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# ***Dog Obedience Lesson Plans for Open Challenge Training***

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# Open Challenge Obedience Training

Open Challenge is for 4-H members who have passed Open and have not advanced to Utility with the dog they are showing. Members should not advance to Open Challenge until they and their dogs are competent in Open.

Open Challenge is a combination of four Open and two Utility exercises. The Drop-on-Recall, Retrieve on the Flat, and the Stays are done as in the Open class; the Signal Exercise and the Directed Retrieve are Utility exercises. Since detailed instruction for all Open exercises can be found in the Open section, this section will cover only instructions for Signals and the Directed Retrieve.

Success on the Signal exercise depends on how well the member has taught his or her dog to pay attention. Teaching attention begins in the Pre-Novice section and should be reviewed throughout training. All exercises from previous sections should be reviewed constantly; keep the training sessions interesting and enjoyable for the dog and the trainer. Remember to praise the dog enthusiastically for a correct response, and occasionally to break an exercise with "OK" and play with the dog. The dog should want to do the work, and it is up to the trainer to keep the dog motivated and interested in training.

Study the lesson plans carefully before training the dog. Make sure the dog is solid on each step of the exercise before advancing to the next step. Train the dog daily; give the dog many repetitions on each step. Be a fair, enthusiastic, patient trainer.

## Open Challenge Class Description

Exercises	Points
Signal Exercise	40
Drop-on-Recall (Signal Drop)	30
Retrieve Over High Jump	30
Directed Retrieve	40
Long Sit (3 minutes out of sight)	30
Long Down (5 minutes out of sight)	30
Total Points	200

## Open Challenge Exercise Performance

### Signal Exercise

In the Signal Exercise, the heeling is done as in the Heel Free exercise, except that throughout the entire exercise the trainer uses hand signals only and must not speak to the dog at any time.

On Judge's order "Forward," the trainer signals the dog to walk at heel and then, on specific order from the Judge in each case, the trainer and dog execute a "Left turn," "Right turn," "About turn," "Halt," "Slow," "Normal," and "Fast." These orders may be given in a sequence and may be repeated. Then, on order from the Judge and while the dog is walking at heel, the trainer signals her dog to stand in the heel position; on Judge's order "Leave your dog," trainer signals the dog to "Stay," goes to the far end of the ring, and turns to face her dog. On separate and specific signals from the Judge, the trainer gives the signals to Drop, to Sit, to Come, and to Finish as in the Recall. During the heeling part of this exercise, the trainer must not give any signal except where a command or signal is permitted in the heeling exercises.

### Drop-on-Recall (Signal Drop)

This exercise is done as in the Open class with the following difference: The trainer must drop the dog to the down position using only a hand signal.

### Retrieve Over High Jump

This exercise is to be performed as in the Open class.

### Directed Retrieve

Stand with the dog sitting in the heel position facing away from the end of the ring where the gloves will be dropped. The trainer will provide three predominantly white, cotton work gloves, which must be opened and approved by the Judge. The Judge or steward shall place the three gloves across the end of the ring in back of the dog and trainer, one in each corner and one in the center, about 3 feet from the end and/or side of the ring. There shall be no table or chair at this end of the ring.

***Directed Retrieve—continued***

The Judge will give the order “One,” “Two,” or “Three.” The trainer then must give the command to Heel and turn in place with his dog to face the designated glove. The dog should sit in heel position facing the designated glove. The trainer may not touch the dog to get it in position. He then gives his dog the direction to the designated glove with a single motion of his left hand and arm along the right side of the dog, and gives the command to retrieve simultaneously with or immediately after giving direction. The dog shall go directly to the

glove at a brisk pace and retrieve it without unnecessary mouthing or playing with it, completing the exercise as in Retrieve on the Flat.

The exercise shall consist of a single retrieve, but the Judge shall designate different glove positions for successive dogs.

**Long Sit (3 minutes out of sight) and Long Down (5 minutes out of sight)**

These exercises shall be performed as in the Open class.

# Open Challenge Lesson Plans

<i><b>Exercise</b></i>	<i><b>Page</b></i>
Signal Heeling .....	3
Signal Stand .....	4
Signal Down .....	4
Signal Sit .....	5
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## Signal Exercise

**Before Beginning:** Dog must have a good foundation in Pre-Novice and Novice Lesson Plans, respond immediately to verbal command on all exercises, and be attentive to trainer.

**Signal Exercise:** All signals are broken into 3 steps: **Automatic Correction, Voice and Signal, and Signal Only.** Each signal is trained separately, practiced in random situations, and combined as a Formal Exercise only when the dog responds reliably to **signal only** on each exercise.

**Signals:** All signals are a **continuous, quick, clear** motion with the arm returning **immediately** to trainer's side.

**Praise:** While teaching signals, **praise enthusiastically throughout entire exercise.** When dog is reliable, **occasionally** eliminate praise until end of exercise.

**Attention:** **Do not wait** for dog's attention before giving signal! If dog misses or responds slowly to a signal, practice **Review** and **Step 1 of that signal.** If dog is inattentive, practice attention exercises from Pre-Novice and Novice Lesson Plans.

**Off-Lead:** On all signals, when dog is reliable on Step 3, **signal only,** practice Steps 2 and 3 off-lead. On Stand-Stay, Down, Sit, and Recall, practice on check-line, then off-lead; gradually

increase distance to 40 feet. At first mistake, attach lead, **praise,** practice **Review** and **all steps** of that signal. Remove lead, **praise,** repeat off-lead.

## Signal Heeling

**Review:** Practice all Heeling and Heel Position Exercises, Pre-Novice and Novice Lesson Plans, with emphasis on starts.

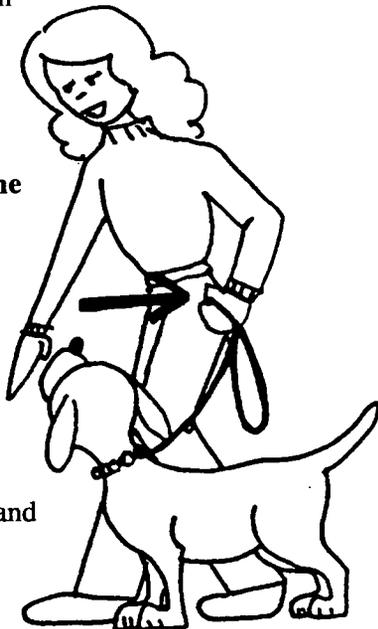
1. **Automatic Correction:** Dog on-lead, sitting in heel position. Lead in **right** hand, **left** hand on **slack portion** of lead. Command "**Heel,**" simultaneously **pop forward** with **left** hand, step off with **left** foot, **praise;** continue heeling, begin again. Sometimes take **left** hand off lead, **simultaneously** command "**Heel,**" give signal by moving **left** hand in same motion as pop, **pop forward with right hand,** step off with **left** foot, **praise;** continue heeling, begin again.
2. **Voice and Signal:** Dog on-lead, sitting in heel position. Lead in **right** hand, **left** hand off lead. Command "**Heel,**" give signal by moving **left** hand in same motion as pop, step forward with **left** foot, **praise;** continue heeling, begin again.
3. **Signal Only:** Dog on-lead, sitting in heel position. Practice heeling, using signal only and lots of praise.

## Signal Stand

**Review:** Practice Sit for Examination, Stand for Examination, and Attention Exercises, Pre-Novice and Novice Lesson Plans.

**Important:** The stand signal comes before trainer's feet come together!

**Exercise Ending:** Dog standing in heel position, vary exercise ending. Sometimes give "OK" release, **praise**; sometimes command "Stay," examine dog; sometimes command "Heel," begin again; sometimes practice **Stand-Stay**.



**Stand-Stay:** Dog standing in heel position, command "Stay" as left hand, palm towards dog, fingers pointing down, gives stay signal in front of dog's nose. Step out with right foot, take two small steps forward, turn to face dog, command "Watch Me." Return to heel position, give "OK" release, **praise**. Gradually eliminate verbal "Stay" command. Practice on-lead and on check-line, gradually increasing distance.

1. **Automatic Correction:** Heel with lead in left hand. Dog in perfect heel position, prepare to stop. **Before trainer's feet come together, simultaneously** command "Stand," right hand (with thumb on top) holds dog's muzzle, **pop back** and place left hand in front of dog's right rear leg to block forward motion. Trainer stops, dog stands in heel position, **praise**. Practice stand after right, left, and about turns. Stay at this step until dog stands without assistance.

2. **Voice and Signal:** Heel with lead in left hand. Dog in perfect heel position, prepare to stop. **Before trainer's feet come together, right hand, without touching dog, comes in front of dog's nose for signal, command "Stand," pop back with left hand, praise.** Trainer stops, dog stands in heel position, **praise**. When dog stops and stands in heel position on trainer's signal, eliminate pop.
3. **Signal Only:** Heel with lead in left hand. Practice stand, using signal only and lots of praise.

## Signal Down

**Review:** Practice Moving-Drop, Graduate Novice Lesson Plans.

**Exercise Ending:** Dog in down position, vary exercise ending. Sometimes give "OK" release, **praise**; sometimes command "Stay," leave dog, return to heel position, give "OK" release, **praise**; sometimes combine **Down and Sit Signal exercises**.

**Increase Distance:** Practice Steps 2 and 3 on-lead, then on check-line, gradually increasing distance.

1. **Automatic Correction:** Dog on Sit- or Stand-Stay, trainer two steps in front, facing dog. Lead in left hand, **no slack**. **Simultaneously** command "Down," bring right arm straight up for signal, step towards dog with right foot to block forward motion, **pop down with left hand, praise**. Dog downs, **praise**.
2. **Voice and Signal:** Dog on Sit- or Stand-Stay, trainer two steps in front, facing dog. Lead in left hand, **no slack**. Command "Down," bring right arm straight up for signal, step towards dog with right foot (first few times), **praise**. Dog downs, **praise**. Gradually increase distance to end of lead before giving command.
3. **Signal Only:** Dog on Sit- or Stand-Stay; practice down using signal only and lots of praise.

## Signal Sit

**Review:** Practice Random Sit Exercise, Novice Lesson Plans.

**Exercise Ending:** Dog in sit position, vary exercise ending. Sometimes give “OK” release, **praise**; sometimes command “Stay,” leave dog, return to heel position, give “OK” release, **praise**; sometimes **combine Down and Sit signal exercises**.

**Increase Distance:** Practice Steps 2 and 3 on-lead, then on check-line, gradually increasing distance.

1. **Automatic Correction:** Dog in down position, trainer two steps in front, facing dog. Both hands on lead, **no slack**. **Simultaneously** command “Sit,” **pop straight up** as left foot steps between dog’s front feet to block forward motion, **praise**. Dog sits, **praise**.
2. **Voice and Signal:** Dog in down position, trainer two steps in front, facing dog. Lead in **right** hand, **left** hand off lead. Command “Sit,” give signal by moving **left** hand in same upward motion as pop, step between dog’s front feet (first few times), **praise**. Gradually increase distance to end of lead before giving command.
3. **Signal Only:** Dog on down-stay, practice sit using signal only and lots of praise.

## Signal Recall

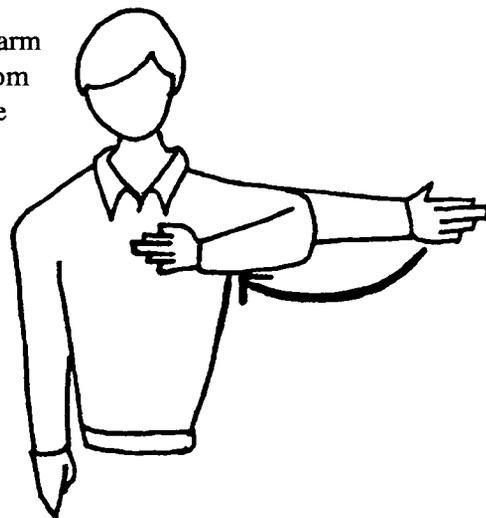
**Review:** Practice Recall Exercises, Novice Lesson Plans.

**Exercise Ending:** Dog coming quickly towards trainer, vary exercise ending. Sometimes turn, run away praising, give “OK” release, **praise**; sometimes charge backward **praising**, then do Formal Front; sometimes stand still, do Formal Front and Finish; sometimes charge backward praising, give “OK” release, kneel on one knee, throw arms out, **praise**.

**Increase Distance:** Practice all steps on-lead, then on check-line, gradually increasing distance.

1. **Automatic Correction:** Dog on Sit-Stay, trainer end of lead, facing dog. Lead in **left** hand. **Simultaneously** command “Come,” **pop towards you**,

give signal by moving **right** arm directly out from shoulder, make quick motion towards chest, **charge backward** **praising**.



2. **Voice and Signal:** Dog on Sit-Stay, practice recall using voice and signal and lots of praise.
3. **Signal Only:** Dog on Sit-Stay, practice recall using signal only and lots of praise.

## Signal Finish

**Review:** Practice Flip and Round Finish Exercises, Novice Lesson Plans.

1. **Automatic Correction:** Practice Flip and Round Finish, Steps 1 through 3, Novice Lesson Plans.
2. **Voice and Signal:** Practice Flip and Round Finish, Step 4, Novice Lesson Plan, using **command and signal**. Give signal away from your body in direction of finish. **Right** hand for Round Finish, **left** hand for Flip Finish.
3. **Signal Only:** Practice Finish Exercises, using signal only and lots of praise.

## Signal Exercise—Combine Signals In Formal Exercise

**Review:** Practice all Signal Exercises. Before combining signals, dog **must** respond **quickly** to **signal only** on all exercises.

**Exercise Sequence:** Heel—Stand—Stay—Down—Sit—Come—Finish

**Formal Exercise:** Dog sitting in heel position, do Signal Heeling with left turn, right turn, about-turn, halt, slow, normal, and fast in any sequence. After a turn, Signal Stand, give Stay Signal, walk straight away, turn to face dog. Signal Down, Sit, Come, Finish.

**Off-Lead:** Practice Steps 2 and 3 on-lead, on check-line, and off-lead, gradually increasing distance to 40 feet.

1. **Automatic Correction:** Dog on-lead, sitting in heel position. Practice **Formal Exercise** using voice command, signal, **automatic correction**, and **praise**.
2. **Voice and Signal:** Dog sitting in heel position, practice **Formal Exercise** using voice command, signal, and **enthusiastic praise**. **Critically analyze dog's performance; isolate problem, work separately.**
3. **Signal Only:** Practice **Formal Exercise** using signal only and lots of praise.

## Directed Retrieve

**Before Beginning:** Dog **must** be reliable on Dumbbell—Retrieve on the Flat and Heel Position Exercises.

**Equipment:** Three predominantly white, cotton work gloves.

**Formal Exercise Position:** Trainer stands mid-way between and in line with the High Jump and Bar Jump, with dog sitting in heel position. Trainer and dog face away from the gloves.

**Formal Glove Position:** Gloves #1, #2, and #3, from left to right, are placed behind the trainer/dog team, 10 to 15 feet apart, with the center glove approximately 22 feet from **Formal Exercise Position**.

**Turn in Place:** Team must turn in place to face designated glove; dog must maintain heel position. To make it easier for the dog, **pivot right** to face #1 or #2 glove, **pivot left** to face #3 glove.

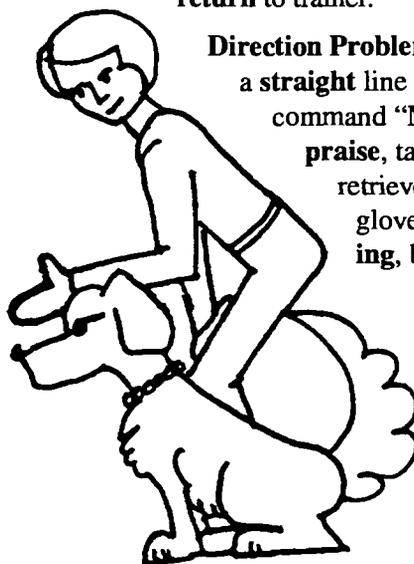
**Line:** Teach dog to run a straight line. Dog sitting in heel position, hold **left** arm bent at elbow with fingers pointing **straight** out to indicate direction, by **right** side of dog's head.

**Mark:** An extra training command meaning "**Look where I'm pointing.**"

**Retrieve Problem:** Any time dog goes out slowly, returns slowly, or doesn't pick up glove, practice **Dumbbell—Retrieve on the Flat, Open Lesson Plans**. Insist on a **quick grab** at glove and a **fast return** to trainer.

**Direction Problem:** Any time dog doesn't run a **straight** line in the indicated direction, command "**No,**" dog stops, go to dog, **praise**, take to correct glove, give retrieve correction, dog **grabs** glove, **charge backward praising**, begin again.

**Praise:** Sometimes **charge backward praising** as dog retrieves; sometimes kneel on one knee, throw arms out, **praise**; sometimes **do Formal Front and Finish**.



1. **Informal Glove Retrieve:** Practice Dumbbell—Retrieve on the Flat, Open Lesson Plans, using glove. Occasionally use **“line and mark”** and **send dog while glove is in mid-air**.
2. **Stationary Retrieve—22 Feet:** Dog on Sit-Stay, place glove 10 feet in front, return to heel position. Turn dog away from glove, **pivot back** to face glove, **“line and mark,”** send dog. **Gradually** increase distance to 22 feet.
3. **Angle Retrieve—Gloves #1 and #3:** Dog sitting in heel position, throw (or place) gloves #1 and #3 in **formal glove position**, 22 feet from dog. Pivot to last glove thrown (or placed), **“line and mark,”** send dog. Pivot to other glove, **“line and mark,”** send dog.
4. **“No—Leave It”:** Dog sitting in heel position, throw (or place) gloves in #1 and #3 **formal glove position**, 22 feet from dog. Pivot to last glove thrown (or placed), **“line and mark,”** command **“No—Leave it.”** Pivot to other glove, **“line and mark,”** send dog. Pivot back to first glove, **“line and mark,”** send dog.
5. **Team’s Back to Gloves:** Dog on Sit-Stay, place gloves #1 and #3 in **formal glove position**, 22 feet **behind** dog. Pivot to #1 glove, **“line and mark,”** command **“No—Leave it,”** pivot back. Pivot to #3 glove, **“line and mark,”** command **“No—Leave it,”** pivot back. Pivot to #1 glove, **“line and mark,”** send dog. Pivot to #3 glove, **“line and mark,”** send dog. Vary order of retrieve.
6. **Gloves in Formal Exercise Position—Eliminate “Mark” Command:** Team in **formal exercise position**, all gloves in place. Pivot to #2 glove, **“line,”** command **“No—Leave it,”** pivot back. Pivot to #1 glove, **“line,”** send dog. Reposition #1 glove. Repeat entire sequence, alternating **“No—Leave it”** with retrieve on **all gloves**.
7. **Formal Exercise:** Team in **formal exercise position**, all gloves in place. **Turn in place** to face a glove, **“line,”** send dog. Dog delivers to come position, **finish, praise**.

## 4 H Dog Obedience Score Sheet Open Challenge Class

Contestant's Number \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Division \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Show \_\_\_\_\_ Judge \_\_\_\_\_ Height at withers \_\_\_\_\_ Jumps \_\_\_\_\_

Exercise & Commands/Signals*	NON QUALIFYING (ZERO)		QUALIFYING		Maximum Points	Points Off	NET SCORE
			SUBSTANTIAL	MINOR			
<b>SIGNAL EXERCISE</b> Forward, Halt, Right turn, Left turn, About turn, Slow, Normal, Fast Stand, Leave, Down, Sit, Come Finish Exercise finished	<input type="checkbox"/> Any audible command or signal to: <input type="checkbox"/> Fails 1st signal to: <input type="checkbox"/> Unmanageable <input type="checkbox"/> Handler continually adapts pace to dog <input type="checkbox"/> Moved from position <input type="checkbox"/> Sat out of reach <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipated	<input type="checkbox"/> Stand <input type="checkbox"/> Drop <input type="checkbox"/> Sit <input type="checkbox"/> Stay <input type="checkbox"/> Come	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra signal to Heel Lacks <i>brisk</i> pace ..... <input type="checkbox"/> No change of pace <input type="checkbox"/> Slow <input type="checkbox"/> Fast <input type="checkbox"/> Lagging <input type="checkbox"/> Sniffing ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Improper heel position ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Heeling wide <input type="checkbox"/> Turns <input type="checkbox"/> Abouts ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Forging <input type="checkbox"/> Crowding handler ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Walks forward on: <input type="checkbox"/> Stand <input type="checkbox"/> Drop <input type="checkbox"/> Sit <input type="checkbox"/> Slow Stand <input type="checkbox"/> Drop <input type="checkbox"/> Come <input type="checkbox"/> Sit <input type="checkbox"/> No sit in front <input type="checkbox"/> No sit <input type="checkbox"/> No finish <input type="checkbox"/> Poor finish <input type="checkbox"/> Holding signals ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Delay in following Jds. orders ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Touched Handler <input type="checkbox"/> Sat between feet <input type="checkbox"/> Handler error .....		<b>40</b>		
<b>DROP ON RECALL</b> Leave your dog Call your dog Down your dog (Signal only) Call your dog Finish Exercise finished	Does not come on first command or signal ..... Does not drop on first command or signal .....	Extra com. or sig. to stay <i>after</i> handler leaves ..... Moved from place left ..... Anticipated: Recall ..... Drop ..... Come in ..... Sat out of reach ...	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow response to Drop <input type="checkbox"/> Slow response to the Come <input type="checkbox"/> Extra command to Stay before leaving <input type="checkbox"/> Stood or lay down Slow sit <input type="checkbox"/> Extra command to Finish Poor sit <input type="checkbox"/> No sit in front Poor finish <input type="checkbox"/> No finish Touched handler <input type="checkbox"/> Sat between feet <input type="checkbox"/> Handler error .....		<b>30</b>		
<b>RETRIEVE OVER HIGH JUMP</b> Throw it Send your dog Take it Finish Exercise finished	Uses jump for aid Fails to go out on first command or signal ..... Fails to jump going and returning ..... Fails to retrieve ....	Goes before command or signal ..... Jumps only one direction ..... Sat out of reach ... Extra command or signal .....	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra command to Finish <input type="checkbox"/> Slow <input type="checkbox"/> Going <input type="checkbox"/> Returning <input type="checkbox"/> Picking up <input type="checkbox"/> Mouthing or Playing ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Handler error ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Dropping dumbbell Poor sit <input type="checkbox"/> Poor delivery Slow sit <input type="checkbox"/> Touching jump going over Poor finish <input type="checkbox"/> No sit in front Touched handler <input type="checkbox"/> No finish Sat between feet		<b>30</b>		
<b>DIRECTED RETRIEVE</b> Send your dog (1, 2, or 3) Take it Finish Exercise finished	Does Not: Go out on command ..... Go directly to glove ..... Retrieve right article ..... Fails to retrieve ....	Anticipated ..... Sat out of reach ... No prompt return Positioning dog after turning .....	<input type="checkbox"/> Handler over-tums <input type="checkbox"/> Touches dog ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive signals <input type="checkbox"/> Motion ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Slow <input type="checkbox"/> Going <input type="checkbox"/> Returning <input type="checkbox"/> Picking up <input type="checkbox"/> Mouthing or playing <input type="checkbox"/> Dropping glove <input type="checkbox"/> Poor release <input type="checkbox"/> Extra command or sig. to finish <input type="checkbox"/> No sit <input type="checkbox"/> No finish <input type="checkbox"/> Slow sits <input type="checkbox"/> Poor sits ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Poor finish ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Touching handler ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Sat between feet ..... <input type="checkbox"/> Handler error .....		<b>40</b>		
<b>MAX. SUB-TOTAL</b>					<b>140</b>		
<b>LONG SIT (3 minutes)</b> Handler out of sight Sit your dogs Leave your dogs Return to your dogs Exercise finished	Did not remain in place ..... Goes to another dog .....	Repeated barking or whining ..... Stood or lay down before handler returned to heel position .....	<input type="checkbox"/> Rough treatment by handler <input type="checkbox"/> Resistance of dog to sit <input type="checkbox"/> Moves minor distance <input type="checkbox"/> Minor bark or whine <input type="checkbox"/> Handler error ..... Changes position <i>after</i> return to Heel		<b>30</b>		
<b>LONG DOWN (5 minutes)</b> Handler out of sight Down your dogs Leave your dogs Return to your dogs Exercise finished	Did not remain in place ..... Goes to another dog .....	Repeated barking or whining ..... Sat or stood before handler returned to heel position .....	<input type="checkbox"/> Rough treatment by handler <input type="checkbox"/> Resistance of dog to down <input type="checkbox"/> Moves minor distance <input type="checkbox"/> Minor bark or whine <input type="checkbox"/> Handler touches dog into Down <input type="checkbox"/> Handler error ..... Changes position <i>after</i> return to Heel		<b>30</b>		
<b>MAX. POINTS</b>					<b>200</b>		
Dog's lack of willingness or enjoyment of work <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of smoothness and naturalness by the handler <input type="checkbox"/> Less Penalty for Unusual Behavior H. Disciplining <input type="checkbox"/> Shows fear <input type="checkbox"/> Fouling ring <input type="checkbox"/> Excused <input type="checkbox"/>							

**TOTAL NET SCORE**

RIBBON AWARDS (Dogs will be placed in Blue, Red, and White award groups at the Judge's discretion. No minimum score is required to place in any award group.)



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Brad Jeffreys, Extension 4-H youth development specialist,  
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