

# Dogs dig small talk

Ninth of 10 articles  
Any dog with normal intelligence is capable of understanding a large vocabulary.

Dogs learn by repetition. Certainly a dog who is with people a great deal has an advantage.

I constantly am amazed at some of the words our dogs understand, although our family has made no effort to teach these words.

Say "egg" to our sheltie, Kilty, and she goes into spasms of joy. An egg is the equivalent of a "hot fudge sundae" to the canines in our house.

I'm sure over the years I have said "egg" each time I've offered one to Kilty, but I don't remember saying it. Since she enjoys them so much, she remembers and associates the word with good food.

Most people who enjoy the companionship of their dogs talk to them like friends. Our dogs not only enjoy hearing our voices during these moments, but also learn and associate key words.

BY KEY WORDS I mean that we may say a long sentence and our dog

may respond to the sounds. But actually they are listening and understanding only one or two key words.

For instance, say, "It's time to go outside and play ball in the yard." The dog probably will understand only two words.

The word "out" is familiar since we have used it while training the dog to go outside. "Ball" means play, and our dog eagerly remembers this word and associates it with running. In that sentence, all we needed to say was "out" and "ball."

As humans with large vocabularies, we enjoy using complete sentences even though they are not important to our dogs. Therefore it is important to remember to use short sentences when talking to the dog and equally important to emphasize the key words.

OUR DOGS enjoy words requiring an action response. We can say "please" and "Thank you" to our dog but he cannot understand the words unless we accompany it with an action.

I have found that occasionally I say "Thank you" instead of "good dog"

when praising my dogs. I also pat them on the head at the same time.

Recently I noticed that it makes no difference whether I say "good dog" or "Thank you." The dogs associate both with praise.

I never have found any action for the word "please" even though I often hear people in my class use it. However, "please" does have a pleasant sound even if the dog does not understand the meaning.

HERE ARE some key words that your dog can associate with an action. Almost any dog, at any age, can learn, and will enjoy the action once taught the key word.

"Sit up" — Lift front paws off floor while sitting.

"Shake" or "gimme five" — Place paw in owner's hand.

"Outside" — Go out the door.

"Bye, bye" or "car" — Get into car for ride.

"No" — Stop what you are doing.

"Quiet" — Stop barking or making noise.

"Down" — Lie down.

## How to RAISE A DOG when nobody's home!

By JERRY CLIMER



"Reg" or "bed" — Go to your rug or bed.

"Stay" — Remain where you are.

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Thursday, November 15, 1979

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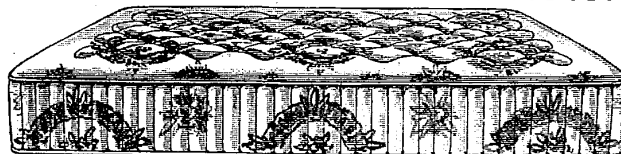
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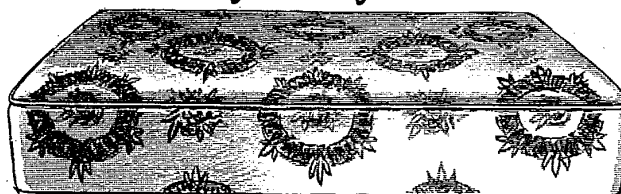
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