

Volhard Puppy Aptitude Test

The following is a concise chart explaining each test and the scoring.

Test	Purpose	Score	1
SOCIAL ATTRACTION Place puppy in test area. From a few feet away the testor coaxes the pup to her/him by clapping hands gently and kneeling down. Testor must coax in a direction away from the point where it entered the testing area.	Degree of social attraction, confidence, or dependence.	Came readily, tail up, jumped, bit at hands. Came readily, tail up, pawed, licked at hands. *Came readily, tail up. Came readily, tail down. Came hesitantly, tail down. Didn't come at all.	1 2 3 4 5 6
FOLLOWING Stand up and walk away from the pup in a normal manner. Make sure the pup sees you walk away.	Degree of following attraction. Not following indicates independence.	Followed readily, tail up, got underfoot, bit at feet. Followed readily, tail up, got underfoot. *Followed readily, tail up. Followed readily, tail down. Followed hesitantly, tail down. No follow or went away.	1 2 3 4 5 6
RESTRAINT Crouch down and gently roll the pup on his back and hold it with one hand for a full 30 seconds.	Degree of dominant or submissive tendency. How it accepts stress, when socially/physically dominated.	Struggled fiercely, flailed, bit. Struggled fiercely, flailed. *Settled, struggled, settled with some eye contact. Struggled then settled. No struggle. *No struggle, straining to avoid eye contact.	1 2 3 4 5 6
SOCIAL DOMINANCE Let pup stand up and gently stroke him from the head to back while you crouch beside him. continue stroking until a recognizable behavior is established.	Degree of acceptance of social dominance. Pup may try to dominate by jumping and nipping or is independent and walks away.	Jumped, pawed, bit, growled. Jumped, pawed. *Cuddles up to testor and tries to lick face. Squirmed, licked at hands. Rolled over, licked at hands. Went away and stayed away.	1 2 3 4 5 6
ELEVATION DOMINANCE Bend over and cradle the pup under its belly, fingers interlaced, palms up and elevate it just off the ground. Hold it there for 30 seconds.	Degree of accepting dominance while in position of no control.	Struggled fiercely, bit, growled. Struggled fiercely. *No struggle, relaxed. Struggled, settled, licked. No struggle, licked at hands. *No struggle, froze.	1 2 3 4 5 6
OBEDIENCE APTITUDE			
RETRIEVING Crouch beside pup and attract his attention with crumpled up paper ball. When the pup shows interest and is watching, toss the object 4-6 feet in front of pup.	Degree of willingness to work with a human. High correlation between ability to retrieve and successful guide dogs, obedience dogs, field trial dogs.	Chases object, picks up object and runs away. Chases object, stands over object, does not return. Chases object and returns with object to testor. Chases object and returns without object to testor. Starts to chase object, loses interest. Does not chase object.	1 2 3 4 5 6
TOUCH SENSITIVITY Take puppy's webbing of one front foot and press between finger and thumb lightly then more firmly until you get a response, while you count slowly to 10. Stop as soon as puppy pulls away or shows discomfort.	Degree of sensitivity to touch.	8-10 counts before response. 6-7 counts before response. 5-6 counts before response. 2-4 counts before response. 1-2 counts before response.	1 2 3 4 5
SOUND SENSITIVITY Place pup in the center of area, testor or assistant makes a sharp noise a few feet from the puppy. A large metal spoon struck sharply on a metal pan twice works well.	Degree of sensitivity to sound. (Also can be a rudimentary test for deafness.)	Listens, locates sound, walks toward it barking. Listens, locates sound barks. Listens, locates sound, shows curiosity and walks toward sound Listens, locates the sound. Cringes, backs off, hides. Ignores sound, shows no curiosity.	1 2 3 4 5 6
SIGHT SENSITIVITY Place pup in center of room. Tie a string around a large towel and jerk it across the floor a few feet away from puppy.	Degree of intelligent response to strange object.	Looks, attacks, and bites. Looks, barks, and tail up. Looks curiously, attempts to investigate. Looks, barks, tail-tuck. Runs away, hides.	1 2 3 4 5
STRUCTURE The puppy is gently set in a natural stance and evaluated for structure in the following categories: Straight front, Straight rear, Shoulder layback, Front angulation, Croup angulation, Rear angulation	Degree of structural soundness. Good structure is necessary.	The puppy is correct in structure. The puppy has a slight fault or deviation. The puppy has an extreme fault or deviation	G F P

Volhard's Puppy Aptitude Testing

HOW TO TEST

Here are the ground rules for performing the test:

- The testing is done in a location unfamiliar to the puppies. This does not mean they have to be taken away from home. A 10-foot square area is perfectly adequate, such as a room in the house where the puppies have not been.
- The puppies are tested one at a time.
- There are no other dogs or people, except the scorer and the tester, in the testing area.
- The puppies do not know the tester.
- The scorer is a disinterested third party and not the person interested in selling you a puppy.
- The scorer is unobtrusive and positions him or herself so he or she can observe the puppies' responses without having to move.
- The puppies are tested before they are fed.
- The puppies are tested when they are at their liveliest.
- Do not try to test a puppy that is not feeling well.
- Puppies should not be tested the day of or the day after being vaccinated.
- Only the first response counts!

Top Dog Tips: During the test, watch the puppy's tail. It will make a difference in the scoring whether the tail is up or down.

The tests are simple to perform and anyone with some common sense can do them. You can, however, elicit the help of someone who has tested puppies before and knows what they are doing.

1. Social attraction - the owner or caretaker of the puppies places it in the test area about four feet from the tester and then leaves the test area. The tester kneels down and coaxes the puppy to come to him or her by encouragingly and gently clapping hands and calling. The tester must coax the puppy in the opposite direction from where it entered the test area. Hint: Lean backward, sitting on your heels instead of leaning forward toward the puppy. Keep your hands close to your body encouraging the puppy to come to you instead of trying to reach for the puppy.

2. Following - the tester stands up and slowly walks away encouraging the puppy to follow. Hint: Make sure the puppy sees you walk away and get the puppy to focus on you by lightly clapping your hands and using verbal encouragement to get the puppy to follow you. Do not lean over the puppy.

3. Restraint - the tester crouches down and gently rolls the puppy on its back and holds it on its back for 30 seconds. Hint: Hold the puppy down without applying too much pressure. The object is not to keep it on its back but to test its response to being placed in that position.

4. Social Dominance - let the puppy stand up or sit and gently stroke it from the head to the back while you crouch beside it. See if it will lick your face, an indication of a forgiving nature. Continue stroking until you see a behaviour you can score. Hint: When you crouch next to the puppy avoid leaning or hovering over the puppy. Have the puppy at your side with both of you facing in the same direction.

Top Dog Tips: During testing maintain a positive, upbeat and friendly attitude toward the puppies. Try to get each puppy to interact with you to bring out the best in him or her. Make the test a pleasant experience for the puppy.

5. Elevation Dominance - the tester cradles the puppy with both hands, supporting the puppy under its chest and gently lifts it two feet off the ground and holds it there for 30 seconds.

6. Retrieving - the tester crouches beside the puppy and attracts its attention with a crumpled up piece of paper. When the puppy shows some interest, the tester throws the paper no more than four feet in front of the puppy encouraging it to retrieve the paper.

7. Touch Sensitivity - the tester locates the webbing of one the puppy's front paws and presses it lightly between his index finger and thumb. The tester gradually increases pressure while counting to ten and stops when the puppy pulls away or shows signs of discomfort.

8. Sound Sensitivity - the puppy is placed in the centre of the testing area and an assistant stationed at the perimeter makes a sharp noise, such as banging a metal spoon on the bottom of a metal pan.

9. Sight Sensitivity - the puppy is placed in the centre of the testing area. The tester ties a string around a bath towel and jerks it across the floor, two feet away from the puppy.

10. Stability - an umbrella is opened about five feet from the puppy and gently placed on the ground.

SCORING THE RESULTS

Following are the responses you will see and the score assigned to each particular response. You will see some variations and will have to make a judgment on what score to give them.

Test	Response	Score
SOCIAL ATTRACTION	Came readily, tail up, jumped, bit at hands	1
	Came readily, tail up, pawed, licked at hands	2
	Came readily, tail up	3
	Came readily, tail down	4
	Came hesitantly, tail down	5
	Didn't come at all	6
FOLLOWING	Followed readily, tail up, got underfoot, bit at feet	1
	Followed readily, tail up, got underfoot	2
	Followed readily, tail up	3
	Followed readily, tail down	4
	Followed hesitantly, tail down	5
	Did not follow or went away	6
RESTRAINT	Struggled fiercely, flailed, bit	1
	Struggled fiercely, flailed	2
	Settled, struggled, settled with some eye contact	3
	Struggled, then settled	4
	No struggle	5
	No struggle, strained to avoid eye contact	6
SOCIAL DOMINANCE	Jumped, pawed, bit, growled	1
	Jumped, pawed	2
	Cuddled up to tester and tried to lick face	3
	Squirmed, licked at hands	4
	Rolled over, licked at hands	5
	Went away and stayed away	6
ELEVATION DOMINANCE	Struggled fiercely, tried to bite	1
	Struggled fiercely	2
	Struggled, settled, struggled, settled	3
	No struggle, relaxed	4
	No struggle, body stiff	5
	No struggle, froze	6

RETRIEVING	Chased object, picked it up and ran away	1
	Chased object, stood over it and did not return	2
	Chased object, picked it up and returned with it to tester	3
	Chased object and returned without it to tester	4
	Started to chase object, lost interest	5
	Does not chase object	6
TOUCH SENSITIVITY	8-10 count before response	1
	6-8 count before response	2
	5-6 count before response	3
	3-5 count before response	4
	2-3 count before response	5
	1-2 count before response	6
SOUND SENSITIVITY	Listened, located sound and ran toward it barking	1
	Listened, located sound and walked slowly toward it	2
	Listened, located sound and showed curiosity	3
	Listened and located sound	4
	Cringed, backed off and hid behind tester 5	5
	Ignored sound and showed no curiosity	6
SIGHT SENSITIVITY	Looked, attacked and bit object	1
	Looked and put feet on object and put mouth on it	2
	Looked with curiosity and attempted to investigate, tail up	3
	Looked with curiosity, tail down	4
	Ran away or hid behind tester	5
	Hid behind tester	6
STABILITY	Looked and ran to the umbrella, mouthing or biting it	1
	Looked and walked to the umbrella, smelling it cautiously	2
	Looked and went to investigate	3
	Sat and looked, but did not move toward the umbrella	4
	Showed little or no interest	5
	Ran away from the umbrella	6

WHAT DO THE SCORES MEAN?

The scores are interpreted as follows:

Mostly 1's

Strong desire to be pack leader and is not shy about bucking for a promotion

Has a predisposition to be aggressive to people and other dogs and will bite

Should only be placed into a very experienced home where the dog will be trained and worked on a regular basis

Top Dog Tips: Stay away from the puppy with a lot of 1's or 2's. It has lots of leadership aspirations and may be difficult to manage. This puppy needs an experienced home. Not good with children.

Mostly 2's

Also has leadership aspirations

May be hard to manage and has the capacity to bite

Has lots of self-confidence

Should not be placed into an inexperienced home

Too unruly to be good with children and elderly people, or other animals

Needs strict schedule, loads of exercise and lots of training

Has the potential to be a great show dog with someone who understands dog behavior

Mostly 3's

Can be a high-energy dog and may need lots of exercise

Good with people and other animals

Can be a bit of a handful to live with

Needs training, does very well at it and learns quickly

Great dog for second time owner.

Mostly 4's

The kind of dog that makes the perfect pet

Best choice for the first time owner.

Rarely will buck for a promotion in the family

Easy to train, and rather quiet.

Good with elderly people, children, although may need protection from the children

Choose this pup, take it to obedience classes, and you'll be the star, without having to do too much work!

Titbits: The puppy with mostly 3's and 4's can be quite a handful, but should be good with children and does well with training. Energy needs to be dispersed with plenty of exercise.

Mostly 5's

Fearful, shy and needs special handling

Will run away at the slightest stress in its life
Strange people, strange places, different floor or ground surfaces may upset it
Often afraid of loud noises and terrified of thunder storms. When you greet it upon your return, may submissively urinate. Needs a very special home where the environment doesn't change too much and where there are no children
Best for a quiet, elderly couple
If cornered and cannot get away, has a tendency to bite

Top Dog Tips: Avoid the puppy with several 6's. It is so independent it doesn't need you or anyone. He is his own person and unlikely to bond to you.

Mostly 6's

So independent that he doesn't need you or other people
Doesn't care if he is trained or not - he is his own person Unlikely to bond to you, since he doesn't need you.
A great guard dog for gas stations!
Do not take this puppy and think you can change him into a lovable bundle - you can't, so leave well enough alone

INTERPRETING THE SCORES

Few puppies will test with all 2's or all 3's - there will be a mixture of scores.

For that first time, wonderfully easy to train, potential star, look for a puppy that scores with mostly 4's and 3's. Don't worry about the score on Touch Sensitivity - you can compensate for that with the right training equipment.

Titbits: It's hard not to become emotional when picking a puppy - they are all so cute, soft and cuddly. Remind yourself that this dog is going to be with you for 8 to 16 years. Don't hesitate to step back a little to contemplate your decision. Sleep on it and review it in the light of day.

Avoid the puppy with a score of 1 on the Restraint and Elevation tests. This puppy will be too much for the first time owner.

It's a lot more fun to have a good dog, one that is easy to train, one you can live with and one you can be proud of, than one that is a constant struggle.