitivity from sound sensitivity, be sure the puppy sees the umbrella pop. The umbrella should be at least six feet from the puppy when popped.

1. Tester now moves away from the puppy to the other side of the testing area.
2. Tester pops the umbrella and sets it on the floor when puppy is:
  - A. Six feet away from the tester
  - B. Looking at tester
3. Be sure:
  - A. The point of the umbrella is away from the puppy
  - B. You pop the umbrella when it is low and somewhat parallel to the floor
4. If the puppy does not move toward the umbrella, the tester should move to the side or behind the umbrella to encourage the puppy to check it out.
5. If the puppy still does not move toward the umbrella, the tester should encourage the puppy with her voice and hands to come to the umbrella.
6. Give the puppy a few seconds to check umbrella out on their own.
7. Some puppies may walk around it, some may walk under the umbrella, and some may grab the umbrella with their mouth.

### *Exercise 16 Troubleshooting*

1. Puppy does not respond to umbrella pop. The sight did not hit the puppy's sight threshold so continue at Exercise 16, Step 4.
2. Puppy does not see the umbrella pop.
  - A. Repeat the test with the puppy looking at from the umbrella.
  - B. Recognize that you may not get a truly valid sight sensitivity assessment.
3. The pop is too close to the puppy.
  - A. Move on to Exercise 17, if puppy is not too stressed.

- B. If puppy is really stressed, Tester should spend some time calming puppy before moving on.
- 4. The pop is too far from the puppy.
  - A. Move on to Exercise 17, if puppy is not too stressed.
  - B. Recognize that you may not get a truly valid sight sensitivity assessment.

### **EXERCISE 17: FRIENDLY DOG**

#### ***Exercise 17 Purpose***

This exercises tests how the puppy greets an adult dog (dog assertiveness) and if the Tester can call the puppy away from the dog (dog attraction).

#### ***Exercise 17 Procedure***

You will need a friendly dog to test your puppies. This can be a dog they have met before but cannot be there mother. Did we mention this dog **MUST** be reliable with puppies?!?! This dog must be stable and tolerant. It does not need to engage the pups, but it must patiently withstand any action from the puppies.

1. While the tester is picking up the umbrella and encouraging the puppy to move away from the entry/exit area, a helper brings the dog into the test area.
2. Open the entry/exit area and move the dog into the test area on a six-foot leash.
3. Allow the puppy to notice the dog (the noise of the dog entering usually attracts the puppy).
4. Allow the puppy to interact with the dog for 15 – 20 seconds.
  - A. How does the puppy greet the dog? Fearfully? Submissively? Aggressively?
  - B. Does it climb on the dog's head or back? Does it grovel in front of the dog?
5. Tester then calls the puppy away from the dog.
  - A. Does the puppy come?
  - B. How hard does the tester have to work to get the puppy to come?

- C. Does the puppy repeatedly return to the entry/exit area in search of the dog?
- 6. If the puppy will not come when called tester should pick up the puppy and move away from the dog.
- 7. Dog is then removed from the testing area and returned to its waiting area.
- 8. Reward the adult dog each time it returns to its waiting area.
- 9. Does the puppy continue to focus on the dog or does it reengage with the tester?

### ***Exercise 17 Troubleshooting***

- 1. Puppy does not respond to the dog. Tester should wait 10-15 seconds and then move on to Exercise 18.
- 2. Puppy is afraid of dog.
  - A. As long as the adult dog is being appropriate, allow the full time for the puppy to decide whether to approach the dog.
  - B. Then move on to Exercise 17, Step 7.
- 3. Dog corrects puppy.
  - A. Remove adult dog from the area and reward it for its patience.
  - B. If correction was deserved, see if puppy recovers on its own. If it does not, comfort puppy until it has recovered.
  - C. If correction was not deserved, comfort puppy until it has recovered. Do not use the adult dog with anymore puppies. You have either exceeded its tolerance or it was not as stable with puppies as you expected.
  - D. Move on to Exercise 18.
- 4. Tester sees situation escalating and believes that dog may correct puppy.
  - A. Remove adult dog from the area and reward it for whatever patience it showed.
  - B. Move on to Exercise 18.

## EXERCISE 18: TOE PINCH and RESPONSE

### *Exercise 18 Purpose*

This exercise tests the puppy's pain threshold and forgiveness.

### *Exercise 18 Procedure*

The two most important elements of this exercise are consistent pressure, from lightest to hardest, between puppies and being silent and still after releasing the puppy from the toe pinch.

Tester sits in the center of the test area with the puppy sitting on the floor on her right side.

1. While holding the puppy gently but firmly in a sit:
  - A. Press the webbing between the middle toes of the right front paw between your thumb and index finger.
  - B. While counting from 1 to 10, gradually increase the pressure you exert on the webbing with the pads of your fingertips (not your fingernails).
  - C. Stop pinching when the puppy reacts, by crying or pulling its paw away. This reaction does not need to be a strong one but, you must be able to distinguish it from the puppy simply tiring of being held.
  - D. Tell the scribe what number you were on when the puppy reacted.
2. Move the puppy to your left side and repeat, remembering to tell the scribe what number you were on when the puppy reacted.
3. Release the puppy and remain totally still and silent.
4. The tester should not engage the puppy until the puppy connects with the tester.
5. The scribe should take note of the following:
  - A. Where does the puppy first move after it is released? Toward or away from tester?
  - B. Does the puppy engage the tester on its own?
  - C. Does the puppy give the tester eye contact?
  - D. Does the puppy studiously ignore the tester?

- E. About how long does it take for the puppy to return to the tester?
- F. What does the puppy do once it returns to the tester?
- 6. Once the puppy engages with the tester she should pet and love the puppy up.
- 7. If after 2-3 minutes the puppy will not return to the tester, the tester should get low to the ground, cajole and beg until the puppy interacts.
- 8. If the puppy still does not engage after 4-5 minutes, the tester should go get the puppy and continue with the test.

### ***Exercise 18 Troubleshooting***

There is no troubleshooting for this exercise because everything the puppy does is informative.

## **EXERCISE 19: FOOD PRESENTATION and PUPPY PUSHUPS**

### ***Exercise 19 Purpose***

This exercise tests food desire and persistence, as well as biddability.

### ***Exercise 19 Procedure***

The tester sits in the center of the test area and gives one piece of food to the puppy, then closes the remainder of the food in her hand.

- 1. Allow the puppy to smell, paw, lick, bite (within reason) to get at the food for 15 seconds. Note if and how hard the puppy tries to get the food or if it quits because it cannot reach the food.
- 2. After 15 seconds, the Tester should give the puppy a piece of food.
- 3. Then the Tester should:
  - A. Show the puppy a piece of food,
  - B. Lure the puppy with the food into a sitting position and then into a down, and
  - C. Count the number of complete sit-down repetitions that the puppy does in 30 seconds. (Each sit to down is one repetition.)

### ***Exercise 19 Troubleshooting***

1. Puppy does not respond to the food.
  - A. Tester should wait 10-15 seconds with present food.
  - B. Tester should try another food option.
  - C. If puppy still does not respond to food, move on to Exercise 20.
2. Puppy leaves Tester and will not return.
  - A. Tester should encourage puppy to return for 10-15 seconds.
  - B. If puppy returns, Tester should make the food active by moving her hand around on the ground.
  - C. If puppy still will not stay with Tester, move on to Exercise 20.
3. Puppy does not do any sits or downs.
  - A. Tester should try for 30 seconds as if training the puppy for the first time.
  - B. Still no sits or downs? Move on to Exercise 20.

### **EXERCISE 20: TOY PLAY III (CHASE AND TUG)**

#### ***Exercise 20 Purpose***

This exercise again tests play desire, chase and tug, as well as stamina. It also tests the pup's transition from food to play. Now that the puppy knows the Tester, how hard does it play? Harder? Less hard? Does it look for the food or sniff the hand that had the food? We also get more information about whether the puppy grows tired of certain toys or has strong favorites.

#### ***Exercise 20 Procedure***

Still in the center of the test area, the tester again attempts to engage the puppy in a game of chase and tug with the toy in the hand that just held the food.

1. Use the toy that had the most success previously.
2. Drag the toy along the ground away from the puppy. Make it appear "alive," moving it in fits and starts to encourage the puppy to chase or even tug.
3. Be sure to have the toy in the hand that held the food in Exercise 18 and note if the puppy is distracted by the scent of the food.

4. Note if the puppy is distracted by the scent of the food on the floor.
5. Note if the chasing and tugging behavior has decreased or increased from the previous two play desire exercises.

### ***Exercise 20 Troubleshooting***

1. The puppy will not chase or play with the toy.
  - A. Tester should be sure to drag the toy AWAY from the puppy rather than pushing toward it. Most puppies and dogs are uncomfortable when toys are shoved at them.
  - B. Some puppies have strong toy preferences while others will play with anything. One pup might prefer cloth toys while another loves rabbit skins. Tester should try another toy to try to find which the pup prefers.
  - C. Move on to the next exercise if the pup will not play after 3-4 minutes of trying.
2. The puppy will not release the toy to the tester.
  - A. Tester should offer another toy to the puppy to see if it will drop the first in order to play with the second.
  - B. Tester can gently pick the puppy up. Most puppies will release the toy when picked up but if it does not, the tester should gently remove toy from puppy's mouth before starting to play again.

## **EXERCISE 21: RETRIEVE III**

### ***Exercise 21 Purpose***

This exercise tests the puppy's transition from chase/tug play to chase/retrieve. It also tests the pup's ability to transition between food and retrieve, as well as the pup's stamina.

### ***Exercise 21 Procedure***

In the center of the test area, the tester again attempts to engage the puppy in a game of retrieve, just as in Exercise 3.

1. Use the toy that had the most success previously and do 3-6 retrieves.
  - A. Does the puppy go out with more or less enthusiasm?



- B. Does the puppy go directly to the object?
- C. Does the puppy pick up the object?
- D. Does the puppy's speed and enthusiasm during the return to the Tester change from the earlier two Retrieve exercises?
- 2. (Optional, for sporting dogs) Retrieve using a bird wing.
  - A. Was there a physical change in the puppy's body carriage when it smelled the wing (did a "switch go on"?)
  - B. Does the puppy come back with the wing?

### ***Exercise 21 Troubleshooting***

- 1. The puppy does not go after the retrieve item.
  - A. Tease the puppy with the paper and throw again.
  - B. Allow the puppy to tug on or chase the toy as in Exercise 2 before tossing it again.
  - C. Tester should crawl out to the toy herself, encouraging the puppy to come along. Then play with the toy before crawling back, all the time encouraging the puppy to engage with the toy.
- 2. The puppy goes out but does not pick up the retrieve item.
  - A. Crawl out with the pup and play with the paper encouraging the pup to grab it.
  - B. Toss another item to see if the puppy prefers that one.
  - C. Start over if it still will not pick it up.
- 3. The puppy gets the paper but does not return with it to the tester.
  - A. Verbally encourage the puppy to return, even just a little.
  - B. If you aren't successful, just go get the puppy and try again.

## **EXERCISE 22: SUPER PUPPY TOYS (OPTIONAL)**

### ***Exercise 22 Purpose***

This exercise tests the puppy's boldness and courage when confronted by strange, moving objects, as well as its stamina and resilience.

### ***Exercise 22 Procedure***

**IMPORTANT:** This portion of the test should only be done with puppies that have not reached their stress threshold!

1. While the puppy is watching, put down and move or turn on a Super Puppy Toy.
2. When moving a toy, move it away from the puppy, not toward it.
3. Allow the puppy to interact with the toy, if it chooses.

### ***Exercise 22 Troubleshooting***

1. The puppy is startled or frightened by the toy.
  - A. Encourage puppy to move toward the toy and praise pup if it approaches.
  - B. Do not force the puppy to interact with the toy – simply encourage the puppy.
2. The puppy does not want to interact with the toy.
  - A. Try another toy.
  - B. Move on to Exercise 23.
  - C. Do not force the puppy to interact with the toy – simply encourage the puppy.
3. The puppy appears bored with the toy.
  - A. Try another toy.
  - B. Move on to Exercise 23.
  - C. Do not force the puppy to interact with the toy – simply encourage the puppy.

## **EXERCISE 23: BREEDER RECALL**

### ***Exercise 23 Purpose***

This exercise tests the puppy's problem-solving ability and style.

### ***Exercise 23 Procedure***

The breeder and tester take their positions in areas indicated on APET layout #3. The tester is holding the puppy facing away from the breeder.

1. The breeder creates an opening in the ex-pen with just enough room for the puppy to get through, but which is not visible to the puppy when it is placed on the floor.
2. Note that the tester, puppy and breeder are aligned but that the exit is off to one side.
3. A timer keeps time as the breeder starts calling the puppy and the tester places the pup on the floor facing the breeder **not the opening** and stops the clock as soon as the puppy goes through the opening.
4. The breeder calls and encourages the puppy until the puppy finds the opening and goes through it.
5. Helpers should hold the ex-pen/sheet firmly in case the puppy jumps on the pen.
6. Once the puppy finds the opening, let the breeder love up the puppy for 15-20 seconds.
7. Repeat the process from the same locations.
8. Note the time it took the puppy to find the breeder on the second try. Did the time stay the same, increase or decrease?
9. The Scribe should note how the puppy solves the problem—noisily or quietly, hysterically or calmly, persistently or intermittently, hyperactively or focused, with interest or disinterest?
10. Here are a few things to understand:
  - A. Sometimes a puppy simply “gets lucky” in where it moves in trying to find the breeder.
  - B. Sometimes a puppy is “unlucky” in that it does not move quite far enough or turns at the wrong moment when trying to find the breeder.
  - C. Neither of these on its own indicates an exceptional or poor problem solver. It’s important to pay attention to how the puppy solves the problem.

- D. This exercise requires a relationship and communication between the breeder and puppy. If the puppy does not know that the breeder wants it to come, it may not respond to the calls. This simply negates this test but does not mean the puppy cannot problem solve or learn.
- 11. Feel free to pass the puppy around for some loving while the group discusses the puppy's response to the APET!!

### ***Exercise 23 Troubleshooting***

- 1. The puppy cannot find the opening after 45 to 60 seconds.
  - A. The tester should slowly move a little bit toward the opening.
  - B. Tester should continue moving toward the opening until the puppy finds it.
- 2. The puppy becomes hysterical in its unsuccessful efforts to find the breeder.
  - A. The tester should slowly move a little bit toward the opening.
  - B. Tester should continue moving toward the opening until the puppy finds it.
- 3. The puppy makes no attempt to find the opening or the breeder.
  - A. The tester should move toward the opening to see if puppy will follow.
  - B. If puppy continues to show no interest, end the test. This exercise only works if the puppy shows a desire or has been conditioned to come to the breeder.

### Observer Instructions

We welcome observers, including prospective puppy buyers, to our temperament tests but there can be challenges with doing so. First, the more people there are the greater the risk that something or someone will make a noise or do something that affects the pup being tested. Even an unexpected cough can influence some puppies.

Second, most puppy buyers have never seen a temperament test before so do not know what normal puppy behavior is. For example, I had a buyer turn down a fabulous and very successful puppy because it did not run into the test area and directly up to the tester. What he did not realize was that few, if any, puppies do what he wanted and those that do are either not very smart or are overly bold as they recklessly charge into the unknown. You must caution your buyers to not expect too much of these young puppies as they are put into this unfamiliar and in their minds, potentially dangerous situation.

If you are new to breeding or temperament testing, you may find it less stressful to have fewer observers at your temperament tests. However, we do recommend you consider sharing the evaluation forms and video of each pup's APET so they can better understand their puppy.

Here are the instructions we give our observers:

1. Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, alarms, etc.
2. You may speak very quietly to each other during the test but if you see a puppy is distracted by your voice, please stop talking.
3. If you have to cough or sneeze during the test, try to move away from the test area and turn away from the puppy. These sounds can be startling to some puppies.
4. If a puppy notices you during the test, first look away from puppy and freeze for a moment. If the puppy continues to watch you, slowly step away from the test area to disconnect.

5. Please remain in the room while a puppy is being tested; entering and exiting can be very distracting to puppies.
6. Please steady the x-pen near you if the puppy jumps or pushes it.
7. We will discuss each puppy after its test so take notes but save your comments until then.

## APET Temperament Traits

- 1) **Assertiveness—People** The degree to which a puppy is bold and self-assured with familiar and unfamiliar people. This trait ranges from timid to overly bold and rude. Low assertiveness puppies do not greet the tester at all and may even be afraid of him/her. Moderately unassertive puppies greet the tester with low body posture and keep at least two feet on the floor during the greeting. Highly assertive puppies immediately approach the tester with erect posture, climb into the tester's lap and bite at his/her face.
- 2) **Assertiveness—Dogs** The degree to which a puppy is bold and self-assured with familiar and unfamiliar dogs. This trait ranges from timid to overly bold and rude. Low assertiveness puppies do not greet the dog at all and may even be afraid of it. Moderately assertive puppies greet the dog with low body posture and keep all four feet on the floor during the greeting. Highly dog assertive puppies immediately approach the dog with erect posture and climb on the dog's head or shoulders.
- 3) **Biddability** Willingness to work with, follow the directions of, and seek to understand and obey cues given by their handler. This trait ranges from extremely willing to work with a person to completely disinterested in working with a person. Low biddability puppies make no effort to understand what the tester wants at each object during the first round of the obstacle course (with food), immediately leave the tester when not rewarded during the second round of the obstacle course, do not retrieve to the tester, and do no puppy pushups. Highly biddable puppies eagerly seek to understand what the tester wants at each step of the obstacle course, work equally hard on the second round when they are not rewarded as they did on the first round, retrieve to the tester repeatedly, and attempt to do puppy pushups for the full 30 seconds.
- 4) **Courage** Mental strength to persevere when afraid. Low courage pups are those that cannot approach an object or situation that frightened them, while highly courageous pups quickly approach a frightening object on their own.
- 5) **Dog Focus** The need to concentrate attention or energy on visible dogs. This trait ranges from low dog focus, where the pup never acknowledges or moves toward the other dog to very high, where the pup cannot be called

away from the other dog and repeatedly returns to where the dog was last seen.

- 6) **Energy Level** Capacity and need for physical and mental activity. This trait ranges from very low energy, where the puppy spends most of its time lying or sitting to very high energy, where the puppy rarely stops and is usually running.
- 7) **Environmental Focus** The need to concentrate attention or energy on surroundings. Environmental focus is not the same as object focus since it emphasizes the puppy's need to explore the space around it, not the objects in it. Low environmental focus puppies never investigate the test space while high environmental focus puppies explore the space in great detail, examining floors, walls, ceilings, etc.
- 8) **Eye Contact** The tendency for puppies to either avoid or look people in the eye. This ranges from puppies that at no point in the test make eye contact with the tester to puppies who make and maintain direct eye contact regularly during the test.
- 9) **Forgiveness** A puppy's reaction to a person's adverse behavior or negative emotion that is unfair or unwarranted. This ranges from extremely unforgiving, when the puppy takes offense to the handler's behavior to extremely forgiving, when the puppy takes full responsibility for the handler's unfair treatment. Puppies that are extremely unforgiving leave the tester after the toe pinch and do not return voluntarily. Extremely forgiving puppies never leave the tester after the toe pinch and offer submissive behaviors, such as licking and lip licking.
- 10) **Following** A puppy's reaction to a person walking near them. This ranges from puppies that take no notice of a person's movement to puppies that naturally fall into step close to the person's feet or legs, sometimes to the point of being underfoot.
- 11) **Food Desire** Level of need and intensity to get food. This trait ranges from low, pups that show no interest in and will not eat the food, to high, pups that hysterically attempt to get the food and do not stop trying during the exercise.
- 12) **Handshyness** Puppy's reaction to a standing person reaching over its head to pet it. This trait is dichotomous. Pups are either not handshy when they show no physical reaction to someone reaching over their head. Or they are



handshy and show some reaction, no matter how small, to this overhead reach.

- 13) **Learning Speed** Speed with which puppy learns to solve a problem. Learning speed is indicated by the change in speed, if any, between the first and second attempts to solve the same problem. This trait ranges from very slow learners, puppies that take longer to find the breeder the second time than the first, to very quick learners, pups that find the breeder in less than half the time on the second attempt.

If you want to compare puppies quantitatively, use the following equation, but know that comparisons are often problematic because of the pup's luck:

$$\frac{2nd\ attempt - 1st\ attempt}{1st\ attempt} \times 100 = \% \ change$$

- 14) **Object Focus** The need to concentrate attention or energy on objects in the test area, including but not limited to the obstacle course. This trait ranges from low, pups that pay no attention to the objects at any point in the test, to high, pups that obsess over one or more objects and are very difficult to refocus.
- 15) **Pain Threshold** The threshold at which puppies show a response to mild discomfort or pain. It is the lowest level at which a puppy reacts to when the webbing between the two middle toes is pinched with fingers, with consistently increasing pressure, 0 being no pressure and 10 being the most pressure the tester can apply.
- 16) **Patience** The extent to which the puppy waits calmly with its handler when the handler is focused elsewhere. This trait ranges from extremely impatient, when the puppy leaves as soon as the handler moves her focus away from the puppy, to extremely patient, when the puppy stays quietly with the handler regardless of how long the handler is distracted.
- 17) **People Focus/Sociability/Pack Drive** Amount of intensity and desire for a connection with people; sociability. This trait ranges from low, where pups do not acknowledge the tester at any point in the test, to high, where pups focus immediately and intensely on the tester and do not break off from the tester at any point in the test.
- 18) **Play Desire** Level of need and intensity to engage with another in a game of chase or tug-of-war. This trait ranges from low, where pups show no interest

in chase and/or tug of war and do not follow the object to high, where pups immediately and intensely chase and/or tug with the object.

- 19) **Problem Solving Style** Manner in which puppy approaches solving difficult problems. This trait is a series of adjectives that describe the puppy's actions during problem solving, from noisy and frantic to calm and quiet to disinterested.
- 20) **Ranking Desires** Relative strength of food, play and retrieve desires.
- 21) **Resilience** Ability to recover from or adjust easily to change or stress. It ranges from puppies that are not resilient so they shut down completely when stressed and cannot recover during the test to pups that rebound quickly from stress on their own. This trait is not evaluated if the puppy does not show any signs of stress during the test.
- 22) **Retrieve Desire** Level of need and intensity to chase, grab, hold and return an item to a person. This trait ranges from low, pups that have no interest in chasing an object to high, pups that not only chase and grab but return the item to the tester. Pups that chase and grab but do not return with the item to the tester cannot score a 10 on this trait.
- 23) **Scent Focus** The need to concentrate attention or energy on scents. This trait ranges from low, where pups do not notice any scents, including the scent object, during the test, to high, pups that focus strongly on scents and cannot be redirected without a lot of effort on the tester's part.
- 24) **Self-Confidence** Assurance or confidence in its own judgment, power and abilities. This trait focuses on the puppy's confidence in itself not its handler or the situation. It ranges from hesitant and fearful to relaxed and eager. Body carriage is also important while assessing self confidence. Puppies with forward body carriage and weight shifts are considered self-confident while puppies with backward body carriage and weight shifts lack self-confidence.
- 25) **Sight Sensitivity** Degree of puppy's fear response to the introduction of an unusual visual object. This trait ranges from very sight sensitive, when puppies have an extreme fear response to an unexpected sight. These puppies often cannot continue the test. Conversely, very sight insensitive puppies show no reaction to unexpected sights. Every puppy and dog can be made to startle with a frightening enough surprise. However, we only want to evaluate the puppy's response to a standard sight. If the puppy shows no reaction to the umbrella pop, the puppy's threshold was not reached. This

tells us that the puppy has a higher than average threshold but it does not tell us anything about how the puppy will respond if and when its threshold is reached.

- 26) **Sound Sensitivity** Degree of puppy's fear response to a loud, unexpected noise. Every puppy and dog can be made to startle with a frightening enough sound. However, we only want to evaluate the puppy's response to a standard sound. If the puppy shows no reaction to the cookie tin drop, the puppy's threshold was not reached. This tells us that the puppy has a higher than average threshold, but it does not tell us anything about how the puppy will respond if and when its threshold is reached.
- 27) **Stability** The appropriateness of a puppy's consistent behaviors while under stress. Pups scoring low on stability exhibit inappropriate behaviors while stressed. Those behaviors include biting, barking, growling, snarling, baring teeth, urinating or defecating from fear, whining and bolting. This trait ranges from very unstable, when pups display inappropriate behaviors throughout the test to very stable puppies that exhibit no inappropriate behaviors during the test. This trait is not evaluated if the puppy does not show any signs of stress during the test.
- 28) **Stress Level (Nerve)** Amount of mental or emotional strain or tension exhibited by the puppy during the test. This trait ranges from highly stressed (weak nerve) puppies to those that show no signs of stress (strong nerve). Highly stressed pups exhibit signs of stress throughout the test. You may need to stop the test for these puppies if they are so stressed they cannot react to the tester. Pups that are not at all stressed by the test (strong nerve) show no signs of stress during the test. Signs of stress include whining, scratching, yawning, crying, barking, hiding, freezing, urinating or defecating from fear, shaking and bolting.
- 29) **Stress Type** Responds to stress with increased or decreased activity. This trait ranges from highly negative to highly positive. A highly negative puppy will stop moving completely, by either sitting or lying down, when stressed. A very positive puppy will become uncoordinated and even start doing the zoomies when it is stressed.
- 30) **Switching Between Desires (Food, Play, Retrieve)** Ability to stop pursuing one desire for another, when presented. This trait ranges from low, where the pup never switches to the next desire, to high, where the pup seamlessly and immediately switches to the next desire. Typically, we present desires in

the following sequence: food then chase/tug, then retrieve. A low switching pup will either never switch from food to chase (most common) or chase to retrieve. A high switching pup will move immediately from food to chase and/or tug and then to retrieve.

- 31) **Activity Focus** Ability and need to concentrate attention or energy on one or more activities. This trait ranges from low, “couch potato” pups that have no interest in activities, to highly intense pups that demand the tester do something with them.
- 32) **Birdiness (optional)** Concentrating attention or energy on birds. Optional for sporting dogs. This trait ranges from low, pups that have no interest in birds, to high, pups that undergo a physiological change, which looks like a shock went through their body, when they smell a bird.
- 33) **Three-dimensionality (optional)** Puppy’s inherent awareness of objects located above its head. This trait ranges from low, where pups never look up to see the flying object, to high, pups that immediately look up and follow the object with interest and without fear.

### Some Traits Are Tweakable

The strength, though typically not the direction, of some temperament characteristics can be influenced through developmental activities, socialization and training. These traits include the level and relative strength of the traits listed in the Puppy Traits table. If they need further development, these traits will be the primary focus of the pup’s training plan. For example, the owner of a pup with moderate object drive can increase the pup’s desire to tug or retrieve through a thoughtful training plan. Too much tug or retrieve may turn off a young pup, but an appropriate amount can build desire.

### Other Traits Are Relatively Stable

Other temperament traits are relatively fixed. Little can be done to change those aspects of a dog’s personality so its owners will instead need to adapt to these traits through management and lifestyle. Training may influence these traits slightly so is worth doing but owners must be realistic about how much they can change these

aspects of their dog. Characteristics such as energy level, handshyness, forgiveness, environmental focus, three-dimensionality and biddability.

Puppy Traits	
<b><i>Relatively Tweakable</i></b>	<b><i>Relatively Stable</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Dog Focus</li><li>2. Eye Contact</li><li>3. Following</li><li>4. Food Desire</li><li>5. Learning Speed</li><li>6. Object Focus</li><li>7. Patience</li><li>8. People Focus</li><li>9. Play Desire</li><li>10. Problem-Solving Style</li><li>11. Resilience</li><li>12. Retrieve Desire</li><li>13. Scent Focus</li><li>14. Sight Sensitivity</li><li>15. Sound Sensitivity</li><li>16. Stability</li><li>17. Stress Level</li><li>18. Switching Desires</li><li>19. Activity Focus</li><li>20. Birdiness (optional)</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Assertiveness, People &amp; Dog</li><li>2. Biddability</li><li>3. Courage</li><li>4. Energy level</li><li>5. Environmental focus</li><li>6. Forgiveness</li><li>7. Handshyness</li><li>8. Pain Threshold</li><li>9. Self-Confidence</li><li>10. Stress Type</li><li>11. Three-dimensionality (optional)</li></ol>

# Matching Puppies to Owners

Matching puppies to owners is an activity that combines science, intuition and experience. Each litter will teach you something about the placement process. However, even novice breeders can use the results of the APET and the information in this chapter to make informed decisions in placing puppies.

This chapter builds on the successes and failures that we have had over the past three decades. The vast majority of our matches were good, some were great, and a few were poor. We have sought to learn from each of these—what went well, what did not and why—so you can benefit from our experiences.

In this chapter, we will discuss owners and puppies, but we also need to consider the breeder in the matching equation. Looking inside yourself to discover and understand your own biases may help you avoid bad placements. For examples, I have a weakness for owners who have recently lost young dogs to cancer. My normally effective intuition gets waylaid by my empathy and compassion. To avoid allowing this characteristic to cause me to make bad matches, I now use my close friends to affirm placement decisions in these cases. If you find that you too have a bias towards (or against) certain homes, set up systems to help you make better decisions. These systems could include reviewing placements with mentors, more experienced breeders or good friends who understand you.

### ***APET Matching Goal***

Why do we care so much about fit? After teaching thousands of dog owners, we know that people can love dogs that do not fit them well. However neither dog nor owner is truly fulfilled in these situations. Therefore, our goal in this endeavor is to put puppies in homes where they and their owners will thrive. A successful placement is one where the puppy's natural abilities and talents are not only honored but welcomed and sought after by its owner. The few characteristics that the owner would like to change (1) are changeable and (2) require only minor tweaking. The owner does not need to tolerate many of the pup's traits nor is she overwhelmed or daunted by working with the pup.

If you have been in dogs for any length of time, you know of dogs and owners that are poor matches. That might be a situation where a dog's natural desires are constantly thwarted by the owner. For example, the high energy dogs who are never allowed to run off leash because of either the owner's living situation or terror of being out of control. Then there was the lovely golden retriever puppy that was never allowed to put anything in her mouth because it bothered her owner. And we all know bright, energetic dogs that live an unfulfilling, boring lives hanging out in the backyard day in and day out.

Equally bad is when owner's lives are limited by their beloved dog. That might be an owner who is passionate about a sport that the dog does not enjoy. You know, the agility addict with the dog who sullenly walks the course or the hunter whose dog would rather be a couch potato than hunting dog. Many owners are over faced by their dog's physicality—size and strength. That might be the lovely young dog that never gets to leave its yard because its owner is not strong enough to walk it. Or the large-breed puppy that gets relegated to the basement because it constantly knocks over the family's toddlers. Finally there is the outgoing owner who no longer socializes because her dog is so fearful that it has panic attacks away from home and is terrified when new people come to its home. Heck, we know people who live with dogs that bite them regularly.

Although we honor the dedication these owners show their dogs, our goal for our puppies is different. Rather than relying on an owner's sense of responsibility to dog ownership, we want to puppies in homes that fit their temperaments with owners who will enjoy enabling the dog to become all that he can be. In other words, where the dog and owner will fulfill each other's highest desires, goals and dreams.

### **Assessing Owners**

Now, on to puppy matching. By the time you are ready to match puppies and owners, you have spent weeks observing your litter and hopefully at least as long getting to know prospective owners. You have evaluated each puppy, including the APET. With these evaluations, you have a lot of information about each puppy's



traits—temperament, structure, type, health and working ability. Now you are ready to put the puzzle together—which puppy goes to which new home?

However, to make the best match, you also need a lot of information about the owners you have available. We recommend three methods to gather this information: a written buyer application, references, and an in-person or over-the-phone conversation with the buyer. Our application process is somewhat arduous because we want to know our prospective buyers are committed to getting a puppy. Raising a good dog is hard work that far overshadows the effort required to fill out a questionnaire, provide references and meet in person.

Like many breeders, we ask about prospect's experience with dogs, expectations, family and living situation. These basics enable us to decide whether or not we should sell a puppy to this person or family but they do not help us decide which puppy will fit best with them. Instead, we use more intimate information about the activities, goals, experience, desires and personal preferences the owner has for their new dog. During this process, we focus on dogs not puppies because puppyhood is so short compared to a dog's lifespan.

### ***Application Components***

1. Complete a thorough, ten-page puppy-buyer application that covers the basics but also asks many open-ended questions that enable prospective buyers to tell us not only about themselves but also their dreams, goals and desires for their dog.
2. Contact three personal and one veterinarian references. We ask the people giving the references to tell us about the puppy buyer, encouraging them to be honest with us. We want to know about the puppy buyer's:
  - a. personality
  - b. training style
  - c. training philosophy
  - d. dog experience and/or horse experience
  - e. and anything else they think we should know



3. If after reviewing the application and references, we still are interested in selling them a puppy we make a date to meet them. If there is no way to meet in person we will work out a phone, Skype or Facetime interview.

To have a rich picture of the puppy buyer, we need to consider all of these things when assessing the puppy-buyer's side of the matching process. The answers to these many questions do not determine if a buyer is appropriate for one of your puppies but they provide topics for discussion during your interview.

### ***Activities***

Many of the activities we want to do with our dogs are quite challenging so why not start off with a dog pre-programmed to succeed in those arenas? Being a family pet is a big job; it takes a dog with special characteristics to thrive with young children or be a wonderful family companion. Achieving the highest level in any dog sport is an accomplishment in itself; doing it with a dog that brings the right temperament, body and mind to the table only helps. Knowing which attributes will help with each activity will go a long way in helping both puppy and owner thrive in training so we can stack the deck in the owner's favor.

Owners who want to do more than one activity present an even bigger challenge. For example, an active grandfather who also hunts and competes in obedience needs a family companion, hunting dog and competition obedience dog. Search and rescue handlers who also want to compete with their dogs need animals that can thrive with very intense, high level training. Owners who love to do pet-assisted therapy but also want to run upper-level hunt tests are looking for a very unique set of canine characteristics. Even the novice competitor who wants to dabble in rally and agility is looking for a special dog.

### ***Goals***

For competition and working homes, the buyer's goals must also play a role in placement. At what level does the buyer want to compete? Does the owner want her first agility dog, her third Master Agility Champion or a World Team prospect? Does she want a Junior Hunter or is she looking for a Field Trial Champion? Will she

be thrilled with a Companion Dog title or does she have her heart set on an Obedience Trial Champion?

Pet homes are only slightly less demanding. An inexperienced couple with three children under the age of six has very different (but quite high) goals for their dog than a young, single man who loves to run in his spare time. Helping owners express these goals is an important job for a breeder.

### ***Living Situation***

The living situation for the puppy buyer is also an important consideration. Here is a list of the things you would like to know to help you make the best possible match:

- ☐ Does the owner live in the city, suburbia or out in the country?
- ☐ Does the family own their home do they rent?
- ☐ What kind of a home do they have and how much control do they have over it?
- ☐ What is the makeup of the family?
- ☐ Does the family have children? If they do what are their ages? There is a big difference between three-year olds and teenagers!
- ☐ Are there any special needs individuals in the family?
- ☐ Are there any elderly/frail people living in the house?
- ☐ What is the typical activity level in the house?
- ☐ Will the puppy be able to get daily exercise?
- ☐ How much exercise is off leash?
- ☐ How much exercise is on leash?
- ☐ Will the owner be working away from home on a full-time basis?

### ***Dog Experience***

The amount and quality of a prospective owner's past experience with dogs is an important consideration when matching puppies. People who have never had a dog typically need a different kind of puppy than those who have been raising puppies for years. But more than just the amount of experience they have, you want to find out if that experience is compatible with yours. If you believe dogs should live in the

house, you want to identify buyers who have always had outside dogs. If you raise soft golden retrievers, you want to know if the prospect once handled military working dogs. None of these experiences might preclude you selling a dog to these families, but they should inform your choice of dog for them and the discussions you have about your puppies.

### ***Beliefs about Dogs***

We always want to feel out people's beliefs about the role and care of dogs during the application process. People who see dogs as furry children are likely to need a different dog than those who believe dogs are instinctive-driven hunters. Similarly, all-positive trainers are likely to do better with a different dog than a balanced trainer.

As important are the prospective owner's ideas about dog feeding and care. These beliefs do not need to mirror yours exactly, but you should be comfortable with them before deciding to match one of your pups in that home. If you are a raw feeder, you want to know if a buyer only believes in feeding one type of kibble to their dog with no "people food." The same goes for veterinary care, grooming and upkeep.

### **Putting the Puzzle Together**

The answers to these questions give us an idea of what kind of dog will do best with each home. Over the years, we have outlined the traits that have served dogs best in the various homes we have placed them in. For each activity, we lump traits into three categories: those that most contribute to success, those that hinder success, and those that do not matter. To make the best match, we look for puppies with most of the contributing traits and few of the hindering traits. If some of the traits do not match, we focus on those traits that are relatively unchangeable over a dog's lifetime and then we use training plan to help owners make up the differences.

We also take into account how immersed the owner plans to be in the activity. Pet homes are immersion, every day, all the time, so we want as good a match for them as possible. Search and rescue homes are similarly immersion; the dog trains or works most of the time. Hunting homes vary greatly from the avid hunters who hunt

daily during the season to the dabbler who may take their dog out a few times a season.

Competition homes also fall along the avid and dabbler continuum. Some people compete every weekend, month in and month out. Others fit in shows only once a month or so. Some competitors want to excel at the national or international level, while others are just happy to play with their dog in the ring. Not only do we try to match pups with the best trait profile with the more competitive homes, we also want them to have the stamina and energy to handle the demands of upper-level training and competition. However, dabblers also have unique needs since they do best with biddable dogs with long memories who can adapt to long periods between shows.

And of course, we know of dogs with few of the “right” traits that have excelled in each situation. The highly sound sensitive dog who became an agility or even field trail champion. The puppy that ignored the movements of its owner that became an obedience trial champion. The lists below are not the whole answer but they stack the deck in favor of each dog and owner.

Finally, temperament is not the entire answer to good matches. Thus, we use three additional assessment tools to place our puppies. They are structural evaluations, health screenings and, depending upon breed, natural working ability. Information about these assessments can be found in our seminars, from other authors, your breed’s registry and national breed club.

Remember, some activities have more flexibility in the range of dogs that can succeed. For example, dogs with a wider range of characteristics can succeed at obedience and agility competitions than search and rescue, retriever field trials or herding trials. And of course, there are so many variations in pet homes that many dogs can succeed if they have good biddability and energy appropriate to the home.

So let’s consider how we think about developing a temperament trait profile for various homes and activities. Below we discuss our thinking about various homes and how that leads to success traits. We also list the traits that we would prefer not to see in a puppy going into one of these homes. We call these hindrances. This list

is by no means complete so take some time to think about the kinds of buyers that come to you for puppies and make your own success and hindrance trait lists.

### ***Family Pet***

All but the most experienced pet homes do best with easily trained dogs that want to work with their owners, so we look for puppies with moderate to high biddability, moderate to high people focus and middle-of-the-road forgiveness. Since pet homes often have smaller pets (cats, rabbits, birds, rodents) in the home or neighborhood, we look for dogs with low prey desire. Stable dogs with a moderate pain tolerance and low sight and sound sensitivity will handle the activities of children more easily. Many pet owners enjoy playing games with their dogs within reason so low to moderate play desire works well.

### **Success Traits**

- ✓ Moderate to high biddability
- ✓ Moderate to high people focus
- ✓ Low environmental focus
- ✓ Low prey desire
- ✓ Low to moderate play desire
- ✓ Low energy (quiet pet home)
- ✓ Moderate energy (active pet home)
- ✓ Low to moderate sight and sound sensitivity
- ✓ Moderate to high pain threshold although low-pain threshold dogs can do well in homes with no children
- ✓ Middle-of-the-road forgiveness

### **Hindrances**

- ☒ High energy
- ☒ Low activity focus
- ☒ Low biddability
- ☒ High sight sensitivity
- ☒ High sound sensitivity (homes with young children)

- ☒ Low pain threshold in homes with young children

### ***Competitive Obedience***

Competitive obedience dogs should be comfortable moving close to their owner and giving natural eye contact. To focus on their owner despite distractions around them, they should have high people focus, moderate to low environmental focus, and low sight and sound sensitivity. Since obedience tends to require regular drilling, dogs with moderate to high biddability, good stamina and high play/retrieve desire are likely to enjoy the sport more than those without these traits. A strong natural hold makes retrieve work easier. In addition, teaching precise positioning is usually easiest with dogs with high food desire.

#### **Success Traits**

- ✓ High natural following
- ✓ High eye contact
- ✓ Moderate to high energy
- ✓ Moderate to high food desire
- ✓ Moderate to high retrieve desire
- ✓ Moderate to high play desire
- ✓ Strong natural hold
- ✓ High people focus
- ✓ Low to moderate environmental focus
- ✓ Moderate to high biddability

#### **Hindrances**

- ☒ High environmental focus
- ☒ Low people focus
- ☒ No eye contact
- ☒ Low play desire
- ☒ Low food desire

### ***Competitive Agility***

To get through a course, agility dogs need to both focus on the environment and attend to the instructions of their handler. Their training is aided if they like food

rewards, are courageous when faced with the equipment, and enjoy playing some sort game with their owner, such as chase, tug or retrieve. Since agility is basically a game of chase, moderate to high play drive is very helpful to agility dogs and owners.

To withstand the rigors of showing, they will be well served by moderate to high energy but with good activity focus. In addition, agility dogs will do best with low sight and sound sensitivity. There is little need for natural eye contact in agility dogs and, in fact, this trait can interfere with their focus on the equipment and course.

### **Success Traits**

- ✓ Moderate to high environmental focus
- ✓ Moderate to high people focus
- ✓ Moderate to high play desire
- ✓ Moderate to high food desire
- ✓ Moderate to high energy
- ✓ Moderate to high courage
- ✓ Low sight and sound sensitivity

### **Hindrances**

- ☒ High eye contact
- ☒ Low play desire
- ☒ Low food desire
- ☒ High sight and sound sensitivity

### **Search and Rescue Dog**

Search and rescue (SAR) dogs also need to have both the natural tendency to focus on the environment for their search while attending to their handler for guidance and connection. They must be highly motivated to work and very biddable, while exuding boldness and confidence in every situation. They must be “bomb-proof,” stable to sights, sounds, pain, and movement. Ideally, they show strong scent desire without being overly dog focused. Three-dimensionality is a great benefit in SAR dogs.

### **Success Traits**

- ✓ Moderate to high environmental

- ✓ Moderate to high people
- ✓ Strong three dimensionality
- ✓ High scenting desire
- ✓ High retrieve
- ✓ High play desire
- ✓ High courage
- ✓ High energy

### **Hindrances**

- ☒ High eye contact
- ☒ Low play desire
- ☒ Low food desire
- ☒ High sight and sound sensitivity
- ☒ Low pain threshold
- ☒ Low self-confidence

### ***Retriever Field Trials***

Retriever field trials are one of the most competitive dog sports, with very high training, physical and trialing demands. Many dogs wash out during the years of training it takes to get to the top so finding puppies with the best collection of traits only helps owners hoping to succeed in field trials.

Field trial retrievers need moderate to high energy to hold up to the amount of training, traveling and competing inherent in this sport. High environmental focus will naturally incline them to look out for marks and blinds. They need some people focus but there is no need for high levels of this trait not only so they are primarily focused on the environment, but also because many field trial dogs work for and train with many different handlers over their careers.

There is little need for natural eye contact in field trial dogs and, in fact, this trait can interfere with their focus on their work. Ideally, they have a high retrieve desire and natural so their innate desire to play the game enables rewards them for handling the difficulty and demands of the sport.



High energy and stamina with high activity focus will set them up for success along with a lot of natural self-confidence to face the complex challenges of various set-ups and extreme conditions. A good amount of courage allows them to confidently handle the unknown terrain and water and a protesting injured bird. And finally, high birdiness ensures they are most motivated by retrieving birds, the ultimate genetic prize for the retriever.

### Success Traits

- ✓ Moderate to high environmental focus
- ✓ Low to moderate people focus
- ✓ High retrieve
- ✓ Natural hold
- ✓ High courage
- ✓ High energy
- ✓ High birdiness
- ✓ Moderate to high scent desire

### Hindrances

- ☒ High eye contact
- ☒ High people focus
- ☒ Low retrieve desire
- ☒ High sight and sound sensitivity

### Designing Training Plans

After matching pups to homes, the second most important use of the APET is providing guidance to new owners through brief training plans. These plans focus owners on their pup's tweakable personality traits that can be influenced by developmental, socialization and training opportunities, as well as those stable traits that will need to be managed.

### A Quick Review of Canine Cognitive Development

The APET's training plans take advantage of the timeline of canine brain development. The vast majority of canine brain development takes place during the period from the last three weeks of pregnancy until 16 weeks of age. Then in decreasing order of power, dogs continue to develop up till six months and still further until twelve months. After that, dogs can learn new things but the size and overall complexity of their brain is pretty much set. Other Avidog® programs discuss how to best develop your puppy's brain but the APET seeks to guide owners as they develop their baby puppy to help mold it into a dog that enriches their life.

### There Are No Perfect Puppies or Matches

Despite our best efforts, there are neither perfect puppies nor matches of puppies to owners. But because of the timeline of canine brain development, owners and breeders have the ability to change the shape and size of their dog's brains for the first year of its life, with the most influence taking place prior to sixteen weeks of age.

Up until now, most of the puppy's developmental experiences are focused on the litter as a whole. Now it is time to create individual development plans for each puppy that take into account its individual strengths and weaknesses. The APET provides a snapshot of the maturing puppy. Some of the parts of the puppy are already well developed (stable traits), while others are still early in development (tweakable traits). Based on the total picture, the puppy's owner can design a plan tailored to that puppy's characteristics.

### Training Plans

Training plans thus provide guidance regarding influencing traits that might be tweakable and managing traits that might are not. Training plans are short documents, which give owners the high points of what they need to know about their puppy.

In our training plans, we:

- ✓ Describe the puppy to owner so they can go back and review their dog's key characteristics
- ✓ Implications of those characteristics for them and their living situation, goals, etc.
- ✓ Provide 10 suggestions on 1 to 2 pages to:
  - Help owners handle the mismatched traits
  - Shape owner's approach to puppy
  - Remind owner of key puppy-training principles

Training plans focus on:

- ✓ Mismatches between home and puppy
- ✓ Complex traits, e.g., forgiveness
- ✓ Reminders of good training methods

### Describe puppy's key temperament traits and their implications

We start the training plan with a simple description of the puppy, its approach to life, and its key temperament traits. Many owners do not need or care about all of their puppy's traits so we focus on:

- ✓ **Confidence and Resilience.** These traits tell us how a puppy will approach new things and how easily it will bounce back from stress. From this, new owners can create a socialization plan as well as decide

how much stress to allow their puppy to feel during any session. More resilient pups can handle more while less resilient pups should be faced with less.

- ✓ **Assertiveness with People and Dogs.** These two traits become the foundation for the pup's socialization plan, such as how owners will instruct new people to interact with their puppy and which dogs they will allow their pup to meet. Very people-assertive puppies should be taught polite greeting behaviors from the outset while less assertive puppies might be allowed more liberties until they become more comfortable with strangers. Overly dog-assertive puppies must be taught polite canine greetings or should spend time with puppy-savvy adult dogs that will correct rudeness. Without this early education, these puppies risk become dogs that bully other dogs or even get into fights due to their rude behavior. Conversely, less dog-assertive puppies must be protected for rambunctious or puppy-aggressive dogs until they develop trust and confidence in other dogs.
- ✓ **Environmental and People Focus.** The discussion of these two traits forewarns new owners about how their puppy will engage with its environment and the people in it. A highly environmental focused puppy often confuses or frustrates its owner because it seems to not care about them except at home. In reality, the puppy must be allowed to see new spaces and become accustomed before it is able to focus on its owner or activities. These puppies need to arrive at class well ahead of time so it can become acclimated prior to the start of class.  
A highly people-focused puppy must greet every person it sees, which makes walks and training classes difficult. These are the dogs that drag their owner down the sidewalk and up to ever passerby, whether they like dogs or not.

To handle this trait, owners must start early on teaching the puppy when it must concentrate on them, rather than the people around them.

- ✓ **Desires: Play, Food, Retrieve, including level, switching and ranking.** The puppy's desires for food, playing and retrieving help owners determine how to reward their pup, since the higher desires are naturally more reinforcing for a puppy. They will know which desire to use in really challenging circumstances (the highest) and which can be used at easier times. These drives also show owners where to focus their efforts if they want to change their pup's level of desire, say if they want to teach their puppy to enjoy retrieving or tugging.
- ✓ **Object/Activity Focus.** The level and intensity of a puppy's object and activity focus sets owners' expectations about living with their puppy. Pups low on these two traits are often easier to live with because they are not obsessed with things or activities. But it also means that it may be harder to motivate these pups to learn, since they are less able to focus on doing things. Conversely, a puppy that is object and/or activity driven is one that gets in trouble a lot. They must be confined and controlled so it does not destroy the owner's possessions and house when not occupied or watched by its owner.  
Owners wanting to work or compete with their pups, however, will want to build object and/or activity desire for training sessions and competitions.
- ✓ **Patience.** Patient puppies are usually a pleasure to live with because they tolerate downtime when their owner is preoccupied. Reinforcing this trait from the outset increases the probability that the puppy will remain patient throughout its lifetime.  
More common are impatient puppies that have no tolerance for downtime. Owners of these puppies must focus even more on rewarding even brief periods, seconds perhaps, of patient inactivity on their puppy's part. They also need to manage their puppy so it does not leave to

reinforce itself when the action stops. Leashes, crates or vigorous games of tug can keep puppies connected during these periods.

- ✓ **Pain Threshold.** We focus our guidance on puppies that are at the extreme ends of the pain threshold continuum. Pups with very low pain thresholds feel pain more quickly and intensely than normal. Owners must take care to condition these puppies to handling from the start, with gentle sessions filled with the highest rewards the pup can imagine. Preparing these animals for a lifetime of grooming, veterinary care and people touching them is essential.

Very high pain threshold puppies present challenges to their owners when being taught to walk on leash. These pups cannot feel their owner at the end of the leash and quickly become serious pullers without early training.

Competitors with puppies at either extreme need to plan their training well. Low pain threshold pups will feel weave poles, down contacts, cold water, briars and stones to a greater degree than other dogs and need careful and high-value reinforcement to teach them to tolerate, if not love these aspects of their competitive careers. High pain threshold puppies are more likely to injure themselves during rigorous activities and, as mentioned above, not respond to leash or collar pressure like other dogs.

- ✓ **Forgiveness.** This trait is one of the most important to us as we place and describe puppies. Most owners think they want forgiving puppies but in fact, most do not. Forgiving dogs are those that take responsibility for everything that goes wrong in a household, such as arguments. They run from owner to owner trying to resolve a situation that has nothing to do with them. These dogs do best in calm, less emotional homes.

Unforgiving dogs have no problem in excitable, loud households as long as they are not blamed for things they did not do. These are not tough dogs and they accept corrections for their own mistakes but if owners treat them unfairly, unforgiving dogs will lose respect for them. These dogs

seem to approach relationships with their owners as a partnership not a hierarchy.

- ✓ **Stability.** Stable puppies provide few challenges but unstable pups, those that react inappropriately to stress, need slow and careful development so they learn how to handle the stressors of daily life. Puppies that are quick to panic, bite or urinate must be very gradually introduced to difficult situations until they learn alternative responses. These less stable puppies also need a very solid relationship with their owner so they learn to trust her when things go wrong.
- ✓ **Biddability.** Biddable puppies fit well in all homes, but unbiddable pups and their owners can also thrive with early training. These latter pups will become mini-tyrants in homes that give them everything they want without requiring anything of them. However, owners can encourage their less- biddable pups to work with them but using high-value rewards whenever the pup makes an effort.
- ✓ **Energy Level.** Matching energy to homes is one of our most important criteria. Possibly more than any other trait, a mismatch of energy can challenge even the most loving relationships between dog and owner. Even with a good match, owners of high-energy dogs must be reminded that this means regular, daily mental and physical exercise. We provide suggestions to these owners about tricks they can teach, games they can play at home, and services such as doggie daycare and dog walking that can fill in the gaps when they cannot get their dog out as much as it needs.

### Top Ten Tips for This Puppy

From this discussion of the puppy's traits and implications, we then select our top ten things that we would use to create a development and socialization plan for this puppy. You might be able to write a ten-page list but don't! Keep it simple. Highlight the most important or challenging aspects of the match, knowing what you know about puppy and owner. Then, briefly offer several specific suggestions to implement each idea.

For example for the very self-confident puppy that responds to stress by barking, offer:

*This puppy has a lot of attitude that may result in demand barking. Although cute at this age, demand barking in this puppy is likely to result in an obnoxious adult. If he barks AT YOU (not at something else and not in play), perhaps when he wants out of his x-pen, you have to make a quick decision as to whether he needs to pee/poop or is just demanding to be let out. Read the Crate-Training Section of the Puppy Potty Training Solution course and follow it exactly. ALWAYS take this puppy outside on leash!*

Or for the owner getting a very forgiving puppy, recommend:

*Although many people think they want a forgiving dog, it's not necessarily a great thing. It means that your dog will not judge you, but he will take responsibility for errors that he didn't make. You must be upbeat and positive in training, particularly when you make an error, or he will think he's done something wrong. This often slows dogs down or makes them very handler dependent. If you make a mistake, reward your dog FIRST and then discuss the issue with your instructor, etc.*

There are lots more sample training plans on the APET Kit Resource page so check them out.

## Conclusion

You now have an idea of how to prepare for, conduct, analyze and use an APET to match puppies to homes and provide guidance to their owners. Now it's time to give it a try. But first, spend some time on the APET Kit Resource page. To get the most out of that page:

1. Begin by downloading and printing the forms you will need: the score and scribe sheets, three layouts, exercise sequence and, if you are a breeder, the litter trait profile. Look the forms over to familiarize yourself with them.



2. Watch the annotated video, which walks you through each exercise of a real APET, identifying the basics of the exercise and its purpose. Use this puppy's score sheet to guide your viewing.
3. Open Mr Green's scribe and score sheet on your computer or print a copy. Then, watch his APET video from beginning to end. Look at the scribe sheets as you go to see what we noted about his performance. Then review the score sheet to see how we scored his effort. Finally, look at his training plan to see what we highlighted and recommended for his new owners.
4. Now print a blank scribe sheet and scribe Mr Blue's APET video while you watch it. At the end, fill out a blank score sheet and compare the scores you gave him to ours. It's okay if we don't agree completely but your scores and ours should be similar. Now read his training plan to get an idea of how we described him and what guidance we gave his owners.
5. Review the temperament traits described in this ebook and then watch the individual trait videos to get a picture in your mind of what they look like and the range of behaviors puppies might show.
6. Now gather the items you will need for your APET, identify a stranger if you are a breeder or an owner, and give it a try! Drop us a note to let us know how it went.
7. We hope you have enjoyed learning about the APET. Thanks for joining the Avidog team and using the APET to evaluate, match and develop puppies so that they and their owners will thrive!

# Avidog Puppy Evaluation Test (APET) Scribe Sheet

Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_

Litter: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Full APET Scribe Sheet

**Important Note:** The puppy's general traits will be apparent throughout the test. Testers and observers should note and record evidence of the following traits as they occur:

- Assertiveness
- Biddability
- Energy Level
- Resilience
- Self-Confidence
- Stability
- Stress Level
- Stress Type

Test Component	Puppy Traits	Description of Puppy Behaviors and Observer Comments
Behavior Upon Entry (Strange place and stranger)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Self-confidence</i></li> <li>• <i>People Assertiveness</i></li> <li>• <i>Environmental Focus</i></li> <li>• <i>People Focus</i></li> <li>• Object Focus</li> <li>• Scent Focus</li> </ul>	
Toy Play I (Chase and Tug)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Play Desire</i></li> <li>• <i>Activity Focus</i></li> </ul>	

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

**Puppy Evaluation Test Scribe Sheet for Puppy:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Litter:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Chase &amp; Retrieve I (Chase and Retrieve)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Play Desire</b></i></li> <li>• <i><b>Retrieve Desire</b></i></li> <li>• <i><b>Activity Focus</b></i></li> </ul>	
<b>Explore Test Space and Sociability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Environmental Focus</b></i></li> <li>• <i><b>People Focus</b></i></li> <li>• Activity Focus</li> <li>• Object Focus</li> <li>• Scent Focus</li> </ul>	
<b>Following Stranger</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Eye Contact</b></i></li> <li>• <i><b>Natural following/heeling</b></i></li> <li>• Environmental and People Focus</li> </ul>	
<b>(OPTIONAL: INTRODUCE NEW TESTER WHO IS KNOWN TO PUPPY)</b>		
<b>Test Component</b>	<b>Puppy Traits</b>	<b>Description of Puppy Behaviors and Observer Comments</b>
<b>Tester Sets Up Obstacle Course</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Self-confidence</b></i></li> <li>• <i><b>Sight Sensitivity</b></i></li> <li>• <i><b>Sound Sensitivity</b></i></li> <li>• Environmental and People Focus</li> <li>• Patience</li> </ul>	

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Puppy Evaluation Test Scribe Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Obstacle Course (w Food)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Biddability</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Self-confidence</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Object Focus</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Activity Focus</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Scent Focus</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Sight Sensitivity</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Sound Sensitivity</i></b></li> </ul>	
Obstacle Course (without Food)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Biddability</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Self-confidence</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Object Focus</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Activity Focus</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Scent Focus</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Sight Sensitivity</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Sound Sensitivity</i></b></li> </ul>	
Tester Moves Items (Dramatically)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Self-Confidence</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Sight Sensitivity</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Sound Sensitivity</i></b></li> <li>• Environmental and People Focus</li> <li>• Patience</li> </ul>	
Toy Play II (Chase And Tug)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Play Desire</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Stamina</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Activity Focus</i></b></li> </ul>	

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Puppy Evaluation Test Scribe Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Chase and Retrieve II</b> (Optional: Retrieve w/ delay Retrieve w/ obstacle)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Play Desire</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Retrieve Desire</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Biddability</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Activity Focus</i></b></li> <li>• Stamina</li> <li>• Courage</li> </ul>	
<b>Disconnect from Pup (Conversation with Observer)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Patience</i></b></li> <li>• Activity Focus</li> <li>• Environmental and People Focus</li> <li>• Object Focus</li> </ul>	
<b>Overhead Reach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Handshyness</i></b></li> </ul>	
<b>Flying Object (OPTIONAL)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>3-Dimensionality</i></b></li> </ul>	
<b>Cookie Tin Drop</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Sound Sensitivity</i></b></li> <li>• Courage</li> </ul>	
<b>Umbrella Pop</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Sight Sensitivity</i></b></li> <li>• Courage</li> </ul>	

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

**Puppy Evaluation Test Scribe Sheet for Puppy:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Litter:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Friendly, Reliable Dog</b> (Dog MUST be reliable with puppies!!)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dog Focus</i></li> <li>• <i>Assertiveness (Dog)</i></li> <li>• <i>People Focus</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Toe Pinch and Response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Touch Sensitivity</i></li> <li>• <i>Forgiveness</i></li> </ul>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>First: _____/10</span> <span>Second: _____/10</span> </div>
<b>Food Presentation and Puppy Pushups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Food Desire</i></li> <li>• <i>Biddability</i></li> <li>• <i>Activity Focus</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Toy Play III (Chase And Tug)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Play Desire</i></li> <li>• <i>Activity Focus</i></li> <li>• <i>Switching from Food</i></li> <li>• <i>Stamina</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Chase and Retrieve III</b> (Optional: Retrieve w/ birds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Play Desire</i></li> <li>• <i>Activity Focus</i></li> <li>• <i>Retrieve Desire</i></li> <li>• <i>Biddability</i></li> <li>• <i>Switching from Food and Play</i></li> <li>• <i>Birdiness (optional for hunting breeds)</i></li> <li>• <i>Stamina</i></li> </ul>	

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Puppy Evaluation Test Scribe Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Super Puppy Toys (OPTIONAL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•<i>Courage</i></li><li>•<i>Stamina</i></li><li>•<i>FUN!</i></li></ul>	
Breeder Recall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•<i>Learning Speed</i></li><li>•<i>Problem Solving Style</i></li></ul>	Trial #1: _____ Seconds      Trial #2: _____ Seconds

Italicized, Bold Traits are the primary traits being tested in each test

## Pet Litter APET Scribe Sheet

**Important Note:** The puppy's general traits will be apparent throughout the test. Testers and observers should note and record evidence of the following traits as they occur:

- Assertiveness
- Biddability
- Energy Level
- Resilience
- Self-Confidence
- Stability
- Stress Level
- Stress Type

Test Component	Puppy Traits	Description of Puppy Behaviors and Observer Comments
Behavior Upon Entry (Strange place and stranger)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Self-confidence</i></li> <li>• <i>People Assertiveness</i></li> <li>• <i>Environmental Focus</i></li> <li>• <i>People Focus</i></li> <li>• Object Focus</li> <li>• Scent Focus</li> </ul>	
Toy Play I (Chase and Tug)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Play Desire</i></li> <li>• <i>Activity Focus</i></li> </ul>	
Retrieve I (Chase and Retrieve)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Play Desire</i></li> <li>• <i>Retrieve Desire</i></li> <li>• <i>Activity Focus</i></li> </ul>	



## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

**Puppy Evaluation Test Scribe Sheet for Puppy:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Litter:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Explore Test Space and Sociability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Environmental Focus</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>People Focus</i></b></li> <li>• Activity Focus</li> <li>• Object Focus</li> <li>• Scent Focus</li> </ul>	
<b>Following Stranger</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Eye Contact</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Following</i></b></li> <li>• Environmental and People Focus</li> </ul>	
<b>(OPTIONAL: INTRODUCE NEW TESTER WHO IS KNOWN TO PUPPY)</b>		
<b>Test Component</b>	<b>Puppy Traits</b>	<b>Description of Puppy Behaviors and Observer Comments</b>
<b>Tester Sets Up Obstacle Course</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Self-confidence</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Sight Sensitivity</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Sound Sensitivity</i></b></li> <li>• Environmental and People Focus</li> <li>• Patience</li> </ul>	
<b>Obstacle Course (w Food)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Biddability</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Self-confidence</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Object Focus</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Scent Focus</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Sight Sensitivity</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Sound Sensitivity</i></b></li> </ul>	

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Puppy Evaluation Test Scribe Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Obstacle Course (without Food)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Biddability</i></li> <li>• <i>Self-confidence</i></li> <li>• <i>Object Focus</i></li> <li>• <i>Scent Focus</i></li> <li>• <i>Sight Sensitivity</i></li> <li>• <i>Sound Sensitivity</i></li> </ul>	
Tester Moves Items (Dramatically)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Self-Confidence</i></li> <li>• <i>Sight Sensitivity</i></li> <li>• <i>Sound Sensitivity</i></li> <li>• Environmental and People Focus</li> <li>• Patience</li> </ul>	
Toy Play II (Chase And Tug)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Play Desire</i></li> <li>• <i>Stamina</i></li> <li>• <i>Activity Focus</i></li> </ul>	
Retrieve II (Optional: Retrieve w/ delay Retrieve w/ obstacle)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Play Desire</i></li> <li>• <i>Retrieve Desire</i></li> <li>• <i>Biddability</i></li> <li>• <i>Activity Focus</i></li> <li>• Stamina</li> <li>• Courage</li> </ul>	

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Puppy Evaluation Test Scribe Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Disconnect from Pup (Conversation with Observer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Patience</i></b></li> <li>• Activity Focus</li> <li>• Environmental and People Focus</li> <li>• Object Focus</li> </ul>	
Overhead Reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Handshyness</i></b></li> </ul>	
Cookie Tin Drop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Sound Sensitivity</i></b></li> <li>• Courage</li> </ul>	
Umbrella Pop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Sight Sensitivity</i></b></li> <li>• Courage</li> </ul>	
Friendly, Reliable Dog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Dog Focus</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Assertiveness (Dog)</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>People Focus</i></b></li> </ul>	
Toe Pinch and Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Touch Sensitivity</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Forgiveness</i></b></li> </ul>	First: _____/10                      Second: _____/10

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Puppy Evaluation Test Scribe Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Food Presentation and Puppy Pushups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•<i>Food Desire</i></li><li>•<i>Biddability</i></li><li>•<i>Activity Focus</i></li></ul>	
Breeder Recall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•<i>Learning Speed</i></li><li>•<i>Problem Solving Style</i></li></ul>	Trial #1: _____ Seconds      Trial #2: _____ Seconds

Italicized, Bold Traits are the primary traits being tested in each test



# Avidog Puppy Evaluation Test (APET) Score Sheet

Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APET Score Sheet				
GENERALLY STABLE TEMPERAMENT TRAITS				
TRAIT	DEFINITION	SCORE		
Assertiveness-- People	The degree to which a puppy is bold and self-assured with familiar and unfamiliar people	1-----5-----10		
		RESERVED So restrained and reticent that it does not greet tester	MIDDLE OF THE ROAD Initially greets tester low but with encouragement gets into lap but never approaches tester’s face; may be more assertive with familiar people	FORWARD Lacking restraint; presumptuous, bold with both familiar and unfamiliar people, e.g., greets by getting in lap and leaping into tester’s face
Assertiveness-- Dogs	The degree to which a puppy is bold and self-assured with familiar and unfamiliar dogs	1-----5-----10		
		RESERVED So restrained and reticent that it does not greet dog	MIDDLE OF THE ROAD Greets confidently with appropriate restraint, keeping all feet on the ground; may be more assertive with familiar dogs	FORWARD Lacking restraint; presumptuous, bold with both familiar and unfamiliar dogs, e.g., greets by climbing on back, head or neck

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Avidog Puppy Evaluation Test (APET) Score Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

TRAIT	DEFINITION	SCORE		
<b>Biddability</b>	The degree to which the puppy shows an interest in working with and/or understanding tester	<b>NOT BIDDABLE</b> Completely disinterested in working with or understanding tester's requests	<b>MODERATELY BIDDABLE</b> Attempts to work with and/or understand tester's words and motions about half the time; gets frustrated or distracted sometimes	<b>EXTREMELY BIDDABLE</b> Intensely focused on working with and/or understanding testers requests throughout test; rarely frustrated or distracted
<b>Courage</b>	Mental strength to persevere despite fear or difficulty	<b>1-----5-----10</b> <b>LACKS COURAGE</b> Shuts down in the face of all frightening or difficult situations	<b>MODERATELY COURAGEOUS</b> Attempts to approach and engage some frightening or difficult situations, often with help from tester	<b>EXTREMELY COURAGEOUS</b> Independently perseveres through every frightening and difficult situation
<b>Energy Level</b>	Capacity and need for vigorous physical and mental activity	<b>1-----5-----10</b> <b>LOW ENERGY</b> Lies down or sits during most of test; only walks when moving	<b>MODERATE ENERGY</b> Trots most of test, may stop moving a few times	<b>HIGH ENERGY</b> Never stops running to pounce and jump

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Avidog Puppy Evaluation Test (APET) Score Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

TRAIT	DEFINITION	SCORE
<b>Forgiveness</b>	Reaction to unwarranted adverse behavior or negative emotion from a person	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>1-----5-----10</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>EXTREMELY UNFORGIVING</b>                      Immediately leaves and stays away from tester , will not engage or return to tester without a lot of encouragement                 </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>MODERATELY FORGIVING</b>                      Goes away but returns to tester without encouragement                 </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>EXTREMELY FORGIVING</b>                      Immediately turns toward and touches tester or gets in tester's lap                 </div> </div>
<b>Handshyness</b>	Puppy's reaction to a standing person reaching over its head to pet it	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>HANDSHY</b> Any physical or behavioral response to overhead reach, such as ducking, flinching, squinting, backing away  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO REACTION</b> No reaction to overhead reach
TRAIT	DEFINITION	SCORE
<b>Pain Threshold</b>	The lowest level of pain which a puppy reacts to when the webbing between the two middle toes is pinched with fingers, with consistently increasing pressure, 0 being no pressure and 10 being the most pressure the tester can apply	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>1<sup>st</sup> FRONT PAW: ____/10</span> <span>2<sup>nd</sup> FRONT PAW: ____/10</span> <span>AVERAGE: ____/10</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>1-----5-----10</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>EXTREMELY PAIN INTOLERANT</b> </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>MIDDLE OF THE ROAD</b> </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>EXTREMELY PAIN TOLERANT</b> </div> </div>
<b>Self-Confidence</b>	Assurance; confidence in its own judgment, power and abilities	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>1-----5-----10</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>NOT CONFIDENT</b>                      Hesitant, fearful, backward movement and low body carriage                 </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>MODERATELY CONFIDENT</b>                      Rarely fearful or hesitant; neutral body carriage; mostly forward movement                 </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>VERY CONFIDENT</b>                      Relaxed, eager, no fear or hesitation Always upright body carriage and forward movement                 </div> </div> <p><i>What, if anything, concerned puppy:</i></p>

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Avidog Puppy Evaluation Test (APET) Score Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

TRAIT	DEFINITION	SCORE		
<b>Stress Type</b>	Responds to stress with increased or decreased activity	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px dashed black; padding-bottom: 5px;"> <span>1</span> <span>5</span> <span>10</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>STRONGLY NEGATIVE STRESSER</b>  Puppy's activity decreased with stress: froze, slowed down, sat or lay down </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>MIDDLE OF THE ROAD</b>  No real change in the puppy's activity under stress </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>STRONGLY POSITIVE STRESSER</b>  Puppy's active increased with stress: did zoomies, hyperactive, fell over, lost control </div> </div>		
<b>Three-dimensionality (3D)</b>	Puppy's inherent awareness of objects located above its head	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px dashed black; padding-bottom: 5px;"> <span>1</span> <span>5</span> <span>10</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>NOT 3-D</b>  Never looks up, even with encouragement and direction from tester </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>MODERATELY 3-D</b>  Notifies objects overhead with encouragement or direction from tester </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>EXTREMELY 3-D</b>  Independently notices and watches objects overhead regularly during test </div> </div>		
<b>RELATIVELY TWEAKABLE TRAITS</b>				
<b>Learning Speed</b>	<p>Speed with which puppy learns to solve a problem. (Note: it is the change in speed, if any, between the first and second attempts that indicate how quickly a puppy learns.</p> <p>If you want to compare puppies quantitatively, use the following equation:</p> $\frac{2nd\ attempt - 1st\ attempt}{1st\ attempt} \times 100 =$ <p>% change</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px dashed black; padding-bottom: 5px;"> <span>1st Attempt: _____ seconds</span> <span>2nd Attempt: _____ seconds</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px dashed black; padding-bottom: 5px;"> <span>1</span> <span>5</span> <span>10</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>SLOW</b>  Puppy takes longer to find breeder the second time as it did the first time </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>MODERATE</b>  During the second attempt, the puppy finds breeder 25% faster than the first time </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>FAST</b>  During the second attempt, the puppy finds breeder 50% or faster than the first time (If physically possible) </div> </div> <p><i>NOTE: If the puppy finds the breeder the first time as fast as is possible, then learning speed is difficult to assess using this scale. Testers should interpret these puppies using their own judgment.</i></p>		



## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Avidog Puppy Evaluation Test (APET) Score Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

TRAIT	DEFINITION	SCORE						
Patience	The extent to which the puppy calmly waits with tester during periods of inactivity or when tester is occupied elsewhere	1-----5-----10						
		EXTREMELY IMPATIENT Immediately leaves tester and occupies itself with other activities until reengaged by tester		MODERATELY PATIENT Remains in general vicinity of tester; may attempt to reengage tester, may eventually leave		EXTREMELY PATIENT Never leaves tester and waits calmly and quietly until tester reengages		
Problem-Solving Style	Manner in which puppy approaches solving difficult problems	Noisy	Quiet	Thoughtful	Reckless	Engaged	Disinterested	
		Focused	Distracted	Frustrated	Calm	Frenzied	Persistent	Quits
		Stressed	Thinks before acting		Acts before thinking		Requires Assistance	
		(Circle traits that apply)						
Resilience	Ability to recover from or adjust easily to change or stress	<input type="checkbox"/> Showed no signs of stress during test; could not evaluate resilience						
		1-----5-----10						
		NOT RESILIENT Could not recover from stress; shut down completely		MODERATELY RESILIENT Recovered from stress with encouragement and support from tester		VERY RESILIENT Recovered easily from stress		
Sight Sensitivity	Degree of puppy’s reaction to the introduction of a unusual visual object	1-----5-----10						
		VERY SIGHT SENSITIVE Extreme startle with flight; moves as far away from umbrella as possible; may or may not recover to continue test		MIDDLE OF THE ROAD Startles and approaches object only with encouragement		NOT AT ALL SIGHT SENSITIVE No startle reaction or evidence of even slight stress		

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Avidog Puppy Evaluation Test (APET) Score Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

TRAIT	DEFINITION	SCORE		
<b>Sound Sensitivity</b>	Degree of puppy's reaction to a loud, unexpected noise	1-----5-----10		
		<b>VERY SOUND SENSITIVE</b> Extreme startle with flight; moves as far away from source of sound as possible; may or may not recover to continue test	<b>MIDDLE OF THE ROAD</b> Startles and approaches object only with encouragement	<b>NOT AT ALL SOUND SENSITIVE</b> No startle reaction or evidence of even slight stress
<b>Stability</b>	The consistency and appropriateness of a puppy's behaviors while under stress	1-----5-----10		
		<b>UNSTABLE</b> Inconsistently responds to stressful circumstances; often exhibits inappropriate behaviors while under stress	<b>MODERATELY STABLE</b> Somewhat dependable under stressful circumstances; may exhibit some inappropriate behaviors while under stress	<b>EXTREMELY STABLE</b> Consistently dependable under all circumstances; exhibits only appropriate behaviors while under stress
<b>Stress Level (Nerve)</b>	Amount of mental or emotional strain or tension exhibited during the test	1-----5-----10		
		<b>HIGHLY STRESSED</b> Shows strong stress indications, e.g., whining, panting, bolting, freezing, fear urination, cringing, trying to escape, tucked tail, ears pinned back, crawling, trembling	<b>MODERATELY STRESSED</b> Shows some mild stress indications, e.g., whining, panting, trying to escape, lip licking, whale eye, scratching, yawning	<b>NOT STRESSED</b> Shows no stress indications

# Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Avidog Puppy Evaluation Test (APET) Score Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

FOCUS-RELATED TWEAKABLE TRAITS					
Trait	Definition	Score			
Dog Focus	The need to concentrate attention or energy on visible dogs	1-----5-----10	DOG INATTENTIVE Ignores dog	MODERATE DOG FOCUS Greet dog but is easily redirected	DOG OBSESSED Continually greets, watches or engages with dog; very difficult to redirect
Eye Contact	The natural tendency to look people in the eye	1-----5-----10	NO EYE CONTACT Puppy does not ever give eye contact to testers	MODERATE EYE CONTACT Puppy makes eye contact 5 to 6 times during test	HIGH EYE CONTACT Puppy regularly makes eye contact during many parts of the test
Following	The natural tendency to move with and close to a human’s legs	1-----5-----10	NO FOLLOWING Puppy does not move with tester	MODERATE FOLLOWING Puppy moves in along with tester but may get distracted by the environment	HIGH FOLLOWING Puppy is often underfoot as it moves with tester
Object Focus	The need to concentrate attention or energy on objects	1-----5-----10	OBJECT INATTENTIVE Ignores objects	MODERATE OBJECT FOCUS Notices objects but is easily redirected	OBJECT OBSESSED Continually engages and notices objects; very difficult to redirect
People Focus (Pack Drive)	Amount of intensity and desire for a connection with people; sociability	1-----5-----10	LOW PACK DESIRE Does not engage tester	MODERATE PACK DESIRE Engages tester when encouraged	HIGH PACK DESIRE Engages tester without encouragement

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Avidog Puppy Evaluation Test (APET) Score Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

TRAIT	DEFINITION	SCORE		
<b>Scent Focus</b>	The need to concentrate attention or energy on scents	<b>1-----5-----10</b> <b>SCENT INATTENTIVE</b> Ignores scents	<b>MODERATE SCENT FOCUS</b> Notices scents but is easily redirected	<b>SCENT OBSESSED</b> Continually engages and notices scents; very difficult to redirect
<b>Activity Focus</b>	Ability and need to concentrate attention or energy on one or more activities	<b>1-----5-----10</b> <b>ACTIVITY UNFOCUSED</b> Has no desire or is unable to concentrate on activities	<b>MODERATELY FOCUSED</b> Can concentrate with effort but easily distracted from activity	<b>HIGHLY ACTIVITY FOCUSED</b> Concentrates intensely on activity, not distractable. Demands action from tester.
<b>PREY DRIVE-RELATED TWEAKABLE TRAITS</b>				
<b>Food Desire</b>	Level of need and intensity to get food	<b>1-----5-----10</b> <b>LOW FOOD DESIRE</b> Shows no desire to get food	<b>MODERATE FOOD DESIRE</b> Shows some desire to get food but lacks persistence	<b>HIGH FOOD DESIRE</b> Eagerly and intensely persists in getting food
<b>Play Desire</b>	Level of need and intensity to engage with another in games, such as chase and/or tug-of-war	<b>1-----5-----10</b> <b>LOW PLAY DESIRE</b> Will not chase any of the play items presented	<b>MODERATE PLAY DESIRE</b> Will chase, pounce or hold but does not play consistently	<b>HIGH PLAY DESIRE</b> Eagerly and intensely chases, grabs and/or pulls back on tug toy every time presented

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Avidog Puppy Evaluation Test (APET) Score Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

TRAIT	DEFINITION	SCORE
<b>Retrieve Desire</b>	<b>Level of need and intensity to chase, grab, hold and return an item to a person</b>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px dashed black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <span>1</span> <span>5</span> <span>10</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>LOW RETRIEVE DESIRE</b>  Will not chase any of the retrieve items that are thrown </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>MODERATE RETRIEVE DESIRE</b>  Chases items about half the time; may or may not return with item to tester </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>HIGH RETRIEVE DESIRE</b>  Eagerly and intensely chases, grabs and returns with items to tester every time </div> </div>
<b>Ranking Desires</b>	Relative strength of food, play and retrieve desires	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>Strongest Desire(s)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Play </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Retrieve </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Food </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>Second Strongest Desire</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Play </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Retrieve </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Food </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>Weakest Desire(s)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Play </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Retrieve </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Food </div> </div>
<b>Switching Between Desires (Food, Play, Retrieve)</b>	Ability to stop pursuing one desire for another, when presented	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px dashed black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <span>1</span> <span>5</span> <span>10</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>DOES NOT SWITCH DESIRES</b>  Does not move from one desire to another regardless of tester's effort </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>SWITCHES DESIRES</b>  Moves from one desire to another with a lot of encouragement and/or effort on tester's part </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>SWITCHES DESIRES EASILY</b>  Moves seamlessly between desires without effort on tester's part </div> </div>
<b>OPTIONAL SPORTING BREED-RELATED TRAITS</b>		
TRAIT	DEFINITION	SCORE
<b>Birdiness (optional)</b>	Concentrating attention or energy on birds	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px dashed black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <span>1</span> <span>5</span> <span>10</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>BIRD INATTENTIVE</b>  Ignores bird so is easily redirected </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>MODERATE BIRD FOCUS</b>  Shows interest in bird but can be redirected </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <b>BIRD OBSESSED</b>  Physiological response to bird; cannot be redirected from bird </div> </div>



# Avidog Puppy Evaluation Test (APET) Score Sheet

Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This puppy best suited for the following homes according to its temperament?

	Very Poorly Suited	Poorly Suited	Neither Good Nor Bad Match	Well Suited	Very Well Suited
Family Pet (Quiet Home)					
Family Pet (Average Home)					
Family Pet (Active Home)					
Competitive Obedience					
Competitive Agility					
Search and Rescue					
Field Trial Retriever					
Conformation					

## Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Avidog Puppy Evaluation Test (APET) Score Sheet for Puppy: \_\_\_\_\_ Litter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Training Plan Notes for this Puppy:*

# Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Litter: \_\_\_\_\_

## APET Litter Trait Profile

Sire: \_\_\_\_\_

APET Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dam: \_\_\_\_\_

Puppy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Trait/Puppy ID								
Assertiveness--People								
Assertiveness--Dogs								
Biddability								
Courage								
Energy Level								
Environmental Focus								
Forgiveness								
Handshyness								
Pain Threshold								
Self-Confidence								
Stress Type								
Three-dimensionality								
Learning Speed								
Patience								
Problem Solving Style								
Resilience								
Sight Sensitivity								
Sound Sensitivity								
Stability								
Stress Level (Nerve)								
Dog Focus								
Eye Contact								
Following								
Object Focus								
People Focus								
Scent Focus								
Activity Focus								
Food Desire								
Play Desire								
Retrieve Desire								
Ranking Desires								
Switching								
Birdiness (optional)								



# Avidog Pet Evaluation Testing (APET)

Litter: \_\_\_\_\_

APET Litter Trait Profile

Sire: \_\_\_\_\_

APET Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dam: \_\_\_\_\_

Puppy	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Trait/Puppy ID								
Assertiveness--People								
Assertiveness--Dogs								
Biddability								
Courage								
Energy Level								
Environmental Focus								
Forgiveness								
Handshyness								
Pain Threshold								
Self-Confidence								
Stress Type								
Three-dimensionality								
Learning Speed								
Patience								
Problem Solving Style								
Resilience								
Sight Sensitivity								
Sound Sensitivity								
Stability								
Stress Level (Nerve)								
Dog Focus								
Eye Contact								
Following								
Object Focus								
People Focus								
Scent Focus								
Activity Focus								
Food Desire								
Play Desire								
Retrieve Desire								
Ranking Desires								
Switching								
Birdiness (optional)								



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