

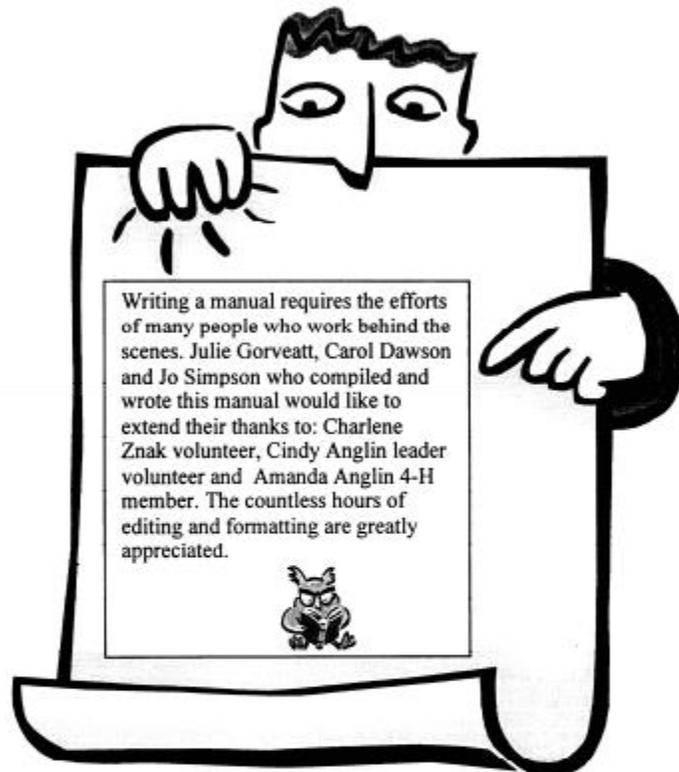
# GUIDE TO 4-H



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WASHINGTON STATE





Showmanship manual revised 2009; Jo Simpson . 4-H photos by; 4-H member Kristina Gunderson and 4-H leaders Matt Ginther and Sarah Gunderson. Photo editing; Kristina Gunderson. Showmanship manual edit ; Cathy Soule and photo graphics done by Barb Taylor.

Thanks for all your help.



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# **Introduction to the 4-H Showmanship Event**

## **Section 1**

### **How to Prepare, Train and Show in the 4-H Event**

This section will provide information in a generic fashion. It should be left up to the members to research and decide what is right for their breed. They should be allowed to present their dog in the style and presentation they choose, within the rules and regulations. This section tells how to find information, train yourself and your dog for the showmanship event, get the right equipment and know how to dress. It also includes grooming skills and presentation skills, ring procedures and basic preparation for the ring. Using this section will benefit new members and leaders.

## **Section 2**

### **Judging criteria: for Judges, Leaders and 4-H Members**

This section will offer judging criteria for those who judge our 4-H Showmanship event. This information will also be helpful to the members, leaders and parents. Those that judge the 4-H Showmanship events must be familiar with the judging criteria, rules and regulations as well as all other policies that apply. Developing the criteria will help standardize judging across the state, make 4-H Showmanship more consistent, and give members a better opportunity at preparing for competition, no matter who the judge is. 4-H Showmanship will always be subjective, but we can still improve upon the current nature of it by developing a set of guidelines and score sheet, so judges and members are receiving the same information.

## **Purpose or Goal**

**4-H showmanship classes are judged on the ability, knowledge and skill of the 4-H members to groom, handle and present their dogs according to 4-H guidelines.**

## **Objectives**

**To introduce and encourage members to participate in the sport of dogs.  
and improve in all areas of dog care, including handling skills and sportsmanship.**

# Section 1

How To Prepare, Train and Show in the 4-H Showmanship Event



## Getting Started

The goal of 4-H Showmanship is to teach 4H members how to properly care for and exhibit their animals. This includes the animal's grooming, condition and cleanliness. Showmanship also refers to the member's ability to present their dog to its best advantage before a judge. Mixed breeds, purebreds and spayed or neutered dogs may be used. The member does not have to own the dog, but he or she must have regular access to it for training purposes. 4-H showmanship is a completely different competition from obedience, do not confuse the two so that you do not confuse the dog. Think of your dog as a first grade student, he or she will be taught both obedience and showmanship, but they are as different as math and spelling. Use different commands for each class.

### **The purpose of 4-H Showmanship**

In order for you to show your dog in this event, you will need to recognize what the judge is looking for when they judge a dog. 4-H showmanship is not a competition to see who has the best dog. Your dog is not being judged, but your handling skills are. You and your dog are a team. When you present the profile, the front, or the rear of your dog in a stacked position, what is the judge looking for? What is the purpose of gaiting your dog around the ring? How is the dog supposed to look? In order for you to present your dog to a judge you will need to understand these questions. To become successful at dog handling you will need to study, research, and learn from experienced people. You can start now by learning the basics.

### **Learn about the Breed**

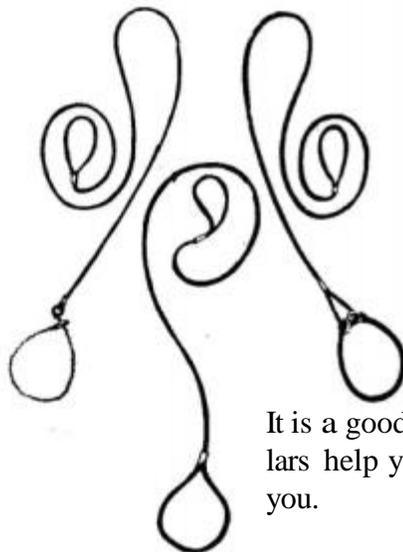
Before you learn to show your dog, it is a good idea to find out how your dog would be shown in conformation. Every breed is shown differently and the best way to find out how to show your breed is to:

- Study pictures of your breed of dog and research your dog's breed standard, or the breed standards that most resemble your dog if you have a mixed breed. The standard is a description of an ideal specimen for a specific breed. It is like a blueprint against which every dog is judged. (Go to the American Kennel Club web site, AKC.org for breed standards.) The AKC also has a video on each breed standard. This can help you see what it is supposed to look like. You can find other books that have other breed standards if the AKC does not have your breed. Look at photographs in books and magazines from breed clubs, look at breed books and study pedigrees. Go to other breed registries as well for rare breeds not listed by the AKC.
- Ask your leaders or superintendent to recommend someone for you to talk to.
- Talk to a reputable breeder for your breed. Look at how your breed's feet are placed and how the head and tail are held. If you are watching a class of dogs, either on TV or at a show, notice how fast the dogs are moved and how the handler holds the lead. You will need to gait your dog at a speed that makes your dog move its best. If you have a mixed breed dog, you must choose the one breed which your dog most resembles and show him or her as if purebred. When you enter a showmanship event, put an "X" after the breed of dog so the judge knows it's a mixed breed. Also, check what types of show leads and collars are used in the breed ring.
- If you have a rare breed, or rare breed mix, that does not have an AKC standard but does have a standard in another registry, bring that with you to give to the Superintendent and Judge.

## Choosing a Show Lead and Collar

There are several different kinds of show leads. The main difference between them is the amount of control they give you. Any of the leads are okay for any breed of dog, although some are more commonly used than others. In selecting a lead/collar, it is necessary for the it to compliment and enhance your dog. For example if you have a black dog use a black show lead. It should not distract from the dog or stand out. You should try to find a leash that is barely noticeable. Do not use a black show lead and collar on a white dog, or any bright colors. The most common types of show leads/collars are described as follows:

- **Spring Clasp** is a leash and collar combination often used on smaller dogs. It does not give the handler a lot of control. Another problem with this lead is the clasp. The spring in the clasp breaks very quickly allowing the leash to slip off. This can lead to problems in the ring.
- **Martingale** is a collar and leash combination. This lead gives a fair amount of control and is usually the best choice for a small to medium dog. It works well on the spaniel breeds, like cockers and springers. It is also used on terriers, whippets and some larger dogs and smooth coated breeds. Martingale leads come in various lengths and colors. On some, the collar section is made of chain, this gives even more control. When you buy a Martingale lead, make sure that when the leash is pulled tight, the two metal rings on the collar do not touch when fitting it on your dog.
- **Collar and Lead** have two separate parts, the collar and the lead. The collar is a slip collar similar to those used in obedience. It is usually made of very fine chain (snake) or nylon. Check to see which is best for you and your dog. Leads come in different lengths and are made of nylon or thin leather. They are shorter than obedience leashes and are thinner, and lighter weight. They are easier to roll up into your hand, keeping the leash work neat and tidy. This combination is a good choice for a medium or large dog that is strong and may pull a smaller handler. Generally smaller dogs use longer leads, larger dogs use shorter leads.



Types of show leads and collars:

(Left) Choke collar made of either a fine chain or leather, combined with a fine lead, with or without a snap.

(Center) "RESCO" type, an adjustable, non-choking, one piece lead.

(Right) "Martingale" A one piece lead that allows a limited extent of tightening on the neck.

It is a good idea to have someone that knows about leads and collars help you select the right one for your breed, your dog and for you.

## Grooming and General Appearance of Your Dog

Each breed of dog requires more grooming than you would think. For your dog to look his or her best in the show ring, you should groom regularly. Each breed has specific needs, making it impossible to list them all here. Talk with breeders, professional groomers, handlers or your leader or superintendent to help you learn how to groom your breed. **Members may choose to have their dogs shaved down if it is more suitable for their family lifestyle.** If the dog is professionally clipped or groomed, ask the groomer to leave ears, toenails, and some trimming for you to do **as you are responsible to do those items.** Your dog will receive a score in the grooming category. Points may be deducted in any or all of the following categories:

- The number one requirement is to have your dog clean! Even if your breed standard says that they should be shown in a natural state, that does not mean the dog can be dirty, stink or have fleas, mats, or dead hair.
- Long coated dogs should be brushed thoroughly and regularly to prevent matting. The length of your dog's coat will determine what supplies you will need to keep his or her coat in shape.
- He or she should not have dandruff or untreated sores.
- Nails must be trimmed. They must be cut regularly to prevent the quick from growing too long.
- Teeth should be cleaned often to prevent tartar buildup.
- Keep ears clean to prevent infection.
- If the dog's eyes weep or the dog drools in the ring, the handler should keep them wiped. Eye discharge can mean a number of ocular problems and should not be ignored. Tears react with oxygen to form a red stain on the coat. Tear stain removers are available and can be used if this has been recommended. Red stains anywhere on the dog are usually caused by saliva and excessive licking in that area. Constant licking may be cause for veterinarian attention.
- Whiskers do not have to be trimmed depending on the breed. But, if they are, it should be done neatly and carefully.
- **Dog coats are not to be dyed or sprayed in any unnatural colors. There should not be any special clips done that are not customary for dog breeds.**

### Coat Types

- **Short coats** usually require some trimming to tidy up scraggly hairs under the tail, tuck-up, belly and neck.
- **Wire coats** usually require hand plucking and stripping. Most Terriers have wire coats, as do some other breeds. Clipping a wire coat is acceptable for most pet dogs, however this exposes the soft undercoat ruining the hard harsh texture needed in the show ring. Sometimes this harsh texture can be lost by washing the dog right before the show. Special shampoos are made for these breeds. These coats require the artistic talents and skills of professionals. Seek out those who know and you can learn this talent too!
- **Long coats** usually require trimming, brushing, bathing and blow drying. The best kind of blow dryers force cool or warm air to dry the dog. These blasters and stand dryers are very effective in drying the coat quickly, but can be expensive. You can use your hair dryer to start with. Keep it on low heat or a cool setting. Brushing long coats as you dry the hair will straighten the hair and give the coat more body. In some breeds, a straighter, fuller bodied coat is more desirable. Long coats must be kept clean and free from dirt and oil which will make the coat tangle or mat. Mats will cause hair loss and will need to be cut or stripped out. Some breeds with long flowing coats can have their hair wrapped, (ie: cockers, springers etc.).

Each breed has a different technique, one way is to brush the coat straight and wrap it or pin it up. Sometimes ears are wrapped so as not to hang down and get dirty. You can purchase a special vet-wrap. (A special vet bandage that clings to itself). You can also buy it at the drug store. Sometimes a snood ( a cloth hood) may be used to keep the ears back from the face and protect them from dragging and getting dirty. The afghan, basset and spaniels are examples of breeds that sometimes wear a snood to keep their ears away from their face and the ground. In male dogs, the coat on the sides can be held out of the way of any urine by securing the coat to the hair on the side of the body by a claw type clip. You can be very resourceful when it come to creating ways to protect your dogs coat.

## Bathing

Before showing your dog, your dog should be bathed. It is okay to use any of the available dog shampoos, but you should check with your breeder or 4H leader to ask which one you should use and how often you should bathe your dog. Concentrated shampoos should be diluted. Follow these steps when bathing your dog:

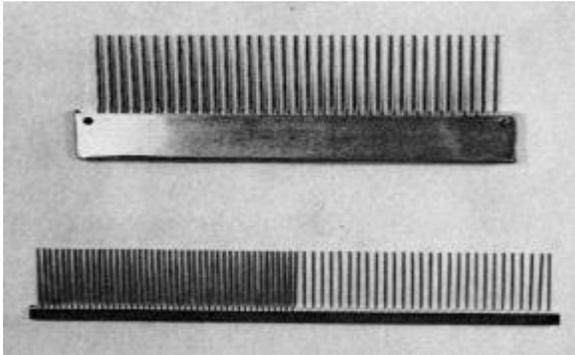
- **Brush** your dog to remove any mats or dead hair. You may need to rake out the under coat if you have a long coated breed.
- **Soak** your dog to the skin in warm water. Do not get water in ears or eyes. You can place cotton balls in the ears to keep the water out.
- **Apply shampoo**, starting with a ring around the head, neck and ears while working it into the skin with your fingers. Work all the way back to the end of the tail, and down to all of the toes. Like washing a car start from the top (the head) and work down to the ground.
- **Rinse** your dog well with warm water. Any shampoo left on the dog will dry and look like dandruff. Excess shampoo can also cause hot spots. You can use a wash cloth to wash your dog's face. Again, the car principle applies - start the rinse at the top and work down to the ground. If your dog is very dirty shampoo him or her again. After the final rinse, take the cotton balls out of the dog's ears. Keep your dog warm and away from drafts until he or she is dry. Drafts can cause health problems for your dog.
- **Dry** your dog quickly to make his or her coat fluffier, you can use a blow dryer or blaster, depending on the coat type. If you have a long coated dog like an afghan or old english shepard this technique is not recommended. Drying with a blaster could cause the hair to tangle and mat. Use a stand dryer or hand dryer. If you use a blaster (for Golden Retrievers, Setters etc.), use a low heat setting and blast the water out of your dogs coat. Keep the nozzle close to the dog and go back and forth quickly until you have most of the really drippy water out. If your dog is not used to the dryer (blaster) start near his croup, back or legs not on his head, ears or face. When your dog becomes more comfortable, you can get closer to the ears and head. Once you blast out most of the water, you can start to shape and blow the hair in the correct direction using the proper pin brush, slicker brush or other brush depending on your breed. All breeds are finished differently and you should learn what is correct for your breed and which brushes to use. If you use a grooming table with an arm and noose, do not leave your dog unattended on the table, even for a few seconds. Dogs can hang or injure themselves by trying to jump down.

Make sure you have everything you need before you put your dog onto the table and in the noose.

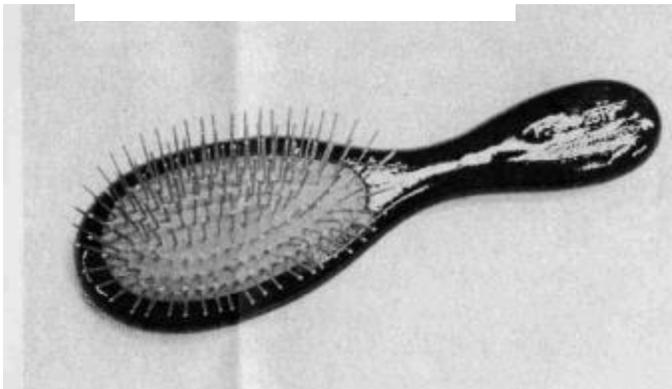
- **Wash or clean out your brushes** at the same time you wash your dog so they will not make the dog dirty again.

## Common Grooming Utensils

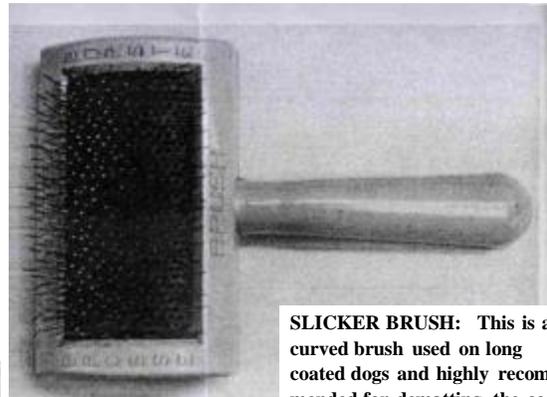
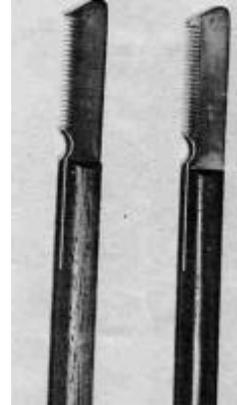
**COMBS:** The best all around comb we can recommend is one with half medium and half fine teeth. The medium side is used first to help tease out mats or tangles. The comb is used for final combing of the coat.



**PINBRUSH:** This brush is used for the regular brushing of long coated dogs.

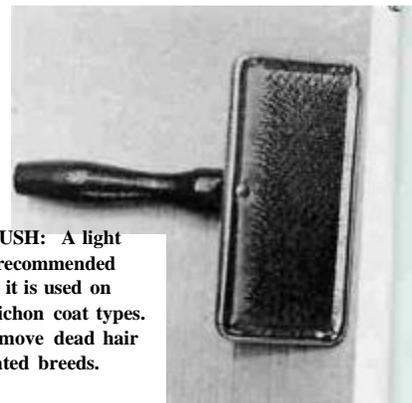


**STRIPPING KNIVES:** The fine stripping knife is used on the head, ears and other sensitive areas. The coarse stripping knife is used on the other parts of the body.



**SLICKER BRUSH:** This is a curved brush used on long coated dogs and highly recommended for dematting the coat.

**SLICKER BRUSH:** A light weight brush recommended for the novice, it is used on poodles and Bichon coat types. It is used to remove dead hair from short coated breeds.



## Toenails and Clippers

In the ring, the judge will check to see that your dog's toenails have been trimmed. Even if your dog's toenails were not judged, it would still be important to clip them as toenails left unclipped can cause the dog's feet to spread. The nail can also grow back into the foot. Three ways to shorten the nails are described below. No matter which method you use, the toenails should be clipped almost to the quick.

The quick is the place where the blood vessel ends in the toenail. If you cut beyond that point, the nail will bleed. It will also hurt the dog and cause him to be shy of the clippers the next time. To stop bleeding, use Kwik Stop, flour, cornstarch, or a Styptic Stick (what men or women use while shaving). If your dog has white toenails, you can see the quick. If your dog has black toenails it is more difficult so trim small portions at a time. As you near the quick the dog will become more sensitive. If you clip your dog's toenails regularly, the quick will recede and you will be able to cut the nails shorter. If you do not clip the toenails, the quick will grow out. When your dog's toenails are long, your dog does not move as smoothly as he or she should. It can also cause the dog to walk farther back on its pasterns. Eventually, the dog can begin to limp from the pain.



Scissor type of nail clippers

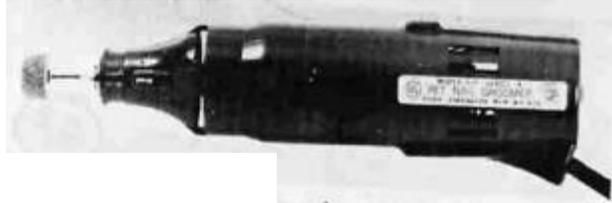
Now, let's look at the tools used on the toenails. Have your leader or groomer show you how to safely cut your dog's toenails.

- **Toenail clippers.** There are two different styles available: Guillotine, or scissors type. Choose a quality clipper that is sharp.
- **Files.** Special metal files, emery boards and sandpaper can be used on toenails. It takes longer to shorten nails this way, but if your dog really fights, it may be your only choice. Another use for files is to smooth nails you have clipped with clippers.



Pictures show long pointed nails with Kwik. Use your nail trimmers to cut along the dotted line so the nails do not turn under or come to a point.

- **Grinders or a Rotary Hand Tool.** The grinder is like an electric file. Grinders work very well, but they are also expensive and must be used very carefully to avoid injuring the dog. If the dog has long hair between the toes you must pull the hair back and expose the nail completely. This will prevent the hair from winding around the shaft of the grinder while it is spinning. Use the sand paper wheel not the sand stone because the sanding stone can get too hot. You can buy a Dremel hand-grinder at the hardware store. **Do not use a grinder unless you have someone show you how.**

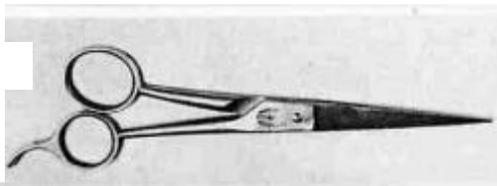


### Coat Trimming:

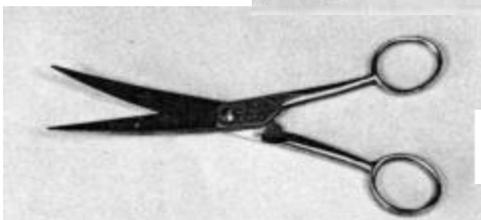
All breeds require some trimming. The trimming described here is used on most breeds. However, some breeds require more trimming; some less. It is up to you to find out what trimming is appropriate for your breed. It is best to buy a special pair of scissors for your dog. This way you always know they are sharp. As you become familiar with your breed standard, and the areas in which your dog does not quite measure up, you will be able to learn how to trim your dog to compensate for those shortcomings. In all cases, seek help from a knowledgeable person to learn the skills of trimming, scissoring, shearing, thinning and clipping. If possible practice on the right side (non show side) of your dog first, until you get comfortable and can study your effects on the coat before tackling the left (show side) of your dog.

- **Scissoring** is an art! It takes many years to become a great sculptor. If you have a breed of dog that requires scissor work you will need to learn this skill. It will take time to learn how to shape Poodles, Bichons, Portuguese Water Dogs, Irish Water Spaniels and other breeds that require this talent. Sometimes these breeds are clipped or sheared instead which is okay as long as you are not showing the dog in an AKC dog show. Sometimes shearing is the easiest way to keep these dogs clean and neat looking. However, if you decide you want to go into the AKC ring you will need to learn from a professional or from a breeder or a groomer that knows how to scissor.
- **Thinning Shears.** These are used to avoid scissors marks and to thin out areas that you want to look more even and smooth. In some breeds thinning shears are used to hide faults. Examples; topline, neck, shoulders, elbows or croup just to mention a few. When using the thinning shears, you should always cut with the jagged edge turned out so the blade of the scissors touches the dogs coat first. Learn how and why to use the thinning shears and you will be amazed at what you can create.

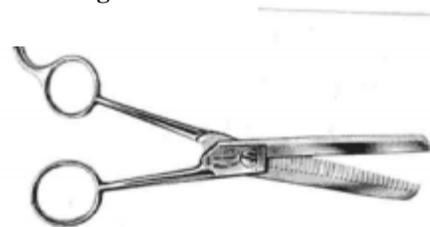
Scissors



Curved Scissors



Thinning Shears



- **Pads** (bottom of the feet). For some breeds, the hair on the under side of the foot should be trimmed, while some breeds are not trimmed at all. You should check with your leader, breeder or other knowledgeable person to determine which is the proper method for your breed.
- **Feet** (top). Some breed standards call for a neat, tight foot. There are many breeds with carefully shaped hair on the top and edges of the feet. To achieve a neat and tight foot, use regular scissors to trim the excess hair around the pads at the bottom of the foot. Use thinning shears to trim the excess hair in between the toes to make the foot look neat, round or cat-like. Next trim the hair around the edge of the pad with small regular scissors. Some breeds do not trim the feet at all. Research to see which is correct for your breed.
- **Front Legs**. Again check with those that know what is to be trimmed on your breed. Even if you have a mix breed dog, some trimming may be necessary.
- **Back Legs**. Some breed standards call for good bone in the legs. If you trim too much on the hind legs you will make the legs look thin. Trim the back of the hind legs from the pad to the hock joint. As you trim the hock, hold the thinning shears vertically, not horizontally. By trimming vertically you will trim up the hock versus horizontally when you would be more apt to cut out chunks.
- **Whiskers**: Whiskers may or may not be cut, and some breeds require that they not be cut. If you cut them, trim them as short as possible. Push the whisker toward the nose as you clip. If you don't do this, the dog can partially retract the whisker. Don't forget the whiskers around the eyes, chin and cheeks.

### **Ears**

The judge will check to see if your dog's ears are neat and clean. You should clean your dog's ears as needed. Always look at the matter you take from the ears. If the matter is black or red, your dog could have ear mites. If there is a lot of liquid matter or an odor to the ears, your dog could have an infection. Have your vet check the ears. To clean the ears use a cotton ball to wipe out all the little crevasses in the ear. The dog will usually flinch if you start to poke too far. When the crevices are cleaned, use a piece of cotton dipped in Novasan, a special ear medication, or an ear wipe. Rub it over the inside of the ear. Some long coated, long eared breeds have excessive hair growing inside the ear canal which should be removed to prevent infection. (ex. Poodles, Terriers, Maltese or Bichons) Check with a breeder or groomer to see if it is necessary for your breed, if so you can cut out the excess hair, or use your fingers or a pair of tweezers or hemostats to pluck out the hairs.

### **Teeth**

Plaque is the yellow substance you often see on teeth. If your dog has a bad buildup of tartar, you may want to have it removed by your vet. Once the teeth are clean, keep them clean yourself. If the tartar is not removed, the teeth will eventually rot and fall out, or your dog could develop a gum disease or abscess which could lead to other internal problems. The best way to keep your dog's teeth clean is to prevent tartar buildup by feeding dry dog food, (or other hard biscuit type products), or beef knuckle or leg bones. Watch your dog while he or she is chewing the bones so that he or she doesn't get the bone stuck or have other problems. You should also brush your dog's teeth with dog toothpaste (not human toothpaste) on a regular basis. Tooth scalers can be used if necessary. Have your leader or groomer show you how to do this. Scrape from the top of the tooth down on the top teeth and the bottom up on the bottom teeth. Remember the tool is sharp, so don't poke the gums. Don't forget to clean your dog's molars. Cleaning the teeth will also help to keep your dog from having bad breath.



**Plaque and tartar buildup on teeth**

## Exhibitor Appearance

In the showmanship event, you should prepare yourself as carefully as you prepare your dog. If your dog is to look his or her best, you must too. Be poised, alert, neat and clean. Dress in business-like attire. Your outfit should be an appropriate backdrop for your dog. You should show respect for the judge and the Showmanship Ring. The main rule is dress conservatively. Showmanship is not a fashion show. You shouldn't distract from your dog. We recognize for some 4-H members these suits and "nice" clothes are not your preference, nor would you be caught dead at school looking like this, but you can tolerate the "look" for a short time, out of respect for the 4-H Showmanship ring.

### For Girls

- **Suits, Dresses and skirts** are the most popular choices. If you wear a dress or skirt, make sure it is not too short or too tight because you will have to kneel and bend over, you should be able to move freely. Your neckline should remain in place when you bend over. The height of your dog and the hem line of your dress/skirt should not be the same, this could distract from your dog and he could be hidden by your dress.
- **Pants or pant suits** are a sensible choice if you have a small breed and need to bend or kneel a lot. They should not drag on the ground or have ragged hems. You should present a modest and attractive image to the judge.
- **CAUTION Wraparound skirts** have a tendency to unwrap as you run around the ring or if a wind catches it just right (or wrong).
- **Long Full Skirts** are often loose and wide and might obscure the judge's view of your dog's movement. A gust of wind at an outside show could blow the skirt: How embarrassing! If you have a small dog, they can get under the skirt and become hidden.

### For Boys

- **Suits, Sport Jacket and Casual Slacks**, or other nice pants that are neat and clean, do not drag on the ground, sag or have holes in them are good choices.
- **Dress Shirts:** Sports or Polo shirts, sweaters or vests, are recommended. Make sure the jacket is buttoned so it does not flap around when you are moving or bending. T-shirts are not a good idea. A relaxed look is not desirable in the ring.

### General Appearance for Both

What you choose to wear could leave a lasting impression on the judge. Your clothing should fit properly and be neat, clean and in good repair. It should not interfere with your dog or the judge when you move or present your dog.

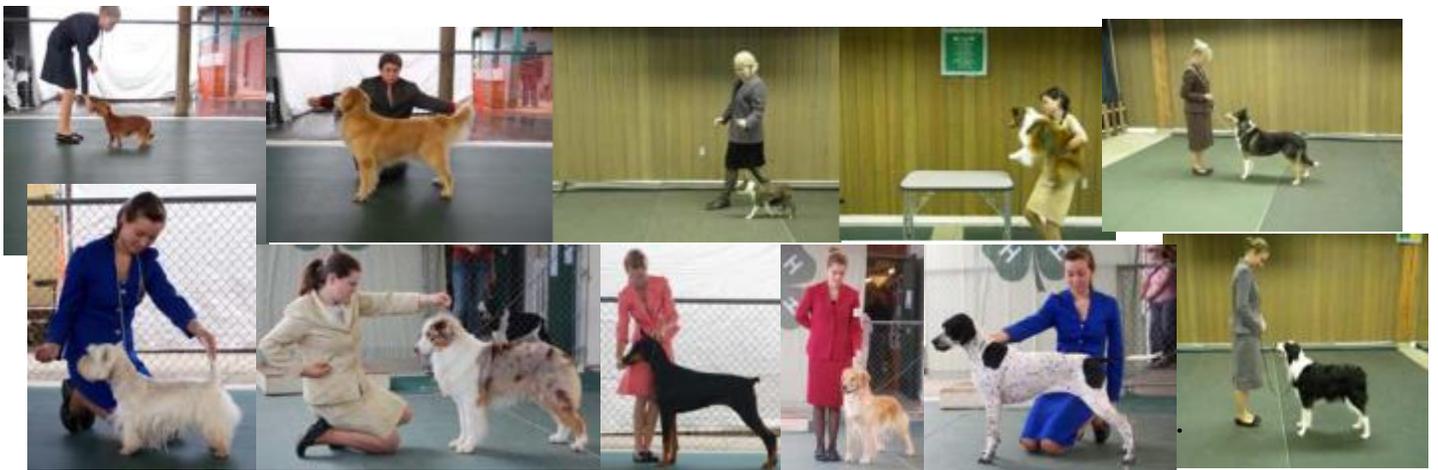
- **Hair:** You should have your hair in a neat style or tied back so it will not fall over your face when you bend over or move.
- **Scarves and neckties** should be secured so they do not flap, distract, or hang across the dog.
- **Jewelry** should not flap, clank, rattle or roll, or make noise when it moves. It should not hit the dog when you bend over. Remember to remove any loose change or keys from your pockets.
- **Bait:** If you are using bait with your dog, make sure your outfit has pockets at the proper places (right side) or you can use a bait pouch. The best outfits have pockets in which you can carry combs, bait or a toy. They should not be bulging or distracting. If you like an outfit at the store but it does not have pockets you can have a tailor or friend sew them into almost any dress, suit or skirt.

- **Color** is as important as style. A black dog would be invisible if your clothing were black. Your clothing should contrast with your dog so your dog stands out. If you have a multicolored dog, solid colors will look the best and not seem too busy or detract from your dog.
- **Shoes** should be comfortable, clean and attractive. A flat non-skid sole is a must for safety and traction: avoid wearing high heels because they can cause tripping or turned ankles. Tennis shoes or running shoes are okay, but giant running shoes are awkward and can distract from the dog, they also look out of place with a suit or dress. Tied shoes or slip-ons are good. Make sure tied shoes stay tied neatly and slip-on shoes stay on your feet while you run and gait your dog. Avoid shoes that make noise or light up when you run or walk. Shoes should not be a distraction to your dog, the judge or your clothes. No open toed or open back shoes are allowed.
- You do not need to go out and purchase name brand clothing to compete at fair. Many discount and thrift stores will carry stylish clothes. After all you only need to wear it while you are in the ring. Many times you have the perfect outfit hanging in your closet. Remember you want to be a great picture paired with your dog in the judge's viewpoint. When in doubt, opt for the more conservative choices.

### What NOT to Wear

- **Jeans** or ragged pants that are torn or have holes in them. You can leave the denim at home for one day or change after the event.
- **T-Shirts.** Again, for the respect of the sport no t-shirts please.
- **The same colors as your dog.** It will be hard for the judge to see your dog. It is better to contrast.
- **Sandals or opened toed and backed shoes** are not allowed.
- **Short skirts or short dresses, low cut and or gapping necklines. These are not allowed under the 4-H dress code.**
- **Low cut or gapping necklines**
- **Hats or caps**
- **Club, organizational affiliation, personal identification or Junior showmanship pins**

A great outfit is a backdrop for your dog and a signal of respect for the 4-H Showmanship event. It is not to draw attention to yourself, but enhances the teamwork and balance with your dog. You should **NOT** draw attention away from your dog. If you have other questions on appropriate dress, please refer to the 4-H dress code in the Wa. State 4-H Leaders Guide.



## Handling Guidelines

You have practiced and practiced. Now you are ready to show your dog. Your dog is groomed and so are you. It's time to show. Most judges follow the same basic routine. This section will help you prepare for what you will do in the ring. From the moment you enter the ring your objective is to present your dog to his or her best advantage. Through your actions and attitude you should convey to the judge that you are confident, prepared, businesslike and courteous. The quality or conformation of the dog is not being judged in this class. 4-H Showmanship classes are judged on the ability of the exhibitor to handle their dog in the following areas.

### **4-H members should:**

- Know correct handling of the leash, how to free stack, hand stacking, and properly gait (for your breed).
- Be able to present your dog in a smooth, efficient and quiet manner to the judge without creating unnecessary movement.
- Make your dog look its best in both pose (stacking) and motion, (gaiting).
- Use bait (food or a small toy) appropriately. If bait is used, it must be used correctly.
- Strive to make your **DOG** stand out as the most important part of the team effort.
- Be able to control your dog at all times
- Keep your dog's attention without using dramatic or unnecessary noise or movements.
- Gait your dog in a controlled trot without distracting or interfering with the judge's view of the dog.
- Concentrate on your dog first, then you and the judge next. Make occasional eye contact with the judge to show attentiveness, but focus the **majority of your attention on your dog**. Always make sure your dog is looking its best. **The dog is the number one consideration in the ring.**
- Make an effort not to distract or interfere with the judge's view of your dog. Brief blocking moments of moving from side to side inline, done smoothly and efficiently are allowed. The use of *necessary* courtesy turns while gaiting in patterns or around the ring, done in a smooth and efficient manner is allowed. Let's look at and compare the old interpretation to the new.

### **Between the Dog and the Judge (BDJ rule)**

**Old interpretation:** This will be one of the most apparent changes for all 4-H members and showmanship judges. The intention of BDJ is a good one, however the interpretation of this phrase left it very unclear as to what was intended. It meant different things for some than for others. When many leaders, members and parents were asked to explain this rule there were many different explanations. Over the years many people have considered this saying to be the number one "**Golden Rule**" in 4-H and interpreted it to mean; "Do not, at any time, under any circumstances, ever get between the dog and the judge". For some, this even included all parts of the dog's body. For instance, while stacking the dog, you couldn't reach over the top of the dog's shoulder to stack the left side because your arm would be BDJ. The old interpretation has, at times, **created unnecessary movement** on the part of the handler and the dog. The motion of moving around the back of your dog is usually awkward and unnatural and sometimes pulls the dog out of its stack, not allowing proper presentation by the handler. However, this method of passing behind your dog may still be used and will not be penalized if; the timing and smoothness is not compromised and the 4-H member can still present their dog smoothly.

## **The New BDJ Method**

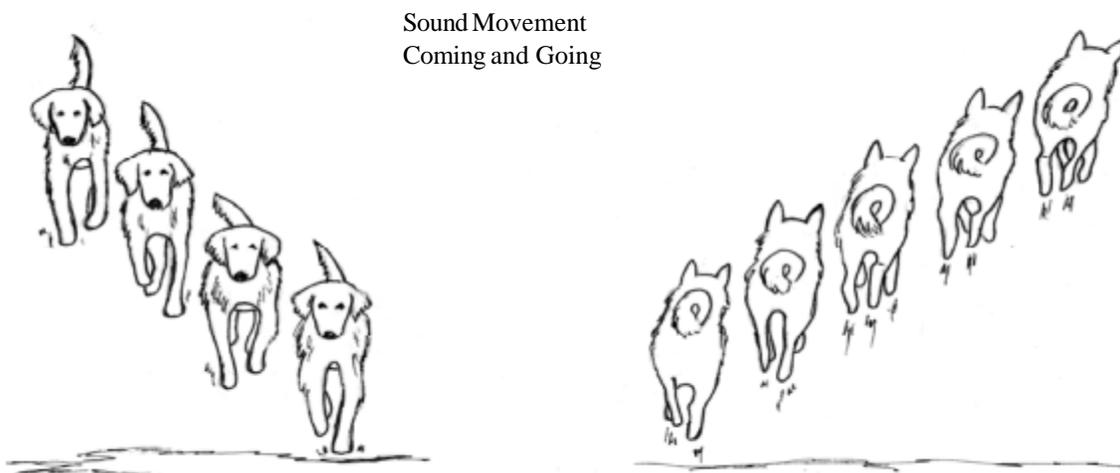
Everyone agrees the handler should not interfere with the judges view of the dog. However, brief blocking moments will be allowed if warranted. This method of moving from side to side, allows the handler to move quickly and smoothly, without pulling the dog out of position. If movement to the other side is needed, a simple step around the front of your dog to the other side is allowed. This will take less movement, be less distracting, and will not pull the dog out of position. The presentation on the other side of your dog, the front, the profile, or the rear can be done without adding unnecessary movement or distractions by you and most importantly you will be able to continue to present your dog. This move to the other side can be done right before the judge gets to you or whenever the timing or movement warrants switching sides. Timing of when to move is important. Have a more experienced leader or 4-H member help you. You can move quietly and smoothly continuing to present your dog efficiently.

### **Tips About the BDJ Skill**

BDJ is not how you get from side to side, or how you line up your dog or get from point A to point B. It's not which method you choose to use. It's about how you accomplish the following objectives; moving smoothly, with the least amount of movement and distraction; keeping the dog in their stack; not interfering with the judge's view of your dog; and most of all, continuing to present your dog to the judge. The use of the courtesy turn in-line, at the beginning or ending of patterns, or gaiting around the ring is also considered a brief blocking moment and will be allowed if one chooses to use them and use them for the reasons they were intended. It is better to not use a courtesy turn, than to use it and use it wrong, or for the wrong reasons. Have a knowledgeable person help you with understanding these turns and how to use them.

### **Handling Skills: Gaiting**

Gaiting your dog around the ring and in an individual pattern are two different kinds of gaiting, both accomplishing different objectives. In order for you to gait your dog correctly you need to understand what the judge is looking for in most breeds- sound movement coming and going.



This is the reason for the patterns. The judge might ask you to do a down and back pattern. They are looking at the dog's rear movement as it goes away from them and its front movement as it comes back to them. This is why it is important to go in a straight line.

**Reach and Drive** from the side (side gait): **Reach** refers to the dog's ability to fully extend their front legs in balance with the **Drive** from the rear legs. Patterns that show side movement are the "L" pattern, the "Triangle pattern" and the "T" pattern. Side movement is also judged by gaiting around the ring, as a group or individually. So when you hear the request, "Take them around the ring," you know that the judge is looking at your dog's side movement. Practice going in a counterclockwise circle with the dog on your left side. Use bait to free stack your dog when you come back to the judge at the end of a pattern or when you get to the end of the line after gaiting your dog around the ring.



Practically the whole propelling force of the hind limb is dependent on the ability of the dog to straighten the leg from the state of angulation to complete extension, as forcibly and as rapidly as may be required. This is dependent entirely upon the muscle power of a well-developed second thigh.

### Gaiting Around The Ring: Training and Practice

Dogs should move at a brisk trot, not a walk or a gallop. Young puppies may start this training. After the puppy is accustomed to wearing a soft collar, take them outside (if possible), and fasten a show leash to the collar. Let them go where they wish at first. If they resist, try luring the pup with food a couple of feet away from their nose and walk them toward it. Use a happy fun tone of voice, pat your leg and encourage the pup. When the pup is walking well, give it an up beat command such as, "Let's go!" or "Gait!" Do not use the obedience command "Heel!" If your dog always wears their show collar and show leash in showmanship practice, they will eventually learn the behavior that goes with that equipment. If your dog breaks into a gallop, give a quick command and leash correction. As soon as the dog is back under control, say, "Good gait" or "good let's go" depending on your choice of command. Remember, the most important part in any dog training is praise. Soon your dog will be moving proudly, with its head up on a loose leash. There is more to gaiking than running. To make it less complicated, let's look at each aspect of gaiking separately.

**Gait or Speed:** Your dog should move at the proper gait. Gait is the a pattern of footsteps at various rates of speed,. Each pattern is distinguished by a particular rhythm and foot placement. The walk, the gallop and the trot are the most common gaits. The amble, the pace, and the canter are also types of gait. The two types of gait acceptable in the show ring are the walk and the trot. The trot is the movement you should be working on with your dog.



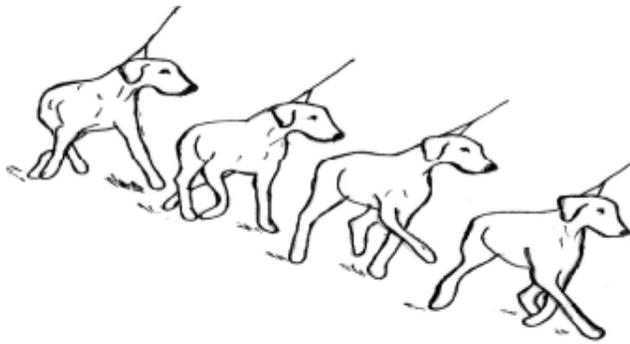
*Top photo shows dog pacing and the bottom photo shows dog trotting.*

- **The Trot** is a rhythmic two-beat diagonal gait in which the feet at diagonally opposite ends of the body strike the ground together (right hind with left front and left hind with right front). Because only two feet are on the ground at a time, the dog must rely on forward momentum for balance. At a normal trot, when the weight is transferred from one pair of legs to the other, there is a slight, period of suspension as the body is propelled forward. This is referred to as “**Spring**.” If a dog is of proper proportion, the imprint of the hind feet will cover the tracks of the front feet. Each handler must learn which gait is correct for their dog and breed, you must work with your dog to determine how fast you should gait so that the judge can correctly evaluate your dog's movement. With a small dog you can walk. Some small breeds, like the miniature Pincher, are distinguished by their high flashy steps. This type of gaiting is called hackney gaiting. The suspended or flying trot is a fast gait in which the forward thrust contributes to a longer reach in the front and the dog tends to hang or fly during each stride. The German Shepherd dog is an example of the flying or suspended trot. It is helpful to have someone watch you gait your dog and tell you at which speed your dog looks best. If you go too fast, your dog will gallop (run), or canter; too slow and they will pace (legs on the same side moving together) or walk. At the proper speed, your dog will move smoothly with little bounce with his or her legs reaching forward efficiently. This is called (reach and drive).
- **Handler's Arm Position:** The next step is to get your arm in the proper position. Hold the leash in your left hand next to the dog, with the excess lead hidden in your hand. Do not hold the leash so tightly that it chokes the dog. Work with your leader and club members to develop a natural arm position that looks good for you and your dog and keeps your dog slightly away from your body and next to you or in front of you. Your free hand should swing naturally at your side, moving as it normally does when you run. Do not have bait in your free hand unless you can hide it while you are moving. You can pull it out of your pocket when you near the end of your pattern or the end of the line so you can use it for free stacking.
- **Dog Position:** Your dog will gait on your left side around the ring. You will be going counterclockwise in a big circle. You will also need to remember to use the whole ring if you have a large or medium sized dog. With a smaller dog it is okay to make a smaller circle.



Handler moving dog out in front.

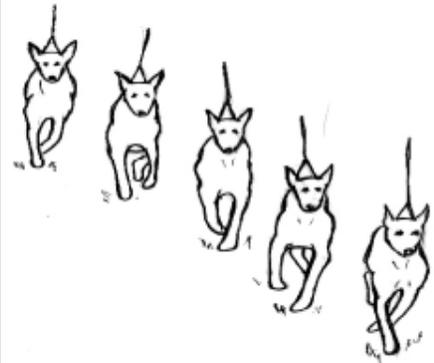
When you gait, your dog should stay away from your body and be next to or ahead of you. Many dogs do not like to trot at their correct speed and will lag. This makes it look like you have a tight lead and it does not look good to be dragging your dog around the ring. In most cases a dog that lags tends to go progressively slower with continued training, not faster. Hopefully gaiting was taught the correct way from the beginning. In Showmanship or handling you want to **encourage** your dog to go out ahead of you as you start gaiting your dog on the go around. This is the opposite of obedience where he needs to be corrected for forging or pulling you. Do not correct your dog for going out in front of you. As long as your dog holds a gait, it is encouraged for them to go out ahead. Once your dog can hold his gait, you can start working the proper speed and control as you go around the ring.



**Moving your dog on a loose lead is important for correct movement.**

←Side pull on the lead accentuates the dogs tendency to "cross."

Swing from the end of a tight lead causes this dog to "cross" in front.



### **Tips for Gaiting Around the Ring**

- You can start this training by using lots of encouragement and making it fun. Even dogs that have been allowed to lag can be taught to move out.
- In obedience some are taught to hold the leash in both hands, not for showmanship handling. Hold the leash in the left hand only, with the excess balled up into the hand. Do not wrap the leash around your hand. Most handlers will bend their arm at the elbow and hold their hand about waist high or slightly higher. Do what feels comfortable and what looks natural for you with your dog. Have someone watch how you hold your arm and hand and see which looks best. Mirrors are a good training tool.
- Your dog will be on your left side as you gait around the ring. You will need to place your dog's collar: (1) high up under the chin, right behind the ears, in the little gap between the head and neck (occiput). or, (2) rotate the collar so that the leash comes out from under the dog's chin on his right side. There are pros and cons for both methods. Method one is used mostly for smaller dogs while the second is preferred by larger dogs. Talk with an experienced handler or leader to find out which one works best for you and your dog and under which circumstances. Whichever method you choose, make sure you position the collar and lead high up under the chin before you start gaiting the dog.
- Do not tell your dog to heel. "Heel" means stay on your left and sit when you stop. It is an obedience term. Encourage your dog by saying, "C'mon," or "Let's go," before you start moving and as you run. This is allowed in the ring. Your dog will learn the difference between a "Heel" in obedience and a "Let's Go" in Handling. You will need to be consistent on whatever words you use.
- Do not jerk him back to you if he pulls you, use your voice (praise) to control his forging! Forging is desirable in handling. Now you need to learn how to shape and control it into what you want and need.
- While training your dog, it is good to throw treats out straight ahead of him as he is gaiting so that he looks ahead for cookies and not at you. This also helps a lagging dog move out faster. In obedience we want our dog looking at us. Not in the show ring! This will tend to throw his movement off. Throwing the food ahead of your dog will keep your dog next to you or out in front of you. Lagging will not be a problem any more! Remember throwing the bait in the ring is not allowed, but it is a good practice technique. You may have seen a well trained, experienced dog that goes out on the end of the lead on the go around. This is good training as long as the dog maintains the correct

gaiting speed and you can maintain control. Timing is important also. Time when to let your dog go out and when not to. Crowding or running up on the dogs in front of you can happen if you do not have timing and control. Practice moving in a group. Individual gaiting around the ring is slightly different than pattern gaiting. Pattern gaiting will be covered in the Pattern section.

- If your dog gallops, canters or gets a bit goofy and wants to play do not pull him back or jerk on the lead....say “easy”, slow down a bit and start over. Dogs that are happy workers are easier to train than those that are taught to just comply. If you do this every time, your dog will learn what you want.
- Do not pass other dogs and handlers when you move in a group.
- Leave enough room or space (when group gaiting) between dogs so you do not crowd or run up on the dog in front of you. If you are behind a little dog, remember the judge usually watches only one part of the ring. When you are out of the judge’s sight, slow down or even stop and allow more spacing to build up in front of you. As you pass in front of the judge you should time your gait to be correct for your dog. This varying gait is called timing. Practice following behind different breeds, large and small; going slow and fast is very important.
- When you gait around the ring the judge will **not** move outside the circle or create unnecessary movement. You **do not** need to pass behind your dog or change hands while gaiting around the ring.
- Watch the judge occasionally as you gait around the ring. Make eye contact at least once when you are gaiting in front of the judge. However, most of your focus is on your dog, where you are going and your timing.
- If you have a medium to large dog, be sure you use the whole ring. Smaller breeds may make a smaller circle.
- Keep your dog on your left side, away from your body. Your dog can be even with your body or ahead of you. Maintain the proper gaiting speed for your dog and control the dog at all times.
- You may be asked to gait around the ring individually or as a group. Remember to finish the picture at the end of the circle after you go around the ring by either hand stacking or free stacking your dog.

### **Pattern Gaiting: Training and Practice**

**Gaiting in a Pattern:** Now it is time for the individual gaiting patterns. Practice gaiting with your dog on your right and left sides so he or she will move smoothly on either side in the ring. In 4-H Showmanship, you will be asked to gait your dog individually. You will be given a specific pattern to do. Each pattern is named for its shape. Do you Remember the reasons why you do the patterns in the first place? In all of the patterns make sure you are lined up with the judge before you move away. Look at a spot straight out from the judge in the direction he or she sends you. Gait your dog straight toward that spot. You should be able to do any pattern as asked. When moving away from the judge, keep your eyes mostly focused on your dog and move in a straight line. When you do your patterns make your turns smoothly, but sharply, do not round off corners. Make sure the lines you make are straight.

**Your dog:** Pattern gaiting is slower and more deliberate than gaiting around the ring. You need to remember what the judge is looking for, concerning your dog, in each part of the pattern. Every dog has a correct speed and you need to decide which is correct for your dog. The speed may vary for coming and going and for side movement.

In coming and going (down and back) you want to move your dog at a speed that will allow the legs to move in a straight line from their body to the ground. Usually the line will merge toward the center as they move faster. In general moving slower is better. Most dogs move more erratically and unsoundly with more speed, or the faster they gait. So why show that to the judge? When you are gaitting your dog in a pattern that shows side movement, you want to move at a speed that will allow for reach and drive. You want your dog's front and rear legs to stride out with full extension. You do not want its legs like pistons, or have them flipping up their front feet. Faster is not always better. In all cases of pattern movement you want your dog to move smoothly and flow similar to slow motion with long reaching and driving strides. If you go too fast it will all be a blur of legs and awkwardness racing around the ring. If you go too slowly it will not allow for your dog to reach and drive fully and show the judge your dogs full potential. It is also important to start and end gradually and build up to the speed you want. Do not take off running when you begin the pattern or come out of the turns. Your dog will be confused and not ready for that fast pace. Don't stop abruptly. You will need to have someone experienced watch you and your dog at different speeds to decide which is correct for your dog and makes the dog look his best. Using a full length mirror is another way of watching movement.

**The handler:** You will also need to practice your running or movement. You and your dog are a team. With small dogs you can walk at a normal pace. With larger dogs, you will need to run. This will take some time and practice. You do not want to run on your toes or kick your heels up behind you. This will make you bob up and down and be bouncy. These are the most common mistake made by novices. It will also distract from your dogs movement. You will need to practice running without your dog first. When it looks smooth and natural, add your dog. Have someone knowledgeable watch and help you with your running technique. Access to a mirror can help you learn this skill also. When you run, use your whole foot with heel to toe impact. Running should be smooth and natural. You should take longer, smoother strides than a normal run. Before you attempt any of the patterns below, **practice moving your dog on both your right and left side**, so both you and the dog can become familiar and smooth while gaitting on either side. Also **practice hand changes from both your right and left sides**. Start with your dog on either side. Move directly away in a straight line. At the end of the ring, change hands on the leash, turn the dog's head toward you, pivot toward the dog and come back. Once you and your dog are proficient in gaitting on both sides and you are able to make smooth hand changes, its time to work on the four patterns the **"Down and Back" pattern**, the **"L" Pattern**, the **"Triangle" pattern** and the **"T" pattern**.

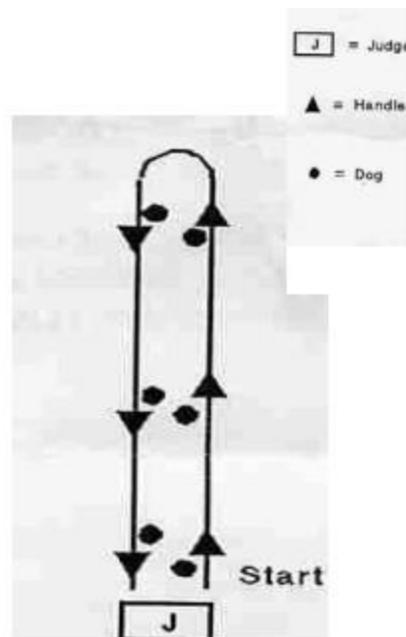


**Hand Change,  
turning dog's  
head into you.**



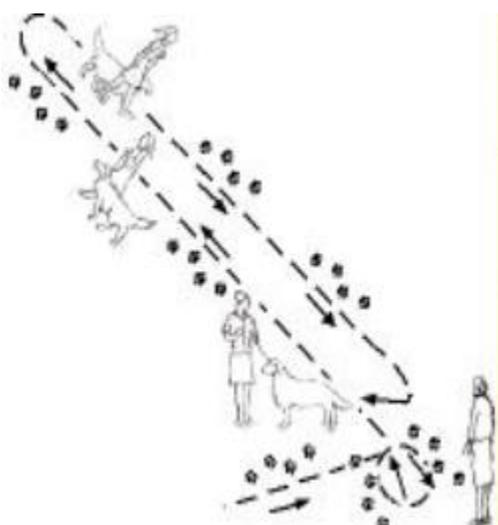
## Down and Back Pattern

**Turn Into Dog, Down and Back Pattern.**  
For the judge to watch the dog's rear movement and front movement. Shaped like an "I"



- One way of doing the down and back is to turn left into the dog at the turn. Start the dog on your left side. Move directly away from the judge. At the end of the ring, make a tight turn toward your dog (left), using your free hand if you need to turn your dog's head to go back the way you just came. Keep the dog on your left side while you return. Watch or listen for the judge's signal to stop while approaching. If the judge does not indicate verbally or with a hand signal to stop, you should stop at a comfortable distance from them. (About 6 feet with bigger dogs or dogs that show profile or angle stacks and about 4 feet for the smaller dogs that come straight in to show head and expression). Do not crowd the judge or get too close. If the judge wants to be able to walk around your dog or get closer to see expression they will have the room to do so. When you come back to the judge free stacking can be used. You may angle the dog to show profile or bring the dog in straight to the judge to show expression. See what techniques are best used with your breed and why. You can also use the angle free stack to hide faults making your dog look better. Make your movements smoothly, calmly, and quickly. Then present your dog to the judge to show proper expression.

This applies to all patterns.



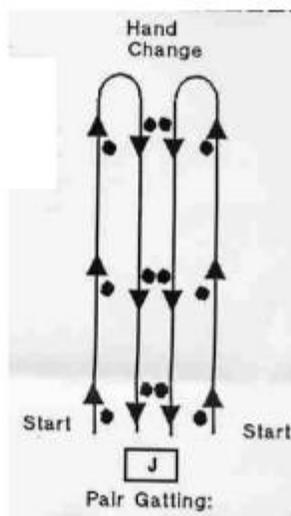
**Courtesy turn down and back on a diagonal**

- **Courtesy Turn Down and Back.** Another way to do the down and back pattern is using a courtesy turn in the corner. Put your dog on your left side. Move directly away from the judge. At the end of the ring, do a tight about turn to the right, away from your dog. Line your dog up and go back the way you just came, keeping the dog on the left side. A brief blocking moment will occur during the courtesy turn. As you are returning, be watching and listening for a signal to stop your dog. If the judge does not give a hand signal or verbal cue to stop, you should stop your dog as above. Again present straight on, with an angle or profile free stack, depending on your breed presentation. The courtesy turn approach is used to line the dog up and to help the dog work into their proper speed or gait. Courtesy turns may also be

to line the dog up and to get the dog up to proper gaiting speed. Small dogs rarely need to do courtesy turns. The turn is mostly used with the larger breeds that need more space for lining up, settling down and moving into gaiting speed. Only use this turn if your dog moves quickly around the turn. The use of courtesy turns in patterns are only necessary if it benefits the dog. Otherwise it will be considered unnecessary movement. So if you decide to use this turn make sure you know why you are using it and that you use it correctly. Using this turn when it is not necessary or used incorrectly will only hinder your performance. Find out from someone who knows the ins and outs of handling and about the usage of the courtesy turn.

➤ **Pair Gaiting Down and Back:** There are times you may need to start the dog out on the right or left side and turn the dog towards you, using a hand change at the turn and come back to the judge. You may be asked to pair gait with another dog and handler. This allows the judge to compare how two handlers show the front and rear movement of the two dogs. Conformation is not being judged here, but your handling skills are. The two handlers bring their dogs to the judge and free stack or hand stack. Unless they judge asks you to face one way or another, it will be up to you to decide how to present when you get in front of the judge. Either face toward or face away from the judge. The dogs will be next to each other, handlers on the outside and dogs on the inside. Dogs should be kept close enough for comparison (3-4 feet apart) but not too close as to distract or interfere with each other. At the judge's direction take the dogs down and back in an "I" pattern. You will be working on either side of the dog depending on which side of the pair you are on. You will also be using a hand change at the turn. Keep the dogs on the inside and next to each other. Handlers and dogs must move together. The faster dog must hold up a bit to wait for the slower or smaller dog and the smaller or slower dog should move a bit faster. Both dogs must give and take. Every effort should be made to keep the dogs gaiting, not walking, running or pacing. An example pair would be gaiting a German Shepherd Dog and a Pomeranian together. Realistically you would not have this size difference for pair gaiting. However the judge is watching your handling skills here, not really comparing the two dogs. In this situation the German Shepherd Dog must move at a slower gait and the

Pomeranian must move at a faster gait. Try not to walk or gallop on the part of both dogs. Try to maintain a trot, just adjust the speed of the trot. It is not just the responsibility of the bigger dog to wait for the little dog. Little dogs must move faster. Little dogs can move out quite quickly if needed and can trot alongside the bigger dog with out much slowing down from the bigger dog. The handler should at least attempt to gait their dogs at a speed which will accommodate both dogs. It is not fair for the handler of the big dog to make **all** the effort to keep the dogs together. If effort is also made by the handler of the smaller or slower dog to move a bit faster you have shown to the judge you understand the meaning of this skill.

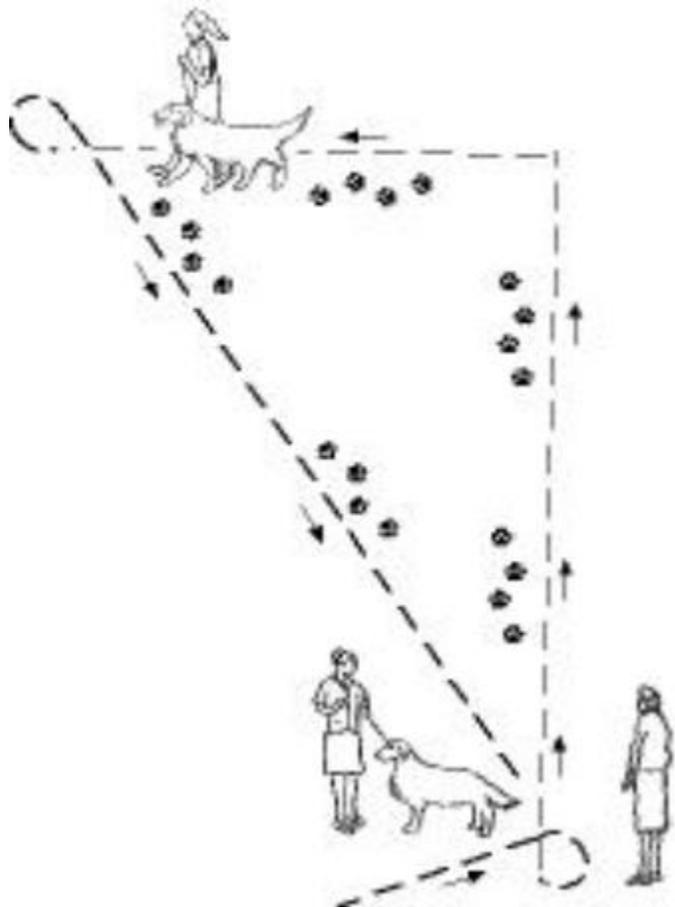


## Down and Back Tips

- The judge may tell you to do a down and back. It is your choice of which type of “Down and Back” you want to use. Which ever method you choose, keep in mind that you want to use the one that makes your dog look and do its best.
- Handlers with smaller dogs usually turn into their dogs using the first method mentioned.
- Larger breeds tend to use the courtesy turn down and back. It gives the larger dog time to adjust to lining up straight coming back to the judge and to work into the proper gaiting speed required of their breed/dog.
- Whichever method you choose, every effort should be made to keep the dog on your left side.
- A hand change at the corner is unnecessary for most down and back patterns, except in pair gaiting or when the ring procedure warrants this hand change. Seek out the advice of those who can help you.
- Align your **DOG** (not you) in front of the judge.
- Make a straight line when going away from and coming back to the judge.
- When returning to the judge, free stack to show expression or profile and know what you are presenting and why.

## Triangle Pattern

**Triangle pattern** If the judge is at the edge of the ring, move directly away from the judge parallel to the edge of the ring. At the end of the ring, make a 90 degree turn toward your dog. Continue across the top of the ring. Turn and move back diagonally to the judge. Keep the dog on the inside of the triangle to avoid any unnecessary hand changes. A courtesy turn can be used to come back to the judge if needed. Present your dog upon finish as you did in the down and back patterns. Try to go from corner to corner and use the whole ring. If the judge is in the middle of the ring, you may ask the judge which way they would prefer you go. Go straight away or go corner to corner. The down and back and triangle patterns are recommended for younger and less experienced 4H members.

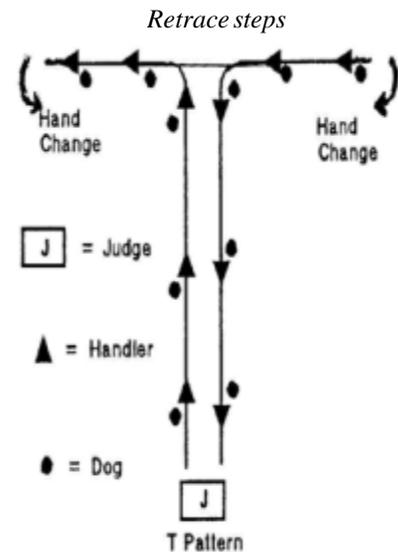


The courtesy turn is optional to start in front of the judge and in the corner



**The “L” Pattern.** Move directly away from the judge. At the end of the ring, make a 90 degree left turn toward your dog. Move to the side of the ring. Change hands on the leash, turn the dog’s head toward you, pivot toward the dog and come back, the dog will be on your right side now. Move back until you are directly across the ring from the judge, hand change or turn and gait back to the judge. (A hand change can be used coming back to the judge to put the dog on your left side). Present your dog to the judge as above.

**The “T” Pattern.** Move straight away from the judge. At the end of the ring make a 90 degree left turn toward your dog. Move in this direction to the side of the ring. Change hands. The dog will be on your right, so as not to get between the dog and the judge, turn the dog’s head toward you, pivot toward the dog and come back; move all the way across the top of the ring. When you reach the other side, change hands again. Reverse direction and move back to the point directly across from the judge. (Hand change is optional to put your dog on your left side). Make a 90 degree turn and move back to the judge. Stop about six feet away unless the judge raises his or her hand to stop you sooner. These more difficult patterns, the “T” and the “L” will show the judge which handlers are smooth, polished and have trained their dog to work on either side. These patterns could be used as tie breakers or for the more skilled and advanced handlers.



### Handling Skills; Stacking

The left side of your dog is considered it’s show side. You will be facing your dog on the dog’s right side. It is important to remember to not let go of the dogs’ head/collar while you stack them. Once you let go of the head/collar you have NO control over your dog. Their body follows their head. If you hold onto the collar or the chin under the jaw you will maintain control and your dog will not be able to move. Adjust the collar high up under your dog’s chin and at the occiput on top of the dog’s head just behind the ears. You do not need to worry about the leash at this learning stage. Keep it attached to the collar but let it hang down to the ground. You can easily grab it if you need to. Bait can be used to keep your dog focused and motivated. Hold the bait in your right hand in front of your dogs nose, or let him chew on it. Hold the collar/leash with the left hand and **walk your dog** to a gradual stop. Use the words “STAND” and “STAY.” You might need to use your left hand in front of his stifle (knee), to get him to stand rather than sit. In most cases sit has been taught first, so stand is something that you will need to teach your dog to do. Release and reward with the bait when your dog stands for just a few seconds. You can build the length of time later once your dog understands the concept of stand and stay. Do not worry about foot placement at this time.

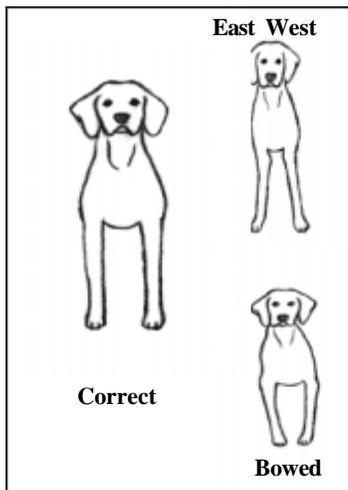
**Proper collar placement high up**

**Poor collar placement.**



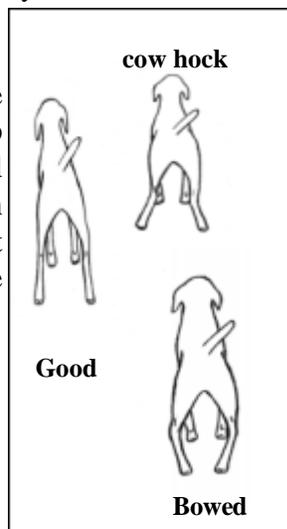
**Once the dog understands the concept of stand/stay and is no longer trying to sit, wiggle or dance around you are ready to move to the next phase.**

- **Using Bait to Hand Stack:** Now you are ready to position the feet and legs. This method of stacking is good with puppies or dogs that work for bait. It aids as a distraction and keeps them interested in the bait while you position their legs. Let the dog nibble on the bait that is in your right hand in front of your dog's nose. Start stacking with the front left foot. If the foot is out of place, use your left hand to pick up the leg by the elbow and place the foot directly under your dog's chest in a straight line to the ground. You can reach over the top of



your dog's shoulder or go under your dog to stack this front left leg. Check to see which method should be used for your dog and why. When you pick up a foot you may need to adjust it so that the toes point forward. Some dog's front legs twist outward (east, west) or toe inward throwing their elbows out. In most breeds, both are structure faults. You will want to show the judge that you know how to correct this, or at least try to. Sometimes by setting the foot in the proper position on the ground and shifting the dog's weight over that leg before you let go of the elbow, helps keep the foot and leg positioned properly; keeping the toes facing forward and the legs in a straight line. A good judge will most likely recognize this structure fault in your dog no matter what you do. However, a good handler will not allow a judge to see this fault or will be able to minimize it by stacking their dog properly. Next, check the right front leg. If it is out of place, stack it in the same manner as the front left. To do so you will need to change hands. Put the bait in your left hand,

in front of your dog. Use your right hand to stack your dog's right leg. Make sure you continue to say stand/stay during this stacking phase. Now you are ready to stack the rear legs of your dog. You may or may not need to change hands from setting the front. If you stacked the right front leg of your dog you will need to change the bait back to the right hand and let the dog nibble on it again. You will use your left hand to stack both the rear legs. If both legs need stacking, you will want to stack the judge's side first (the back left) then, the back right leg if needed. Pick up the dog's leg at the hock joint. Place the rear legs straight down to the ground and under your dog. Cow hocking is a common fault with the rear legs in some dogs. This is where the hocks (from the joint to the ground) twist inward and are not straight up and down to the ground. You could use the same principles to fix this fault as you did with the front. Twist the hock so it is straight up and down while placing it on the ground and shift the dog's weight over the leg. Use the stay command every time you place a foot so your dog will understand what you want. Once your dog will stay in the stack you can hold the collar and bait the head or present your dog's tail etc. Many different options can be used at this point.



**Hand Stacking:** You can also stack your dog without using bait. Some dogs do not need bait to stack and some actually do better without it. Instead of putting the bait at the dogs nose, you can hold the collar, chin or side of your dogs face with the right hand and start the stacking procedure as above. Start with the left hand at the elbow to stack the dogs left front (show side), change hands and stack the dogs right leg with your right hand, change hands again and stack the rear of your dog with your left hand. Hold your dogs head up high and make sure your presentation, positioning and leash work is smooth. Use some eye contact with the judge to show you are done stacking and that you are ready.



**Hand stack holding collar with hand changes (preferred)**



**This shows another method of stacking without a hand change.**

### **Using Bait To Free Stack**

In all cases of using bait learn how to use it correctly. If you drop or place bait on the ground, be courteous and pick it up.

- Stand in front of your dog.
- Have your leash in your left hand. You will not be using the leash at all with this method of free stacking. Keep the leash loose and down near your side while baiting your dog into position.

Lure your dog with the bait. Hold the bait in your right hand close to the dogs nose or mouth. You can walk your dog forward into a stack or move the bait right and left. Your dog will move his feet to wherever the bait goes. Where the head goes the body and legs follow! If you move the bait to the dogs right, the left leg moves forward and toward center or crosses over making the dogs right leg fall naturally in place next to the left leg. You can position the dogs front legs by moving the bait right or left. Once the front is in place say, “stay”, and reward the dog with the bait. The back legs will usually fall into place when the dog moves forward. It is the front end that you will be positioning most of the time.



**Handler uses Bait and Cross-Over method to Free Stack**

**Without bait: Front Cross-Over Stack**

- Some handlers with giant breeds will free stack by using their hands to move the dogs' head and front from side to side while walking their dog into a stack. This cross over stack, as we call it, allows the feet to cross into a nice front stacked position, allowing the front to line up with the rear leg placement.
- You could also use your leash to move the dog from side to side as they are moving forward in the same cross over manner as you did with the bait. The rear legs will usually fall into the correct place when you walk your dog forward a couple steps.



**Handler uses "Hands-On" cross over method Free Stack**

To

**Free Stacking Tips:**

- You can walk the dog into a stack to set all four, three or just two legs. You can hand stack the legs that are out of place if needed. Only position the legs that are out of place. Do not reset legs that are in proper placement. In other words **don't fidget!**
- When you walk your dog into a stack or you have positioned your dogs legs, give the command, "STAY." You can take a step back to give more distance between you and your dog to make your dog stand out. Hold the bait still and at the right level to present proper head placement for your breed.
- You may angle your dog to the judge after returning from your pattern to present profile or to hide faults, or present the head and expression straight in to the judge. Either is acceptable, you will need to research and learn why and which presentation is correct for your breed and dog.
- Do not crowd the judge when you return from your pattern, stay 4-6 feet away, depending on the size of your dog and your presentation.
- When in-line you can use a combination of hand and free stacking techniques. This will keep your dog alert, interested and attentive. Playing catch with the bait in-line will motivate and keep it fun for your dog, providing that your dog has learned to catch. Playing quietly with your dog while in the ring is allowed if you are not a distraction to others and when the judge is not looking at you or the line. These are good relaxation drills for you too!

## Table Stacking



Some breeds are presented to the judge on a table. Smaller dogs that can be lifted by the handler will be presented on a table for their individual exam. The table helps aid the judge in the examination of your dog. You will present smaller (table) dogs on the table and on the floor while in-line. You will need to practice with your dog so they will feel comfortable stacking up on a table without the fear of falling off. You will pick your dog up and place the dog on the table to be examined and then remove your dog back to the floor. Many methods can be used to place your dog on a table. Please check to see which one is right for your breed or dog. Find experienced leaders and other 4-H members to help you learn options and skills.

- If the handler is too small, or the dog too large or heavy to safely lift the dog onto the table, the dog should be examined on the ground.
- Small, long coated or lightweight breeds (terriers and toys) can be picked up by the chin and tail and put up onto the table quickly, in one motion. This method tends not to mess up the carefully brushed coat. Picking up a terrier by the tail is natural for them. Their tails are like handles and are very strong. You can also lift a lightweight, coated breed, (like a Yorkie, Pekinese, Lhasa, etc.) by the chin, leash or collar, with your other arm from behind between their rear legs while supporting the dog on your arm, going all the way up to its chest. Make sure you learn these techniques before you lift your dog onto a table.
- If you are a smaller handler with a heavier dog, you might want to use the scoop method. Scoop the dog up with both arms from front and back and place it up onto the table.
- Another method to place a small dog onto the table is to use one arm under the chin or collar and your back arm over the top of your dog, drawing it toward your body and placing it on the table.
- Place your dog centered at the front end of the table. Make sure all four legs are stacked in the proper position for your breed of dog. Right at the edge, or two-three inches from the front of the table is sufficient to place the front feet.
- You may drape the leash around your neck to free up your hands to stack and pick up your dog. You can also ball up the excess leash into your palm. Whatever method you use, keep the leash neat, without dangling it across your dog or the table.
- Present the left side (show side) of your dog on the table to the judge.
- After removing your dog from the table, place him on the ground in the direction you will be moving. You may fix or quickly brush the coat if it was messed up during the examination. A quick go over is all it should take.



➤ Taking a comb or brush into the ring is permissible, if you have a place to keep it without interfering with your presentation. Some handlers will place a comb in their armband, hair or pocket. There are many methods to free stack, hand stack and table stack that are acceptable—these are just a few. You will need to research your breed presentation and determine how to stack according to your breed. Get the stack done quickly and smoothly, with the feet in the proper position.

The more you teach your dog through repetition the better you and your dog will work together as a team. The more you practice stacking the more polished your techniques will become. This will result in you and your dog comfortably working together as a team.



### General Stacking Tips

Stacking procedures and leg positions vary from breed to breed. Check your breed standard or learn from experienced breeders or knowledgeable people that handle your breed. Watch and learn from 4-H leaders and other experienced members how to present your breed of dog in a



- Be gentle with your dog. Heavy handedness is not allowed in the ring.
- Make sure the collar stays high up under the dog's chin and at the top of the dog's neck. Keeping control of the dog's head will help keep your dog in a stack. Maintain this collar position throughout the stack when you have your hand holding the collar.
- Wrapping your fingers around the collar and holding up the dog's head will help you maintain proper head and shoulder positioning. Try to avoid stringing the dog up by the leash to stack (holding the leash instead of the collar). Your dog can move all over and you do not have good control of the dog's head. Although using this method may work on some small breeds, with dogs that have been already taught how to stack. Learning about your breed and how to stack it is going to take some research, watching and practicing on your part. Not all dogs and all breeds stack in the same fashion. There may be other good methods of stacking your dog as well, however the above two methods are just a few of many that might work for you.
- If your dog is "Posting" (rocking back), lure it forward with the bait. A good handler will be able to keep their dog over their front or leaning forward slightly. Another method you could try is to pull back slightly on the tail. Your dog will pull or lean forward to counterbalance your pull.



← Picture shows dog rocking or posting.

Picture shows dog → correctly presented over its front.



- If your dog moves his feet during the stack, remove the bait and use the word “no” or “stay.” Training “blocks” (blocks of wood that the dog’s feet are placed on) can be used for extra wiggly dogs, or dogs that move their feet a lot. Check with a knowledgeable person to help you with this. As long as the dog remains still you should reward with bait or allow them to chew on the bait. Slowly build distance between the bait and the dog’s nose and increase the time the dog stands still. Eventually you will have a dog that will be able to stand still for a long period of time, looking at the bait in your hand.
- The excess leash should be held or presented neatly, either in the palm of your hand at the collar, or draped neatly across your lap while kneeling, or draped around your neck if you have a small breed to present on the table or kneeling on the ground. There are many different and acceptable methods of holding/draping your leash. The objective is to have a smooth and neat presentation, not sloppy or dangling on the ground or on your dog.
- Be attentive and alert to your dog and present your dog’s best qualities to the judge. Even if your dog has conformation faults, as all dogs do, you should attempt to stack your dog correctly for its breed.
- You will be judged on your skill and effort.
- Be aware of the judges presence, but do not stare or smile excessively at the judge. Remember the focus is on your dog and how to present the dog to the best of your ability.
- Observe proper spacing. Do not crowd the dog in front of you.
- To stand your dog, do not lift up under its stomach. This will cause your dog to roach its back like a camel. A roached top line is a fault for most dogs. Walk your dog in a small circle, without disrupting the dog behind you, and restart, or lure and walk the dog slightly forward with the bait, getting them to stand. Place your left hand at the stifle to stand them if needed.



**Leash draped around neck; presented neatly.**



**Handler focusing intently on her dog.**

- If your dog is standing correctly and the feet are where they should be, don’t move them. Do not fidget!
  - Practice a quick stack. One goal should be to stack your dog within 5 seconds. This will take some practice.
  - You should be able to stack in a quiet, smooth and efficient manner.
  - Your dog should appear posed or interested and under control.
- You and your dog should show confidence in the ring. Try to present two, three or more “pictures” or positions to the judge as they glance down the line. Use a combination of hand stacks and free stacking techniques. Whichever methods you use make sure that the dog looks its best. Remember the focus is on how good the dog looks.





Handler presents different pictures, poses or positions to the judge continuing to make the dog look good.

- The timing of your stack is very important. Know when the judge is looking down the line and have your dog looking good in a stack or free stack. Some judges will look down the line often and others will not. When the judge is busy going over another dog or watching someone else do their pattern, you and your dog can relax and play a bit.
- If you use bait, use it correctly. Use the bait to get your dog's attention and to show expression to the judge. Some breeds are not baited, some breeds bait to get their dogs ears up. Find out what is appropriate for your breed and why.



- Bait your dog quietly. Do not wave the bait around or make unnecessary jerky motions with your baiting hand. Show it to get your dog's attention and hold it still when the dog is in the proper position. Do not throw bait or distract other dogs or handlers in the ring. Throwing bait may be a good training method outside the ring while practicing but it is not allowed in the ring.
- Hold the bait at the proper level to present your dog's head. Toy breeds look up more, sporting breeds lean out over their fronts with their head level or slightly lower. Learn the proper baiting position for your dog.
- Learn to stack your dog from either side, front or rear. Use a mirror to see what it looks like, or have someone watch you.
- Stack the part the judge is looking at first. If the judge wants to see fronts stack the front legs first. If the judge is coming from behind your dog, stack the back legs first.

**Using bait quietly to show expression.**

- Set the front legs of your dog by picking them up by the elbow and set the back legs by lifting at the hock joint.
- Present your dog by baiting them with a treat, holding the face at the flews or chin, holding the collar, or presenting a tail depending on breed specifics.
- Continue to re-check your dog's foot placement from time to time, to make sure your dog did not move his feet. Experienced handlers can "feel" when their dogs move their feet. You will eventually get to this point.
- Talk to your dog and give a command. "Stand", "Stack" and "Stay" are commonly used commands.

- Your dog should look forward to training time. Keep him or her happy. The use of food to lure and motivate during this training phase is recommended. Sometimes you can use toys. If you use a toy remember that it should not distract other handlers or dogs in the ring. Practice keeping your dog's attention and interest by playing catching games. To teach these games start by tossing popcorn to your dog in an arch between his nose and eyes. If your dog does not catch it and the bait hits the ground, pick it up. The dog will not be motivated to catch if he can just eat it off the ground. For some dogs it takes awhile for the light switch to click on. Be sure to make it fun for your dog, even in the ring.



**Handlers keep their dogs interested and alert.**

All dogs do not need to be hand stacked. Some breeds are traditionally baited into a stance, rather than being hand stacked. The herding breeds (Collies, Aussies, Corgis, Shelties etc.) are breeds that can use this free stacking technique. Please check with your leader or breeder for proper stacking techniques for your breed. Learning a combination of hand stacking and free stacking techniques are important to learn with any dog. Free stacking takes practice and patience.

### Ring Procedures

**Individual Examination:** The judge will want to see you stack, and present your dog according to what is proper for its breed. Remember a mixed breed dog should be presented in the same fashion as a purebred dog. If you declare your dog to be a Lab mix, then the judge will want you to present your dog as a Lab. The judge will be evaluating you on your stacking technique, showing the bite and the grooming of your dog. The judge will not be evaluating conformation or structure.



The judge will call you out one at a time for an individual stack and examination. You should have your dog posed and ready if you are next in-line as first impressions are important. Watch for the judge to signal you to come out in front and stack your dog. Stack the show



side (left side of the dog) to the judge. Stack quickly, and smoothly and with all four legs/feet in the proper position. Make sure you present yourself in the position you want to be and then....make eye contact with the judge to let the judge know you are ready with your presentation. Often a judge will allow the handlers and dogs in-line to relax. This means you don't have to be in a perfect stack at all times. However this is a good time to bait, free stack, or play quietly with your dog to keep your dog happy and attentive in the ring while you are waiting your turn for the judge's individual examination. You cannot expect to have your dog in a perfect stack without moving for a long time. This is unnatural and your dog will soon lose interest, becoming bored and will not enjoy being in the ring.

You, too may become frustrated with your dog if he is not standing still. You should be aware of what is happening at all times with the judge and the ring and should not be talking with others. Concentrate on your dog and the judge. The timing of your stacks while you are in-line is very important. When the judge is going over someone else's dog you can relax and play stack with your dog. As soon as the dog being examined is done with its pattern and is going around the ring to the end of the line you will want to have your dog looking good as the judge may glance down the line to see who is paying attention and working with their dogs. You will need to know who is the last person in-line. When the last handler and dog are called out for their exam everyone should get their dog back in-line, lined up with the first dog and restacked. When the judge turns to look at the rest of the line, all dogs and handlers should be stacked and looking good.

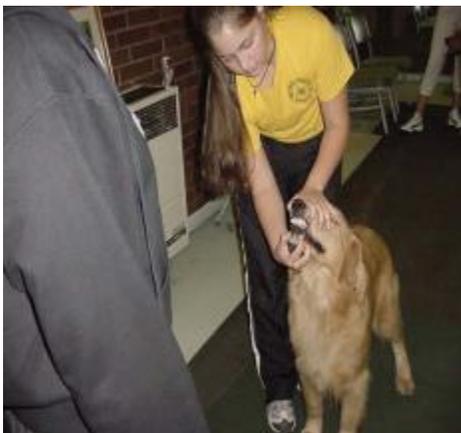
### **What the judge is looking for in the exam:**

- The judge will watch you coming from in-line to the point of stacking your dog. They want to see how you handle and stack your dog, according to its breed. The judge will watch your stacking technique and presentation of the dogs' profile.
- Next the judge will go to the front of your dog to check the front quarters, legs and feet placement, the dog's expression, the head and neck.
- The judge will ask you to show the bite, teeth or mouth. You will need to show this yourself, according to your breed standard. Not all breeds present in the same way. You will need to research what is proper presentation for your dog.

**How to Show the Bite:** The bite is how the dogs' front teeth (incisors) meet. Place the leash in your right hand (if you have it in your palm) under your dog's jaw. Lift the head up toward the judge so the judge can see the bite. Make sure your head is out of the judges view. Your other hand will be on top of your dogs muzzle. Pull back the lips of the upper and lower jaw. Keep the mouth closed. Make sure all the incisors between the canine teeth are visible.



Handler presenting head.



**Showing the Teeth or Mouth:** Some breeds like sporting dogs need to have their teeth shown. First show the bite and then show the teeth, with the mouth closed. You will need to lift the lips and turn the head and show the first side of molars then the other side. Make sure you turn the dog's head toward the judge so the judge sees both sides. If you have a breed that must have full dentition or proper tongue color according to their standard (German Shepherds, DoD bermanns, Chow Chows etc.) You will need to open the mouth to let the judge examine the entire mouth or tongue color. Remember to point your dog's head to the judge. To show the mouth you will show the bite first then briefly open the mouth for the judge.

**Checking Ears, Nails, Coat:** The judge will now continue with the examination gradually going down your dog. The judge will look inside your dogs ears and continue examining the body and legs, working towards the rear. The judge will check your dogs grooming, ears nails and coat.

You will need to hold your dog's head as a courtesy to the judge while the judge is going down the body to keep the dog in the proper alignment and to keep your dog from wiggling or moving. As a courtesy you should warn a judge if your dog is cranky and might snap at them during this exam. You should also let the judge know if your dog is on medications. If the dog's ears are greasy because you are treating an ear infection you should tell the judge so as not to get marked down for dirty ears. You should let the judge know if you are treating for a hot spot or an allergy and be able to name the medication. The judge might lift up the leg to examine the toenails and not replace it in the same spot. You should, when convenient, move it back into the proper placement. All four feet should be back into place and stacked after the judge goes over your dog and steps back to look at the dog's profile again.



Handler holding collar and baiting head during exam.

### General Knowledge Questions

The judge will ask you to relax your dog and answer some general knowledge questions. These questions are to test the 4-Her's knowledge of dogs and 4-H. All questions will be taken from either your 4-H materials (dog bowl questions) or from information obtained from the AKC. At the state level you will be asked 5 questions- One from each of the categories below.

- **Anatomy:** You will be asked a question about your dog's anatomy. Most often you will be asked to show a specific part on your dog. You might be asked to define a part. If you are asked to show a part, make sure you show it on the judge's side so the judge can see it. Point to a specific part, such as the lock or stop. If your dog has long hair, make sure your hands can be seen.
- **Breed standard or history:** You will be asked one question about your dog's breed. You should know your dog's breed standard and the history of your dog. This information can be found at the AKC web site [akc.org](http://akc.org) or in the "AKC Complete Dog Book."
- **Health and general care:** Questions could be about dog diseases, shots, temperature, etc.
- **4-H General Knowledge:** From 4-H materials on the Topics and Source list.
- **4H:** General questions about 4-H; what is the motto, colors, pledge, where the headquarters are located etc.

At the state level the judge will ask you questions. You may or may not be asked questions at your county or qualifying fair. Answer questions in a clear voice. If you do not know the answer to a question, simply say, "I don't know." The questions asked will be appropriate to age and skill level. No question should be asked in order to stump the competitors. Questions asked need to be relevant to the dog project. Remember to keep the questions that you were asked to yourself. Do not tell other exhibitors in the next groups. This would give the other members an advantage that you or some of the other exhibitors did not have.

### It's Show Time!

The armband is worn on your left arm with the number visible. The ring steward will signal you to enter the ring and start the class. Handlers and dogs will enter the ring in the order they are called. The moment you enter ring with your dog the show has begun. The lead is held in your left hand and the dog is on your left side. The excess lead is coiled and kept out of sight in the fist or kept neatly. Keep the show collar high up on top of your dogs' head right behind the ears and high up under the dog's chin for better control and a neater look. When you come into

the ring, you will usually:

- Gait around into place to get lined up.
- Leave at least 3-4 feet between dogs.
- Line-up straight in line behind the first dog in line.
- Stack your dog, or relax the dog if judge the is looking at arm band numbers. Be sure yours is visible when they look for your number.
- Keep your focus on your dog and the judge.
- The ring might be rearranged in order of gaiting speed, if requested by the judge. Faster gaiting dogs will move to the front. Slower dogs to the rear.
- When classes are large, the judge might make smaller groups to come back into the ring.



- Stack your dog up for the judge to begin.
- When gaiting around the ring be sure that **you give room to the dog in front of you. If a dog is slower than you, be sure to give more** room the next time around and slow down to compensate or hold back before you do your gaiting in front of the judge. (Timing.)

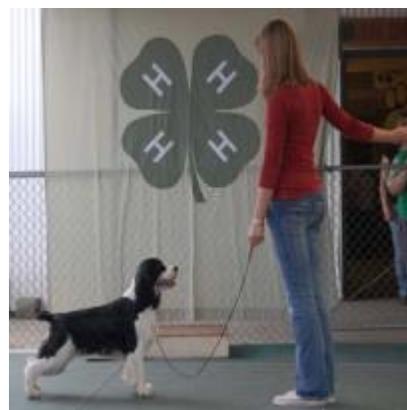
- Be ready when you are first in-line or next for your individual exam and present a nice picture to the judge when the judge turns to point to you to come out and present.
- Continue to move up the line one space after each dog has been called out to be examined and goes to the end of the line. You can

relax your dog and use various free stacks and hand stacks to keep your dogs interest in line. Even quiet play is allowed. If you are next to be examined be sure your dog is looking good when the judge turns to signal you out.

- Have your dog looking good each time a dog is finished with the pattern and gaiting to the end of the line. Some judges will take a quick peak down the line at this time. Use different looks/stacks during this in-line stacking.

- After the last dog has been examined and moved, you should have your dog set up, stacked and ready. At this point the judge might; have all dogs stack fronts and rears; ask you to pair gait; ask you to go around the ring individually or by groups.; or ask you to go to point in the ring and free stack.

Many things can happen. It is always important to be alert and attentive to what is going on in the ring and with your dog. Sometimes after scoring the judge might call back certain handlers as a tie breaker for more work. Be gracious and say thank you to the judge and congratulate the other participants.





**Gaiting around the ring with dog on loose lead**



**After the pattern or in-line free stack**

**Mechanical Hand Stack**



**Exam Presentation of the boxer**



**Lab Exam Presentation**



**Pointer out in front of handler on go around or group gaiting, showing side movement. Reach and Drive**



**Toller free stack room for dogs/handlers**



**Visla moving in the pattern close to handler**



**Boston front edge of**



## Conclusion

When you are in the show ring, you are like an artist. You are creating a picture. You are emphasizing the dog's assets (good points) and attempting to hide its faults (bad points). You are painting a picture for the judge. When you place the legs a certain way, hold up the head and push the tail in the air, you are molding the dog into a position that you think looks good to the judge. In order to create the picture you want with your dog, you must know and understand its good points and its faults. You must have studied and practiced standing and gaiting, so that you are familiar with "why" we do the skills we do in the ring. You will need to practice, and practice these skills correctly, showing off your dog so that the judge sees what you want to be seen. A big mistake a handler makes is to draw attention to the wrong part of their dog. If their dog has a fault in his hindquarter, for instance, the handler will set up their dog and every two seconds look back to make sure that the hindquarter is set properly. All you are doing is drawing attention to that part of your dog. Refrain from extra movement or activity in the area of the fault. With experience, you will know when you need to re-set the rear. Use a smooth and subtle presentation to look at, stare and admire the good parts of your dog. Concentrate on the best features of your dog, and by looking at these areas, you will draw the judge's eye where you want her to look. If you have a dog with a fault in that area, set it up once and leave it alone.

It does take work, effort and patience to do the job right. Receiving a high score rarely happens right off the bat. You will need to learn the sport, study your breed, train and condition your dog, and seek out and receive guidance from those that are knowledgeable. Start off slow and build on a good solid foundation of basics. Do not move to the next step until your dog has mastered the one you are working on. Don't be in a big hurry. Make it fun for your dog! *Training* refers to the *correct* way to do things and the ability to do them the same way every time, by using (*repetition*). *Teaching* is the means by which you motivate your dog to do what you want happily and consistently.

In this 4-H Showmanship event having a positive attitude while practicing or showing your dog will carry down the lead to your dog and effect your dog's attitude and response. This will result in a more alert, interested and happy dog. Anyone can handle a dog, but it takes skill and teamwork to present a dog so that judges think this is the greatest specimen of the breed they have ever seen. It is the handler that is being judged not the quality of your dog. It does not matter if you have a purebred champion show dog or a mixed breed. All dogs have good and bad points even the top show dogs. It is your job as the handler to present the dog as efficiently as possible in the least amount of time. Just like the artist takes pride in their work, you must take pride in presenting your dog as if it were the best dog you have ever seen.

As you enter the ring and your emotions and adrenaline are pumping, your actions will most likely speed up. You think you are doing things at a normal pace but in reality, you have done everything at double time, warp speed! This will also cause your dog to become uneasy and confused. They feel what you feel. When we are nervous our actions and motions are less smooth and our strength increases. Any little tug on the lead becomes a hard yank. The dog becomes less confident, unsure and may move their feet or not stand still. Sometimes the handler will fidget and place the feet over and over again when they are already stacked well. To overcome the "nervous bug", take some deep breaths and slow down. Try to do everything at normal speed. Think about every move in advance and plan it out in your mind right before you go into the ring. By controlling your body motions, the dog will be reassured that everything is fine and will then show better for you.

Remember being nervous is normal. Like anything else, practice often and correctly. The more you do it, the better you become at it. Right practice makes better, building confidence in yourself and consistency in your dog.

Always remember *Sportsmanship*. Accept your ribbon politely, thank the judge, and leave the ring. Be a gracious and congratulate the other 4-H members too. The truly good handlers are those that are good sports. You will see these handlers, no matter what the outcome, congratulate everyone. They will most often go out of their way to help their competitors outside the ring. Good sportsmanship is a good lesson to be learned in presenting the dog properly. If you are going to show dogs over a period of years, you will find it more enjoyable to be known as a good sport. Many lasting friendships are made through participation in 4-H and the sport of dogs.



**Section 2**  
**Judging Criteria for Judges, Leaders and 4-H members**  
**in the Showmanship Event**



## **Qualifications**

Judges who judge the “4-H Showmanship” event must be impartial and totally separate the handling ability of the exhibitors they judge from any other consideration. They have demonstrated successfully their ability to conduct their ring in a consistent, businesslike and safe manner that will instill confidence in exhibitors and spectators. Judges will utilize proper ring procedures to ensure the safety and consistency, equitable treatment and enjoyment of all exhibitors and their dogs. Judges should have a genuine interest in promoting positive learning experiences for children. They should be teachers by example; they should be prompt, courteous, patient, and properly attired. The judge should be familiar with the appropriate presentation for the breeds they are to judge. This includes table presentations if applicable. A list of breeds will be made available upon request from the judge prior to the event. The quality of the dog is not being judged only the handler. Showmanship classes are judged solely on the ability and skill of the 4-H member to properly care for and exhibit their dog to a judge. The judge will consider the dog’s grooming, condition and cleanliness and the ability of the handler to present their dog to the judge, to its best advantage. Mixed breeds, purebred, spayed and neutered dogs may be used. They should be handled and presented as the breed they most closely resemble. Some freedom of expression or expertise should be allowed to the exhibitors. Judges need to be familiar with this Judging Criteria and the “Washington Guide to 4-H Showmanship.”

In judging the 4-H Showmanship Event, every effort should be made to evaluate the class of exhibitors in:

- Proper breed presentation, including grooming
- Skill in the individual dog’s presentation
- Handler Knowledge of ring procedures and showmanship skills
- Appearance and Grooming

The “Danish System” of judging will be used. All 4-H exhibitors are judged to their score card and not exhibit to exhibit. Receiving a Blue is ranked “Excellent”, indicating a high degree of achievement toward the elements set in the standard for the exhibit or contest. Red is ranked “Good” in relation to the standard or expected achievement for the class or contest. White is “Satisfactory”, these are exhibits that are lacking and rate only average or acceptable for the standards established. No award or No ribbons may be given if exhibits or individuals who for some reason or another fail to produce a level of achievement which can be reasonably expected in relation to the specific class or performance in which they are entered.

You are judging the handler, but time should be spent looking at the dog to gain insight as to how well it is being presented, such as:

- Is the dog responsive to the handler? Do the dog and handler work as a team?
- Does the dog appear posed or interested at all times?
- Is the dog moved correctly to the best of its ability?
- Are the dog’s main faults being minimized? Are major strengths being presented?
- Do both dog and handler appear relaxed?
- Is the dog presented with an apparent minimum of effort?

## **Safety**

Participants will vary in degrees of age and experience. Dogs will vary greatly in differences in size, breeds (including mixed breeds), temperament and training. Judges will need safe ring

conditions and must make every effort to ensure the safety of the participants and their dogs during the competition.

- For a participant with an unmanageable dog, offer guidance, or seek guidance from the superintendent or person in charge.
- In the case of a dog that is too shy or reserved for examination, the handler should warn the judge. The handler may show the required parts (teeth, ears, feet). If the judge can not place their hands on the dog for the individual exam and to check for mats and cleanliness, the handler is to receive a deduction.
- A dog may be asked to leave the ring if:
  - The dog is considered unmanageable and the participant is unable to control the dog.
  - The dog is aggressive toward the judge, other participants, or other dogs.
  - If the dog is distracting or disrupting other dogs and handlers with menacing behavior.
- Only admit into the ring, at one time, the number of participants that can be safely examined, dividing the class into smaller numbers when:
  - The safety of the dogs and participants is compromised.
  - The participants need more room to gait and show their dogs.
  - It is too demanding to have the dogs and participants stand and stack, or be in the ring for a long period of time. Some dogs may be elderly or disabled and some participants may be too young, learning impaired, or inexperienced and unable to stay in the ring for an extended length of time. A lame dog or disabled dog will be allowed to compete and should be offered reasonable accommodations to ensure the comfort and safety of the dog and participant. (For example, moving the dog at a slower gait or allowing the dog to lie down in the ring).
  - Judges should arrange or rearrange competitors or have advanced participants arrange themselves in the order of gaiting speed.

### **Ring Procedure and Judging Routine**

The actual routine of judging should be consistent with the procedures commonly used in the conformation ring in AKC. However, this is not limited to any one method. The number of participants, the size of the ring, the age and experience of the handlers, the ring conditions, the weather, the time of day and time restrictions will all influence the actual way you set up your ring and what procedures you should use.

#### **It is important that the judge:**

- Strive to evaluate competitors in an appropriate and consistent manner. Judges should use the same judging routine for all participants in the ring. Give equal time and skills to perform for all participants. Watch all participants from start to finish. Give 100% attention from the time the handler enters the ring, stacks up their dog, the examination, executing the pattern and going around the ring to the end of the line and finishing their stack. This also applies to gaiting around the ring.
- During the Individual Exam: Request and watch each participant set up their dog for the individual exam. Set up can be on the ground or on a table. If a dog is normally presented on a table, but the exhibitor is too small to safely lift or present the dog on the table to the judge, they should be allowed to set their dog up on the ground. The judge should let the 4-H member make that decision. The individual presentation of their dog to the judge should

be done as their breed is shown in the AKC ring. If the 4-H member has a mixed breed, they should show it as the breed that it most closely resembles. Remember it is not the quality of the dog being judged here, but the exhibitor's handling skills.

- Request the participant to "show the bite, teeth or mouth" on their dog during the examination. However with younger 4-H members (primaries and some Juniors), the judge may use discretion or help the member to present the bite. Help may include holding the dog's head for the participant to present the bite. It does not matter what type of bite or how misaligned the teeth are, but rather that the handler knows how to present this skill. The judge should note the condition of the teeth according to the age of the dog. Missing or yellow teeth shall not be considered, however plaque buildup can be penalized.
- Check the ears for cleanliness.
- Check the coat for cleanliness and to see that it shows evidence of care throughout the year. Dogs do not need to be in show coat or trim but should be neat and clean. They should be free from dirt, mats and parasites.
- Check to see that the dog's toenails have been trimmed. An attempt should be made to trim the nails. You should consider the age of the exhibitor and dog.
- Questions will be asked of the exhibitor. You should confer with the superintendents to ask appropriate age and experience level questions relating to dogs. One question will be asked in all five different categories:
  1. Parts/Anatomy
  2. Breed History and Standard
  3. Care and Health
  4. 4-H Dog Project Knowledge
  5. 4-H General Knowledge

### Judging Patterns

Use only those patterns outlined in the 4-H Showmanship manual. A progression of steps or step system should apply for maximum learning to occur. Generally, the less experienced and the younger participants will do the easier patterns.

- For Primary, Junior or first year members: These are the younger, and in most cases, our less experienced members. A "Down and Back" pattern is recommended for each participant to perform. The "T" and "L" with hand and side changes are in most cases too difficult for most younger and inexperienced members to accomplish. The Down and Back and Triangle patterns are good pattern choices for first year members of all ages to understand and accomplish effectively. Once they receive this beginning foundation they will be ready to move on to the more difficult patterns.
- For Intermediate, Senior or more experienced members: Any of the four patterns can be used. It is recommended to use the down and back or triangle patterns during preliminary rounds. For semi-final, tie breakers or final rounds you may want to advance to a more technical pattern such as the "L" or the "T". This should be left to the judge's discretion.
- The judge **should not** cause unnecessary movement or awkwardness for the handlers. For example: When examining a group as a whole in motion (gaiting around the ring), the judge should be **inside** the circle so as not to create unnecessary movement for the handlers. Weaving in and out of the line to cause the handlers to run around their dogs is discouraged. When the dogs are stacked in-line do not move behind the line unless you are going to move them in a Down and Back, pair gaiting or to look at rear presentations.

- The majority of the exhibitor's attention should be on their dog first, then the judge.
- Handlers should make every effort not to interfere with the judge's view of the dog, however brief blocking movements, done smoothly and efficiently are allowed. Getting between the dog and the judge is not about how the exhibitor gets from side to side, how they align their dog or how they get from point A to point B. It is not about which method they choose to use. But how they accomplish the following objectives:
  - Moving smoothly, with the least amount of movement and distraction
  - Keeping their dog in a stack.
  - Not interfering with the judge's view of the dog.
  - Continuing to present their dog to the judge.
- The use of courtesy turns in line, at the beginning or at the end of patterns, is also considered a brief blocking moment and should be allowed if one chooses to use them for the reasons they were intended. However, it is better to not use a courtesy turn, than to use it and use it wrong, or for the wrong reasons.
- In large classes, judges can tell exhibitors to relax their dogs while the other exhibitors are being examined. This does not mean dogs can lie down or the exhibitors can sit and talk to each other. Glancing down the line from time to time to see what the exhibitors are doing is recommended to see if they are keeping their dogs interested and happy. Handlers should have their dogs stacked and ready when they are next in line for their exam.
- Signal the next handler in line to come out and stack. Watch their technique. They should stack and present their dog according to its breed.
- Exhibitors should use the whole ring and not cut corners. Small breeds may make a smaller circle.
- Exhibitors should be stacked and ready when the last dog is moving in their pattern.

#### **Possible Additions to Your Judging Routine**

- Ask the handler to stack their dogs facing into the ring to present fronts and rears.
- You may want to see profiles and/or walk down the line again to see fronts and expression.
- You may ask the handlers to pair gait their dogs.
- You may ask handlers to do another pattern.
- You may ask handlers to go around the ring individually or as a group.
- You may have a call back in the event of a tie and bring those exhibitors in for more work.

#### **Things That Judges Should Avoid:**

- Avoid singling out certain exhibitors that are your favorite by giving them more of your time and attention or by having them demonstrate skills different from other participants. Give each exhibitor equal time. All participants in the ring together should be performing the same skills.
- Do not have participants do any patterns other than the down and back, the triangle, the "L", or the "T"
- Do not create unnecessary movement.
- Do not try to trick participants into making mistakes. The goal is for them to be able to show their dogs without worrying that they will need to run around the dog or jump from side to side.

Please refer to the "Washington State Guide To 4-H Showmanship" for complete coverage of the 4-H showmanship event.

## REFERENCES

- **The Complete Dog Book for Kids:** By American Kennel Club (AKC); This is an official publication of the American Kennel Club. This book is for kids like you who want to learn more about their best friends. This book has big, full color pictures of the AKC recognized breeds. It uses language that is easy to understand.
- **The Encyclopedia of Dog Breeds:** By Juliette Cunliffe. This book gives information on many aspects of owning and caring for a dog, the history and their place in the human world. Over 400 dog breed photographs. Many illustrations and information. Providing an excellent resource for the dog fancier.
- **The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Dog Breeds:** By Joan Palmer. This book is a directory of 235 dog breeds, organized by breed group. It gives information on 79 rare breeds, including the history and development of the breeds. It offers hints on caring, training and showing. It is a very visual directory.
- **Complete Guide to Dogs:** By ASPCA. This is an easy to read guide to 150 breeds plus popular mixed breeds. It has everything you want to know about selecting and understanding your dog and providing the best care. Provides answers on feeding, grooming, training and health questions about puppies and older dogs.
- **The Winning Edge:** By George Alston; Show Ring Secrets. This book is written for the amateur exhibitor who already knows the basics of showing a dog. It is for those that are truly interested in the sport of dogs.
- **Show Me! A Dog Showing Primer:** By D. Caroline Colie; This book explains the basics of dog showing, written for novice exhibitors and also has helpful advice for experienced handlers.
- **Dog Owner's Home Veterinary Handbook:** By James M. Griffin, MD & Lisa D. Carlson, DVM; This is a great guide for general veterinary care and remedies for common ailments.
- **The Complete Book of First Aid for Dogs:** By Sue M. Copeland & John Hamil, DVM. A resource showing and telling general first aid for dogs.
- **AKC.org web site:** This is a resource guide into the AKC Registration forms, dog events, and educational information can be downloaded.
- **4h.wsu.edu web site:** 4-H Youth Development program.

# GUIDE TO 4-H



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