

K-9 Vocabulary Reference

Consistency in language is so important when communicating with our dogs. Can you imagine the confusion we would have if each member of our family had their own language? Well, imagine how it must feel for our canine friends when one person says sit and another says sit down. To prevent this type of chaos anyone involved in training or interacting with your dog must use consistent vocabulary when communicating with your dog.

The following is a suggested list of cues (commands), but you can change the words to whatever you like as long as you stick to them. You may want to post a copy of this list in a highly visible area as a reminder to all members of the family.

ALL DONE - (or “enough,” or “no more“) Use for behaviors that you permit, but wish to stop at the moment such as barking and playing. You can also use this cue when we want to stop all activity with a dog. This works well for over-active dogs.

CLOSE - Stay within a certain radius of me, usually 3'. Use this cue in casual situations such as stopping on the street to greet someone.

COME - Use this cue to get your dog to immediately come to you. Say the dog's name first, for example "Buzz, Come". Always remember to guide the dog in as close to your body as possible and to touch collar.

CRATE - go into your crate

DOWN - Dog is in a comfortable lying position with front and rear down.

DROP IT - Use this when the dog has something in its mouth that they should not have and you would like for them to release and leave, usually something yucky or something that does not belong to them. It's bad canine etiquette to grab something from the dog's mouth.

EASY - (or gentle) Use for leash walking. You can also use "easy" in play when the dog is getting rough, or when he's taking something from you (such as a treat).

GIVE - Use this when the dog has something in its mouth that you would like for them to release into your hand. Use this word when playing tug of war, fetch, etc.

GO POTTY - When you put a name to this natural function you'll find it's very convenient to have a dog “go” when you need him to.

HEEL - Dog is in standing position, with shoulder in line with your left leg. Use this cue when walking to instruct the dog to remain in that position.

LEAVE IT - Tells your dog to back off of something. Whether it's garbage on the street, another dog, person or object. Leave it means you may not have it.

LET'S GO - Use this cue to get your dog move with you or in your direction. This is used instead of “heel” when going for a casual walk.

LOAD UP - Get in the car, truck or whatever you need him to get into.

OFF - Use this cue to tell the dog not to jump on people and furniture, for example. Remember, never use the "down" when the dog jumps; down is a separate cue.

OKAY - The word that you use to release a dog from stays and waits. When you release a dog by saying good boy, you can never praise them for holding a position, as they will anticipate a release, and break the position. For example, tell the dog to "sit stay" leave the dog, and then praise "good girl." Return to the dog and release "okay."

OUT - Get out of the car, the kitchen, bedroom, bathroom or whatever.

SIT - Dog is in seated position.

STAND - Dog's is standing with 4 paws on the floor and holds position until released, (used for grooming, veterinary visits, for example).

STAY - Use this cue to keep the dog in a position, such as a "sit," "down," and "stand," until you return and release them.

TAKE IT - Dog may take whatever it is.

TOUCH - Dog will touch selected item or your hand with his nose or paw (paw-touch)

UP - Use this cue to invite your dog to jump up on you or an object such as furniture, for example. If you're sitting on the sofa and you invite the dog "up", the dog joins you on the sofa.

WAIT – Use this cue to keep your dog in place temporarily, until you give a release word such as “OK”. Your dog can “Wait” before going out the door, “Wait” before getting out of the car, “Wait” as his food dish is placed on the floor.

WATCH – “Look at me”.