

*This document may be reproduced, unedited and in its entirety, for the purposes of education and for its intended use by breeders to assess the temperament of their Poodle puppies and provide new owners with information. This document may not be edited, redistributed, or sold in any format. This assessment is designed for Poodles and the results are likely to be inaccurate if applied to puppies of other breeds. This test must not be used in any way to make or support any claim or prediction about the nature or temperament of mix-breed puppies.*

## PUPPY REACTION TEMPERAMENT ASSESSMENT

STEP 1: Enter results for both parents (refer to Appendix for guidance). Save a 'master' copy of document before adding information for each puppy. Video examples for some traits can be found [HERE](#).

Dam's Name  Sire's Name

Dam FOOD MOTIVATION  Sire FOOD MOTIVATION

Dam TOY MOTIVATION  Sire TOY MOTIVATION

Dam ATTITUDE TO OWNER/FAMILY  Sire ATTITUDE TO OWNER/FAMILY

Dam ATTITUDE TO PEOPLE  Sire ATTITUDE TO PEOPLE

Dam ATTITUDE TO DOGS  Sire ATTITUDE TO DOGS

Dam GUNSTEADY  Sire GUNSTEADY

Dam AFFINITY FOR WATER  Sire AFFINITY FOR WATER

Dam PROPRIOCEPTION  Sire PROPRIOCEPTION

Dam ATTITUDE TO PLAYING  Sire ATTITUDE TO PLAYING

Dam PREY DRIVE  Sire PREY DRIVE

Dam MOUTH QUALITY  Sire MOUTH QUALITY

Dam SENSITIVITY TO CORRECTION  Sire SENSITIVITY TO CORRECTION

STEP 2: Print copies of assessment pages and carry out assessments of puppies

# PUPPY REACTION TEMPERAMENT ASSESSMENT

STEP 3: Enter results for individual puppy from assessment and generate individual socialisation plan

Breeder/affix

Puppy's Name

Puppy DOB

- 1. FOOD MOTIVATION  Eat  Not eat
  
- 2. TOY MOTIVATION 1  Interaction  Interaction 1  Interaction 2  No interaction
- 3. TOY MOTIVATION 2  Interaction 1  Interaction 2  No interaction
  
- 4. ATTITUDE TO PEOPLE  Approach  To stranger  To breeder  Other
- 5. ATP+ATTITUDE TO OWNER/FAMILY  Stand ground  To stranger  To breeder  Other
- 5. ATP+ATTITUDE TO OWNER/FAMILY  Retreat  To stranger  To breeder  Other
  
- 6. ATTITUDE TO DOGS  Approach  Stand ground  Retreat
  
- 7. GUNSTEADY  Startle  Calm
  
- 8. AFFINITY FOR WATER  Interaction  No interaction
  
- 9. CAR REACTION  None  Vomit/salivate

STEP 4: Ensure a selection has been made for each option. Review results from page 3 -8. Print results when ready.

# PUPPY REACTION TEMPERAMENT ASSESSMENT

Results for new owner

Personalised socialisation plan for

By breeder

Puppy DOB

This assessment is used to generate a socialisation plan tailored to the needs of Poodle\* puppies, and specifically to your puppy using observations and exercises carried out by the breeder to determine the puppy's temperament traits. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' outcomes to this assessment, and the intention of this profile is to provide you, the puppy's new owner, with information about your puppy and advice that will help you and your puppy achieve your new family member's full potential. Many of the traits are by no means 100% genetic and fixed at this point in life. Careful, sympathetic raising and socialisation can help puppies to overcome innate weaknesses in their temperament, just as puppies with innately good temperaments who grow up in inappropriate conditions can become fearful and ill-socialised.

The assessment measures motivational aspects (the things your puppy is likely to want most as rewards) as well as attitudes to environmental stimuli such as people and other dogs, and breed-specific attributes concerning the Poodle and the sorts of roles and activities persons wishing to own a dog of this breed might be interested in.

This assessment does not take into account aspects of a puppy's behaviour that are believed to come about as the result of environment and have little or no genetic involvement. For example, properly raised Poodle puppies should not be terrified of their breeder, nor of other people, nor of ordinary household objects. Before acquiring any puppy, you should be given the opportunity to see it interacting with its mother and littermates and have the opportunity to handle the puppies. Puppies should appear bright and their coats should not be soiled and stained. They should interact with you and allow you to pick them up. It is normal for young puppies to wriggle and to mouth at people's hands, and it's also normal (particularly after a meal) for puppies to be relaxed and drowsy when held. Puppies should not react with fear when handled (trembling, freezing up, struggling violently).

This assessment also does not take into account other genetic factors involved in breeding decisions such as genetic diversity, pedigree research, and health tests. These are important things that your breeder should provide information on when you enquire about a puppy, but they are beyond the scope of the assessment. A simple, optional assessment of conformational aspects is provided on page six for the breeder to write notes on.

Detailed information about all of the traits covered in this assessment is included in the Appendix.

*\*If you are acquiring a puppy of another breed or of mixed breed, your breeder should not use this assessment and you should not accept it, as the results are likely to be unreliable.*

# PUPPY REACTION TEMPERAMENT ASSESSMENT

Owner's results page 2

## Puppy's traits profile

The traits assessed are shown below for the puppy and its parents. Four traits, proprioception, attitude to play, prey drive, and mouth quality, cannot be assessed accurately on puppies at this age. Most commonly, puppies will develop traits similar to one of the parents, so looking at the parents' results for these traits may give some idea of the possible outcomes.

	DAM	SIRE
		FOOD MOTIVATION
FOOD MOTIVATION		TOY MOTIVATION
TOY MOTIVATION		ATTITUDE TO PEOPLE
ATTITUDE TO PEOPLE		ATTITUDE TO OWNER
ATTITUDE TO OWNER/FAMILY		ATTITUDE TO DOGS
ATTITUDE TO DOGS		GUNSTEADY
GUNSTEADY		AFFINITY FOR WATER
AFFINITY FOR WATER		PROPRIOCEPTION
MOTION SICKNESS		ATTITUDE TO PLAY
		PREY DRIVE
		MOUTH QUALITY
		CORRECTION SENSITIVITY

Refer to Appendix for more information on the traits.

## Motivation

Dogs are motivated by food, toys, and interactions with people and other dogs. Each dog is different and has their own preferences as to which of these it finds most rewarding. The results of this assessment suggest that your puppy is motivated most strongly by:

## TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

Remember that dogs are also able to learn by routine, and this method can be very helpful for young dogs who might be difficult to motivate using reward-based training. Even puppies who are easily motivated will benefit from day-to-day activities following a predictable pattern.

Puppies do not need to be punished when they make a mistake. At this age, the mistakes they make nearly always come from lack of understanding and not deliberate disobedience. Smacking or shouting at your young puppy is likely to hurt the bond you should be doing everything to develop positively at this stage.

The most important things to train when your puppy first comes home are its name, a recall command, and to use an appropriate place for a toilet (puppies will need to go out after every meal as well as at least every three hours during daytime).

Puppies should learn to understand a 'correction' word, such as no. This should not be shouted or used as a punishment, but if used appropriately the puppy will come to understand that this command means its behaviour is not acceptable and can result in loss of privileges. If the puppy is playing with a person and bites their hand, saying no and stopping play helps the puppy to learn what no means as well as not to bite.

Adult dogs will respond differently to correction. Some will try harder to please their owner, but others might tend to ignore correction, or be offended by criticism and stop trying! It is not possible to assess this trait in puppies, but your puppy's parents were rated as:

## Socialisation priorities

Socialisation is the introducing of puppies in their early months to situations, people, dogs, and other animals they might normally be expected to encounter in everyday life. It conditions the puppy to be a confident and happy dog who takes things in its stride and can accompany you safely throughout your life together. While socialising your puppy, you should try to ensure all the experiences the puppy has are positive, and avoid situations that are unpredictable while your puppy is still learning. Your dog should not walk in public places until its vaccination course is finished (consult your vet) but you can carry the puppy in these places, as long as you do not put it down on the ground. Your puppy should also attend a socialisation class run by a local obedience club.

### **SOCIALISATION WITH PEOPLE**

### **SOCIALISATION WITH DOGS**

### **SOCIALISATION WITH OTHER ANIMALS**

Domestic dogs were developed from predatory wild animals. Poodles were developed generally as a retrieving breed, so they generally retain some 'prey drive' and may chase and attack other animals. Your puppy should be introduced to other animals on the lead in a safe environment. The puppy's eyesight and visual cortex are not fully developed at the time of the assessment, and the dog's predatory instincts may not become apparent until much later. Your dog should never be left unsupervised with other animals, no matter how well behaved it is. Puppies will tend to be similar in this respect to one of the parents, so we can look at the results of the parents' assessments for a clue. Your puppy's parents' results for prey drive are:

### **GROOMING**

It is important that Poodles are introduced to grooming as puppies. Brush the puppy gently, even though its coat is unlikely to need it yet. Play with the puppy's feet and get the puppy used to grooming equipment such as dryers before it is needed. If you are intending to pay a groomer to groom your poodle, your puppy should visit this person and their usual premises before going there for grooming.

### **OTHER SOCIALISATION SITUATIONS**

You should introduce your dog to travelling in the car, going to the vet, visiting the homes of friends and relatives, and any other situations that are likely to be a regular feature in your and the puppy's future life.

## Development

This section contains some advice based on your puppy's own assessment and that of its parents to help give some ideas of what might help your puppy achieve its full potential as it develops and learns new skills.

### FEEDING

### DEVELOPING SKILLS

Proprioception is a dog's awareness of its own momentum, position, etc. This is an important instinct in sports such as agility, and it seems to be largely innate. Proprioception cannot be assessed accurately in your puppy at this age, but your puppy is likely to be similar to one of the parents. The parents' assessments are:

Discourage your puppy from jumping on you and other people -- not only is this annoying, but particularly dogs with poor proprioception if they do it on hard floors and slip could hurt themselves or the person.

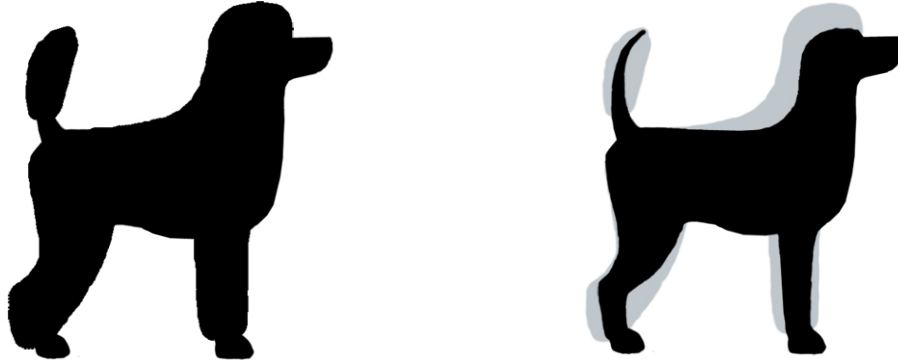
All young puppies mouth at things and chew objects, so it is not possible to assess your puppy's tendency to be destructive with toys. The parents' results for mouth softness are:

Your puppy should have a variety of toys of different types or textures to play with. Take away any toys that the puppy has damaged. Try to encourage appropriate types of toy for rougher play.

Poodles developed to be companions to people. They are not 'pack' dogs as such. It's not uncommon for a Poodle to love being with people, but not play so nicely with other dogs. A great deal of play behaviour is learned, so if you have an older dog who plays gently, this may help your puppy. Alternatively if a friend has a dog who plays nicely, it may be worth your puppy spending time with this dog to learn play skills. Your puppy's parents attitude to playing is:

## Conformation

Conformation is about how closely a dog *conforms* to its breed standard. Breed standards in different countries vary slightly. This section is included so your breeder can provide some basic information about your puppy's conformation. It is not intended to be an exhaustive study of the puppy's structure, and if you would like more information on this aspect of your Poodle you should ask the breeder.



The above images show how the puppy's coat can change its appearance. Below is an image that the breeder may use to note any points about the puppy's conformation. Be aware that the breed standard is an ideal and no Poodles are perfect in all respects, and that puppies can change as they grow.



There are a few superficial faults that might be of relevance if you want this puppy to do conformation showing with, but are likely to be irrelevant if you want the puppy for another purpose. You should discuss any cases of this nature with the breeder. Puppies of incorrect colours should not be promoted as being rare. Some colours atypical to Poodles might be linked to health problems.

- The puppy is a solid colour
- The puppy is a solid colour, but the colour might not be specifically mentioned in the breed standard  
(some breed standards do not specifically recognise blue or cream, for instance)
- The puppy is a solid colour, but has a pigment fault  
(brown pigment on a cream or white poodle)
- The puppy is not a solid colour, but it might even out to a solid colour by maturity  
(e.g. white marks on a pale cream dog, some agouti patterns)
- The puppy is not a solid colour  
(e.g. white marks on a coat of another colour, agouti patterns. These colours are usually not acceptable in conformation)
- The puppy is an atypical colour that might be linked to health problems  
(e.g. albinism, d dilution, merle)



## Appendix

This Appendix provides information on the different traits described in the assessment. The traits are described in such a way as to make it (hopefully) easy for the owners of adult dogs to identify easily which version of the trait most resembles their dog.

The colour coding on the traits denotes closeness to ideal based on the function of a Poodle as an ancient breed with a modern, versatile function, with the 'ideal' traits being the ones most conducive to the modern Poodle fulfilling all these functions: **ideal**, **less ideal**, **unfavourable**. Some breeders and owners may have different priorities as to which traits are ideal or more important than others depending on their lifestyles and the activities they want to pursue with their dogs.

## FOOD MOTIVATION

### HIGH

Greedy, eats like a swine. Steals food and gets in owner's face at mealtimes. Becomes overexcited at feeding time and will jam head in other dogs' bowls potentially triggering aggression and fights. 'Dustbin Dog' who will eat anything with great enthusiasm, even though what it eats won't necessarily agree with it. Becomes overstimulated by training treats which in some cases can actually make training difficult as the dog can't focus on the behaviour asked of it and instead fixates on the rewards. May also hand bite out of greed when feeding treats, which is difficult to correct and annoying to work with.

### MODERATE

Eats food calmly and at a steady pace. Will growl or show other defensive behaviour if other dogs approach while eating, but will not try to take from other dogs nor start fights over food. May steal food if not supervised, and this may become a habit if allowed to occur often. May have preferences and value some food more than others. Easily motivated by training treats.

### LOW

Picky or slow eater with little interest in food. May leave food uneaten or allow other dogs to steal meals. May consistently refuse to eat some kinds of food. Might be difficult to motivate when training if it does not value food treats as a reward. Serious lack of enthusiasm for food, particularly if it is exhibited at a young age, usually accompanies lack of vigour and general failure to thrive.

### COMMENT

Dogs in the first and third categories may need to be fed in isolation. Note that there is no connection between a dog's eating habits and its gut sensitivity. Greedy dogs can often have diarrhoea due to the things they eat and picky dogs can have guts of steel. These traits are probably hardwired to a greater extent than not, nevertheless there are some things that can be done to help modulate the extremes. Careful breeders will feed pups from separate bowls once they are weaned to discourage squabbling over food and learning food aggression habits. Dogs should be fed a variety of different foods to avoid pickiness and food intolerances. Avoid feeding your dog any food that may have gone off or has suspect origins to avoid food poisoning.

## TOY MOTIVATION

### HIGH

Loves toys and interacting; will use toys with owner and probably with other dogs. May become overexcited if toys are waved around. Brings toys to owner of own volition. Toys and playing can be used as rewards for training.

### MODERATE

Plays with toys, and may be highly motivated by them, but plays in an inappropriate way, such as running away with toys or hiding them. Can be difficult to 'reprogram' this behaviour to get the dog to retrieve or use toys in a constructive way during training.

### LOW

Disinterested in toys. Can usually be taught to retrieve, but will not do it for its own sake, and toys and playing with them will not be valued by the dog as a training reward.

### COMMENT

Aggression towards owners over toys should be considered abnormal and is not typical of poodles.

## MOUTH QUALITY

### HIGH

Soft mouth: carries toys gently. Does not chew, rip, or destroy items. Causes only mild wear and tear with teeth on hard toys. Most dogs in this category will still pull the stuffing out of a soft toy if it develops a hole.

### MODERATE

Moderate: carries toys but if unsupervised might tear up and destroy soft toys. Might squeeze balls and puncture them while retrieving.

### LOW

Hard mouth: bites and rips soft toys. Aggressively chews balls and other hard toys. Toys are frequently destroyed and need to be replaced. May be more interested in destroying toys than interacting with toys and owner.

### COMMENT

First category is most appropriate for a retriever. Third category might make a good ratter, but should not be trusted near livestock. Introducing dogs to different types of toy from a young age may help to teach them not to be destructive. Small puppies and adolescents need to chew and should be given appropriate chewing toys to satisfy this urge. Try to avoid letting aggressive chewers swallow pieces of hard toys by removing the toys once they become damaged.

## PREY DRIVE

### HIGH

Birdy, obsessed with prey. Will try to grab small animals. Will escalate to full-blown predatory behaviour (chasing, killing, eating) if precautions are not taken. Will chase wildlife and may lose sense of direction and become lost as a result.

### MODERATE

Interested and greatly entertained by small animals, but if properly socialised will not attempt to chase or harm. May chase wildlife.

### LOW

Disinterested or fearful of small animals. May still chase wildlife.

### COMMENT

Dogs of any breed, however gentle, should never be left unsupervised with smaller animals. Dogs are more likely to be tolerant of animals if introduced to them in an environment that is safe and calm to both the dog and the other animals from a young age.

## ATTITUDE TO PEOPLE

### HIGH

Loves to meet strangers. Runs up to people who may not want to interact. Tends to be a nuisance to work with, as it finds the excitement of meeting new people very rewarding, and will get distracted by people. Potentially at risk from opportunistic dog thieves.

### MODERATE

When accompanied by a family member or familiar person, is calm and confident around unfamiliar people. May bark and show defensive posturing if strangers approach without owner present.

### LOW

Fearful of strangers. Hides behind owner or attempts to flee when strangers approach. Will panic and become extremely afraid if it encounters strangers outside of owner's presence.

### COMMENT

Any aggression towards people should be considered utterly abnormal in poodles. First two traits are ideal for a therapy dog. Introducing puppies to many people when young should help to develop confidence around new people. Introduce young puppies to sensible dog people who will ignore inappropriate behaviour such as running up and leaping. Try to avoid allowing puppies and young dogs to meet children who might scream or run away. Children interacting with dogs should have explained to them the proper way. Learn to be firm with other people who may say "I don't mind" or similar to insist on rewarding the dog with attention for inappropriate behaviour. Other people should only give attention to the dog when it is behaving itself.

## ATTITUDE TO OWNER/FAMILY

### HIGH

Becomes very attached to one particular person, a 'velcro' dog. These tend to be the most enjoyable and easiest dogs to work with -- if you are that person who is their lodestar, in which case they want to work just to please you. May be disdainful of obeying commands of other family members! Beware that dogs with this trait are likely to become very stressed if taken from their owner and put in a strange environment, even if their stress is not outwardly obvious. They may also become jealous of other dogs in the family, and rarely also of people. Loves to be held and stroked by owner in particular. Tends to have a very easy recall, even with little training.

### MODERATE

Bonded to family and likes to spend time with everyone in it. Makes friends with familiar people outside the family. An easygoing dog who is enjoyable to work with. A reliable recall can be easily trained. Tactile and likes physical affection from family.

### LOW

More independent dog that is not so closely bonded to human family. May get distracted by environment and disappear on walks. Recall may be unreliable in some circumstances despite putting a lot of work into training. Can be difficult work with, because it does not see the work as a priority. May like physical affection, but only on its own terms! This trait may be desirable in other dog breeds, but it is not ideal for a poodle.

### COMMENT

These traits are largely innate, although aggression or fear towards owners and failure to form any sort of bond with family can result from prior abuse by caretakers.

## GUNSTEADY

### YES

Little reaction to the noise made when a shotgun or similar is fired at close quarters.

### NO

Response of agitation or fearfulness to the sound of a gun.

### COMMENT

Steadiness to the gun is a desired characteristic if a dog is to be used for hunting. Dogs should not be introduced to this stimulus at any point where there is upheaval or anything that could be a source of stress going on in their lives. Socialisation to gunshots should always be carried out in a familiar safe location. Small puppies can be introduced to sudden loud noises for example by bursting a bag filled with air.

## ATTITUDE TO DOGS

### HIGH

Loves to meet other dogs. May run up to other dogs who do not want to interact with it. Likely to be a nuisance to owner and other dogs' owners, as the dog finds meeting new dogs very rewarding, and might ignore owner's commands and disrupt training

### MODERATE

When an unfamiliar dog approaches, greets the dog appropriately without leaving owner.

### LOW

Fearful when strange dogs approach. Hides behind owner or attempts to flee. May be so frightened of dogs it refuses to work with owner when other dogs are present. May exhibit fear aggression.

### COMMENT

Socialise young dogs with calm and well-behaved adults and encourage appropriate interaction. Inappropriate socialisation with bad-mannered dogs will make fearfulness worse.

## PROPRIOCEPTION

### HIGH

Agile, swift, and surefooted. Can leap onto a bed easily without standing on a person in it. May be very lively and stand up on hind legs when excited, but will not kick or scratch.

### MODERATE

May be active, but clumsy. Tends to climb on things and fall off. Runs at people and jumps up, kicking them in the guts. Tramples on people and dogs who may be lying down/sleeping. Jumps on people and loses balance, falls over while playing chasing games. Puts feet and nose carelessly in owner's face. Does not seem to think before it throws itself about. When playing with tug toys, may bite person's hand by accident instead of the toy.

### LOW

Steady, rarely jumps on people or climbs on objects. If dog seems to be uncomfortable or unusually inactive, check there is not a medical condition underlying.

### COMMENT

Dogs in the first category are the best candidates for sports such as agility. Dogs in the third category lack the enthusiasm for sports, and dogs in the second are more likely to fall from equipment and hurt themselves through carelessness. The first and third categories can make good therapy dogs. Young dogs should be consistently discouraged from kicking, jumping on, or mouthing people.

## ATTITUDE TO PLAYING

### HIGH

Play nearly always appropriate, uses play 'bow' to initiate playing, plays reciprocal chase. Respects and understands other dogs physical differences and comfort level; plays gently with puppies and smaller dogs, and yet can play in a physical, boisterous manner if the other dog is game for this. Knows when other dogs have had enough.

### MODERATE

Usually plays appropriately with other dogs. May get overexcited in some circumstances or with particular dogs. May sometimes ignore signals given by other dogs that they have had enough, or play inappropriately roughly with small or timid dogs. Might not realise that smaller dogs need to be treated gently, and has to be separated from pups until they are bigger. Might have to be removed from other dogs and given time on its own to calm down in such instances where it gets carried away.

### LOW

Overconfident, too forward with other dogs. Gets in their personal space and 'lords it'. May want to play but have trouble with reciprocity -- might want to chase but not to be chased, exhausting and intimidating the other dog. Can make other dogs stressed and trigger fights if care is not taken. Attempts to initiate play may be inappropriate, such as grabbing at, barking at, or shoving other dogs, rather than the appropriate playing 'bow'. Sometimes this behaviour is labelled as 'dominance' and the dogs are said to be experiencing an emotion called 'alpha'. Others prefer to think of it as the dog wanting to play but lacking social skills for appropriate interaction.

### COMMENT

Playing forms the foundations of relationships between dogs in a multiple-dog household. Unfamiliar dogs should always be introduced in a controlled environment. Where there is a significant disparity in size or build, dogs should never be left unattended, however well they seem to get on. Generally, problems with dogs cohabiting occur where more than one dog comes from the second or third categories. Dogs of the first category are usually able to live together harmoniously. Socialising puppies with older dogs who play appropriately helps to teach appropriate ways to play. Note that it is normal for dogs who live together to occasionally 'have a harsh word' to each other when one tries to take another's food/toy/bed. There is not necessarily any correlation between each category and how often or with whom a dog plays. A dog in the LOW category may only play occasionally and appropriately with one friend, and a dog in the HIGH category may try to play inappropriately with all dogs.

## AFFINITY FOR WATER

### HIGH

Innately loves water to the point where it does not mind or even actively enjoys being washed. Plays and splashes in bodies of water. Will readily venture out of its depth and swim.

### MODERATE

Initially suspicious of water, but will wade when given incentives. Will not venture out of its depth of its own accord, but can be taught to swim with sympathetic training.

### LOW

Fearful of water. Will not wade. Will not and should not be made to enter water in an attempt to train it to swim.

### COMMENT

Poodles are meant to be water dogs, although a true water-loving poodle who constantly gets wet can present coat care difficulties. Exercise caution with very water-oriented dogs -- they should not be allowed in water where a dangerous situation could develop, such as becoming caught on a submerged object or coming into contact with strong currents/ riptides.

## SENSITIVITY TO CORRECTION

### HIGH

Overly sensitive to criticism. May be put off working with handler by mild verbal corrections. Sulks when it is told off for doing something naughty. May wet itself when verbally reprimanded or when asked to do something it finds challenging.

### MODERATE

Responds appropriately to mild verbal corrections by paying attention and trying harder at the task in hand. Genuinely wants to please people.

### LOW

Tends to ignore verbal correction and continue with bad behaviour. 'Thick skinned'.

### COMMENT

Small puppies do not understand correction, but will gradually learn that certain words and tones of voice mean disapproval and loss of privileges. Dogs who respond appropriately to criticism are easier to train than those who do not.

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