

Canine Good Citizen (CGC) Test Items

The Canine Good Citizen Program teaches good manners to dogs and responsible dog ownership to their owners. The 10-step CGC test is a non-competitive test for all dogs, including purebreds and mixed breeds. It is a prerequisite for many therapy dog groups and some homeowner's insurance companies encourage CGC testing. There are also an increasing number of apartments and condos that require resident dogs to pass the CGC test.

Before taking the Canine Good Citizen test, owners will sign the [Responsible Dog Owners Pledge](#). We believe that [responsible dog ownership](#) is a key part of the CGC concept and by signing the pledge, owners agree to take care of their [dog's health](#) needs, safety, exercise, [training](#) and quality of life. Owners also agree to show responsibility by doing things such as cleaning up after their /dog-owners/responsible-dog-ownership/dogs in public places and never letting dogs infringe on the rights of others.

After signing the Responsible Dog Owners Pledge, owners and their [dogs](#) are ready to take the CGC Test. Items on the Canine Good Citizen Test include:

1. **Test 1: Accepting a friendly stranger**

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to approach it and speak to the handler in a natural, everyday situation. The evaluator walks up to the dog and handler and greets the handler in a friendly manner, ignoring the dog. The evaluator and handler shake hands and exchange pleasantries. The dog must show no sign of resentment or shyness.

2. **Test 2: Sitting politely for petting**

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to touch it while it is out with its handler. With the dog sitting at the handler's side, to begin the exercise, the evaluator pets the dog on the head and body. The handler may talk to his or her dog throughout the exercise. The dog may stand in place as it is petted. The dog must not show shyness or resentment.

3. **Test 3: Appearance and grooming**

This practical test demonstrates that the dog will welcome being groomed and examined and will permit someone, such as a veterinarian, groomer or friend of the owner, to do so. It also demonstrates the owner's care, concern and sense of responsibility. The evaluator inspects the dog to determine if it is clean and groomed. The dog must appear to be in healthy condition (i.e., proper weight, clean, healthy and alert). The handler should supply the comb or brush

commonly used on the dog. The evaluator then softly combs or brushes the dog, and in a natural manner, lightly examines the ears and gently picks up each front foot. It is not necessary for the dog to hold a specific position during the examination, and the handler may talk to the dog, praise it and give encouragement throughout.

4. **Test 4: Out for a walk (walking on a loose lead)**

This test demonstrates that the handler is in control of the dog. The dog may be on either side of the handler. The dog's position should leave no doubt that the dog is attentive to the handler and is responding to the handler's movements and changes of direction. The dog need not be perfectly aligned with the handler and need not sit when the handler stops. The evaluator may use a pre-plotted course or may direct the handler/dog team by issuing instructions or commands. In either case, there should be a right turn, left turn, and an about turn with at least one stop in between and another at the end. The handler may talk to the dog along the way, praise the dog, or give commands in a normal tone of voice. The handler may sit the dog at the halts if desired. **Read More:** [How to Train a Puppy to Walk on a Leash](#)

5. **Test 5: Walking through a crowd**

This test demonstrates that the dog can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and is under control in public places. The dog and handler walk around and pass close to several people (at least three). The dog may show some interest in the strangers but should continue to walk with the handler, without evidence of over-exuberance, shyness or resentment. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise the dog throughout the test. The dog should not jump on people in the crowd or strain on the leash.

6. **Test 6: Sit and down on command and Staying in place**

This test demonstrates that the dog has training, will respond to the handler's [commands to sit](#) and down and will remain in the place commanded by the handler (sit or down position, whichever the handler prefers). The dog must do sit AND down on command, then the owner chooses the position for leaving the dog in the stay. Prior to this test, the dog's leash is replaced with a line 20 feet long. The handler may take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one command to get the dog to sit and then down. The evaluator must determine if the dog has responded to the handler's commands. The handler may not force the dog into position but may touch the dog to offer gentle guidance. When instructed by the evaluator, the handler tells the dog to stay and walks forward the length of the line, turns and returns to the dog at a natural pace. The dog must remain in the place in which it was left (it may change position) until the evaluator instructs the handler to release the dog. The dog may be released from the front or the side.

7. **Test 7: Coming when called**

This test demonstrates that the [dog will come when called](#) by the handler. The handler will walk 10 feet from the dog, turn to face the dog, and call the dog. The handler may use encouragement to get the dog to come. Handlers may choose to tell dogs to “stay” or “wait” or they may simply walk away, giving no instructions to the dog.

8. **Test 8: Reaction to another dog**

This test demonstrates that the dog can behave politely around other dogs. Two handlers and their dogs approach each other from a distance of about 20 feet, stop, shake hands and exchange pleasantries, and continue on for about 10 feet. The dogs should show no more than casual interest in each other. Neither dog should go to the other dog or its handler.

9. **Test 9: Reaction to distraction**

This test demonstrates that the dog is confident at all times when faced with common distracting situations. The evaluator will select and present two distractions. Examples of distractions include dropping a chair, rolling a crate dolly past the dog, having a jogger run in front of the dog, or dropping a crutch or cane. The dog may express natural interest and curiosity and/or may appear slightly startled but should not panic, try to run away, show aggressiveness, or bark. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise it throughout the exercise.

10. **Test 10: Supervised separation**

This test demonstrates that a dog can be left with a trusted person, if necessary, and will maintain training and good manners. Evaluators are encouraged to say something like, “Would you like me to watch your dog?” and then take hold of the dog’s leash. The owner will go out of sight for three minutes. The dog does not have to stay in position but should not continually bark, whine, or pace unnecessarily, or show anything stronger than mild agitation or nervousness. Evaluators may talk to the dog but should not engage in excessive talking, petting, or management attempts (e.g. “there, there, it’s alright”). Read More: [How to Teach Your Dog to Stay](#)

Equipment

All tests must be performed on leash. [For collars](#), dogs should wear well-fitting buckle or slip collars made of leather, fabric, or chain. Special training collars such as pinch collars, head halters, and electronic collars are not permitted in the CGC test.

Body harnesses may be used in the CGC test. The evaluator should check to make sure the harness is not of a type that completely restricts the dog's movement such that it could not pull or jump up if it tried.

We recognize that special training collars such as head collars and no-jump harnesses may be very useful tools for beginning dog trainers. However, we feel that dogs are ready to take the CGC test at the point at which they are transitioned to equipment that allows the evaluator to see that the dog has been trained.

The evaluator supplies a 20-foot lead for the test. The owner/handler should bring the dog's brush or comb to the test.

Encouragement

Owners/handlers may use praise and encouragement throughout the test. The owner may pet the dog between exercises. Food and treats are not permitted during testing, nor is the use of **toys, squeaky toys**, etc. to get the dog to do something. We recognize that food and toys may provide valuable reinforcement or encouragement during the training process but these items should not be used during the test.

Failures — Dismissals

Any dog that eliminates during testing must be marked failed. The only exception to this rule is that elimination is allowable in test Item 10, but only when test Item 10 is held outdoors.

Any dog that growls, snaps, bites, attacks, or attempts to attack a person or another dog is not a good citizen and must be dismissed from the test.

AKC CGCSM Responsible Dog Owner's Pledge

I will be responsible for my dog's health needs. These include:

- routine veterinary care including check-ups and vaccines adequate nutrition through proper diet; clean water at all times daily exercise and regular bathing and grooming
- I will be responsible for my dog's safety.
- I will properly control my dog by providing fencing where appropriate, not letting my dog run loose, and using a leash in public.
- I will ensure that my dog has some form of identification when appropriate (which may include collar tags, tattoos, or microchip ID).

- I will provide adequate supervision when my dog and children are together.
- I will not allow my dog to infringe on the rights of others.
- I will not allow my dog to run loose in the neighborhood.
- I will not allow my dog to be a nuisance to others by barking while in the yard, in a hotel room, etc.
- I will pick up and properly dispose of my dog's waste in all public areas such as on the grounds of hotels, on sidewalks, parks, etc.
- I will pick up and properly dispose of my dog's waste in wilderness areas, on hiking trails, campgrounds and in off-leash parks.
- I will be responsible for my dog's quality of life.
- I understand that basic training is beneficial to all dogs.
- I will give my dog attention and playtime.
- I understand that owning a dog is a commitment in time and caring.