

NOTE: This test was developed by someone in the USA as a means to find ideal candidates for training as assistance dogs, based on the seminal work by J.P. Scott & J.L. Fuller as documented in their 1965 (Several reprints since) book "Genetics & the social behavior of the dog"

A simple test for puppies 6 to 8 weeks old.

The test is conducted in a room unfamiliar to the puppy. The room should have at least minimal furnishings, to motivate the puppy to explore and if needed offer it a place to hide. Each puppy is tested separately in the presence of two strangers (to the puppy). If needed the breeder too can perform the tests, but the most meaningful results are obtained with strangers. Prior to beginning the tests a list should be prepared for each puppy with the individual tests already listed, so that only the scores and any other comments need to be recorded.

The scoring is as follows: 1 = Very Good; 2 = Good; 3 = Still satisfactory; 4 = Insufficient.

The total time required for all seven tests is about 10 minutes (each takes about 10 – 15 seconds).

Items required for the tests are:

A ball that the puppy can easily carry in his mouth.

An empty plastic water bottle, again of a size commensurate to the puppy.

An empty cigarette box on a string.

#### *Test 1: Coming when called*

(Fearfulness, social attraction, environmental confidence, curiosity)

The puppy is placed on the floor of the room; the testers stand still ignoring him.

The puppy should immediately, without fear (tail / body posture), begin to explore the room.

*Negative:* if he reacts to the unknown environment with fear or panic, wants to go outside, curls up, whines, shakes, or urinates.

After 15 seconds, one of the testers goes through the room while calling the puppy.

*Positive:* he immediately interrupts his action, follows the call willingly, without grumbling and without aggression, lets himself be petted without biting or growling.

Grading example (the "standard" has to be established prior to testing, so that all puppies will be evaluated the same):

1 = reacts quickly to the call and stays with tester

2 = must be called again, stays with tester

3 = must be called again, only stays with tester briefly

4 = does not pay any attention to call, indifferent, fearful, aggressive, etc.

#### *Test 2: Retrieving*

(Hunting instinct, intelligence, willingness, trust)

As the puppy continues to explore the room, the tester rolls a ball past the puppy's nose towards a wall, so that the puppy can follow the ball's course.

With this test significant differences and a wide variety of behaviour can be seen by how the puppy reacts to the ball. It is not to be expected that the puppy fetches the ball and returns it to the tester.

*Negative:* Puppy hesitantly follows the ball; pays more attention to the tester than to the ball; a sluggish dog does not pay attention to the ball; a fearful dog does not follow the ball at all, or not under a table/chair etc.

*Positive:* Puppy chases the ball without hesitation, even under a table/chair etc., picks up the ball, plays with it. When the ball bounces off the wall, the puppy ducks so it can immediately chase it. Dogs with pronounced enthusiasm to retrieve hold the ball in their mouth, others are more inclined to chase the ball and play with it.

A good dog is willing in everything that a human does with him, full of energy, curiosity, self-assuredness.

Enthusiasm in retrieving is tightly correlated with intelligence, self-confidence, and willingness to work.

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### *Test 3: Luring*

(Social attraction, trust, willingness)

The puppy is now lured back and forth between the two testers. Tester A kneels, tester B crawls at a distance of about 3 meters, attracts the puppy with words and gently slaps the floor with his hand. Once the puppy arrives at B, A then repeats the procedure, a total of four or five times.

*Negative:* The puppy does not respond at all and continues to explore the room; he comes hesitantly and fearfully; approaches the hand while growling.

*Positive:* the puppy runs without hesitation to the one calling, head and tail held high, with the same enthusiasm he follows the call from the second tester, and repeats this tirelessly. Every time he arrives he is strongly praised and petted.

### *Test 4: Paw pressure*

(Body sensitivity, vindictiveness, domination behaviour)

The puppy is picked up into the arms and gently stroked. Then the skin (webbing) between the toes of a front paw is pinched firmly between the thumb and index finger for 5 seconds (be sure not to use your fingernails). Normally, puppies of 6 weeks don't have any pain receptors in that area yet.

*Negative:* Puppy whines, squeals, struggles, tries to bite (Later in life it is likely to be shy, panicky, insecure); Puppy does not let itself be held, does not let himself be pinched, tries to bite (later likely to be sensitive, independent, and overly dominant). His defensive reactions typify his surmised character.

*Positive:* The puppy accepts everything done to him calmly, and appears not to notice the pressure at all.

### *Test 5: Lying on his back.*

(Dominant behaviour, trusting nature)

The puppy is picked up slowly from the ground, with both arms slightly stretched out; it is gently turned between both hands until he lies fully on his back. Thereby one hand supports the puppy's neck and the other its body, while he's being held like that for 10 (!) seconds.

*Negative:* Puppy defends himself against being put on his back (reactions appropriate to his type)  
*Positive:* The puppy accepts everything calmly and is relaxed.

### *Test 6: Noise*

(Noise sensitivity)

The puppy is lured back and forth between the two kneeling testers. When he passes a chair or a low table, the empty plastic bottle falls about 60 to 80 cm behind him. When the puppy then arrives at tester B, he is called by A, and the whole thing repeated once more by having B call him again.

*Negative:* Puppy lays back his ears, pulls tail between legs, but does not run away; Puppy has panicky fear, runs away or curls up motionless, urinates.

*Positive:* The motion behind him that topples the bottle does not spook the puppy, he curiously explores what has fallen / was dropped behind him. Sniffs and touches the bottle and then follows the call.

### *Test 7: Moving object.*

(Hunting instinct, willingness, curiosity, potential for enthusiasm).

The puppy remains in the room and explores. One tester, while walking around, drags the cigarette box behind him on a string. He excites the puppy by making the box jump in small or large jumps over the floor.

*Negative:* The puppy is not interested at all; puppy is obviously afraid.

*Positive:* The puppy rushes towards it enthusiastically, paws at it, jumps on it, jumps up. When the box is held in the air, he eagerly follows all the movements of the box and approaches it playfully or challengingly and growling (should be scored less favorably).

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