

## 11 Commands Every Dog Should Know

Dogs have an amazing capacity to learn commands. Highly trained show, working, and service dogs often know dozens of commands, including words, sounds, and signals.

Most pet dogs are taught with vocal commands, but hand signals or non-vocal sounds are also effective. Whatever method you choose, most dogs only need to know 11 simple commands to get along happily with you and the rest of the world.

### Wait

Some dogs have a way of pushing their way to the front of the line when they want to go through doors or down narrow hallways. Telling them "wait" lets them know they're not supposed to go until you tell them to.

### Sit

This is one of the easiest commands to teach, and also one of the most useful. Dogs who know how to sit are less likely to be jumping on you or anyone else, fighting with other dogs, or dragging you across the street at a red light.

### Down

Like "sit," the "down" command is an essential part of doggy etiquette. It's also more comfortable than a sitting position when your dog is going to be hanging out for more than a minute or two.

### Stay

Often paired with "sit" or "down," the "stay" command tells dogs to relax, stay still for a while. It's not the easiest command for many dogs to learn because they'd rather be moving around than staying still.

### Heel

Unless you live in the country and your dog never sees a busy road or walks on a leash, he has to understand this command. "Heel," or a variation such as "let's go," simply means that your dog will walk by your left side without lagging behind or lunging ahead. It's especially important for large or strong dogs to understand "heel" because otherwise their relentless tugging on the leash will make going for walks seem too much like work.

### Come

This is a crucial command in your dog's repertoire. Dogs who understand "come" will turn on a dime and head back to you as soon as you say it. It's a command you can use to keep them from running into the street or knocking into people in the park. It will tell them to come back when they'd just as soon keep running.

### Stand

This command tells your dog to quit fidgeting and be still. It's useful for when you're grooming him, bathing him, checking him over, or drying him off on a wet day.

### Off

Rare is the dog that doesn't prefer an expensive sofa or a goose-down comforter to his own bed. Dogs that understand "off" won't necessarily stay off the furniture, but at least they'll get off quickly when they know the command. "Off" also tells them not to jump up on you or other people.

### Okay

Dogs love this command. "Okay" means they've done a good job. It means you're done giving orders and they can just act silly for a while. It may even mean it's time for dinner.

### Out

Dogs know a good thing when they see it (and taste it), and getting them to relinquish such delicacies as a bone from the trash or your leather shoes can be a challenge when they haven't properly learned "out." This command means they should drop whatever it is that's in their mouth. They won't necessarily like it, but they'll do it as long as you start teaching them "out" when they're young.

### Bed

This command, or a variation such as "crate," tells your dog that it's time to head for his sleeping place. It's useful not only at bedtime, but also when you want him to quiet down for a while.