

Rewards have to be given immediately for them to be effective and the type of reward given will have a bearing on how strong the behavior becomes. A pat on the head and the words “good boy” will be sufficient for a simple behavior such as sitting on command. But calling a dog away from other dogs when it is playing will need something much more rewarding such as a game with a favorite toy or a tasty food treat in addition to the pat on the head and the words “good boy”.

Most owners are totally unaware of the multitude of rewards that are available to them for use in training. By answering the following questions you should end up with a list of rewards that you can make use of in training your puppy.

Name five things, in order of importance, that your dog would choose to play with if he or she were given a free choice in the matter.

Name five foods in order of preference that your dog would like to eat if given a free choice.

Which of these forms of physical attention does your dog like the most?
Place them in order of his preference: stroking, cuddling, patting, tummy tickling, scratching.

Name five places that your dog would choose to go if a free choice was given and what would he choose to do when he arrived there?

Which words or phrases start your dogs tail wagging happily and which words or phrases cause a tail lowered, ears back, looking sorry for itself expression?

How did you do with the questions?

If your dog’s favorite thing to play with is another dog, if he has no real desire to be stroked, cuddled etc., and would choose to go somewhere by himself and do something independently of you when he arrived there then you do not really have much chance of influencing his behavior and will have to resort to using food for the time being until you have built up a better relationship with your pet.

If your dogs favorite toy is the one that you supplied for him to play with, if he likes to be stroked and touched and would choose to go somewhere with you and wanted to be around you when he got there then you will have a major influence on how his behavior develops.

By John Rodgerson