

Training Vocabulary

By Denise Collins

Dogs are capable of learning words and phrases. Consistency is the key to teaching anything new, whether it be a word, obedience command, or trick. Below are some commonly used words for different situations. Use any word you prefer, just make sure that everyone in the household uses the same vocabulary.

The easiest way for a dog to learn a word or phrase is to attach it to the action. For instance, say SIT when the dog's bottom hits the floor. Avoid repeating a command over and over. The dog learns to ignore you or he will learn that he is supposed to SIT when you reach the forth SIT!

- “LEAVE IT” – (My favorite command) To release an object held in the dog's mouth or to stop the dog from picking up something. Also, use it when you want your dog to ignore other dogs.
- “AH! AH!” - Staccato like sound, don't do that right now/not that way (incorrect)
- “NO!” – For behavior that's never allowed. Don't do that under any circumstances. Reserve this word for serious offenses, biting, running into the street, life threatening behaviors. Command should be extremely forceful. The dog should realize he faces dire consequences for this violation.
- “LET'S PLAY” – Words to initiate play.
- “THAT'S ENOUGH” – Use this to stop activity that's allowable. “Enough, I don't want to play with you anymore, “I'm through petting you,” to stop watchdog barking.
- “OFF” – Get off the furniture or people. This can be used when a dog jumps up on you in greeting. Don't confuse this command with “Down”.
- “DOWN” – Lie down until released.
- “SIT” – Sit until released.
- “STAY” – Remain in place, do not move until released.
- “WAIT/WAIT THERE” – Remain in the general area. Allowed to move around. Don't confuse with “Stay”.
- “OK/FREE” – Release word. Means exercised finished, dog can relax, OK to move.
- “COME” – Come to me. Covet this word. If you abuse it by using “come” to call your dog go outside or in a crate for hours on end, you will lose it. Only use this word when you can back up the command by having a leash or 30 foot long line on the dog so you can make the dog come to you.



- “OUTSIDE” – To send the dog outside or to ask him if he needs to eliminate.
- “CRATE” – To send the dog into the crate.
- “QUIET” – Use for nuisance barking, whining, etc.
- “EASY” – means gently, slowly, when walking or taking treats.
- “GOOD/GOOD DOG” – Praise, use often with a happy, enthusiastic voice.
- “GO POTTY/BE QUICK/LOOK SHARP” – Pick any word, when the pup is in the act, say your chosen word. You will have a dog that will go on command.

Body language and tone of voice are ways of communicating that your dog already understands. Assume a confident stature and a firm, authoritative tone when giving commands. Remember to keep praise happy and encouraging.

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