

WHERE GOOD MANNERS BEGIN

*I*f your dog is ill-mannered, I'm afraid you have only yourself to blame. Although he may be blissfully unaware how his behavior reflects upon his species, his behavior also reflects upon you. We humans are ultimately responsible for canine etiquette. After all, good manners begin at home. Happily, even the most ill-mannered dog usually wants to please his humans. All it takes is a little time.

Yes, I realize that you are busy, but good manners are also a practical choice. Will your dog jump up and startle visitors or learn to sit attentively near the door? Will you teach your dog to expect food only in a bowl or inadvertently reward counter-cruising by tossing tidbits from the table? Will you watch helplessly as your home furnishings gradually disintegrate or direct your dog toward acceptable chew toys? Whether it is measured

by enjoyment or economics, dog etiquette is well worth the effort. The time you spend now with your puppy or dog will instill a lifetime's worth of social graces.

We witness the value of dog etiquette anytime we enjoy the company of someone who has civilized her dog. This harmonious team of dog and owner communes comfortably on every level. How can you share in this synchronicity? Just consider life from your dog's perspective!

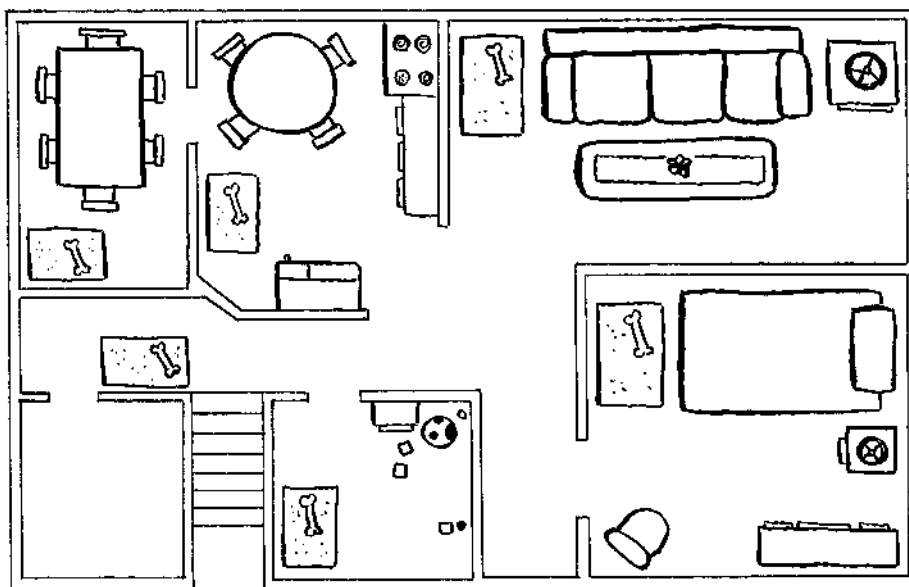
Remember, dear reader, that an ill-mannered dog is a confused dog. And that confusion is almost always caused by mixed signals—the most confusing of which is spoken language. At first, your dog understands English as well as the average American comprehends Urdu, which is to say not at all. Merely repeating your displeasure in a loud, angry tone does nothing to bridge this communication gap.

Fortunately, dogs *do* understand attention—especially winning notice from the top dog in the pack, which, in your household, I pray, is *you*. Again, consider the dog's perspective: No matter what behavior a dog displays upon arrival in a strange new home, he is automatically showered with attention and affection. A dog can only conclude that this love fest is the new norm. Then, just as he has developed a rather swelled head, the new owners randomly “bark” their displeasure in that strange language of theirs. To the dog, this makes no sense!

Strive to remember that dogs crave our attention, whether positive or negative. In fact, they rarely distinguish between the two. The key to dog etiquette is how you bestow your attention. With practice, you will learn to reward only your dog's good manners with your attention and interaction. Almost without fail, he will repeat that good behavior. This fundamental concept bears repeating, and so I shall repeat it—frequently throughout this guide.

Your dog is a social creature. By his very nature, he will want to join you whenever possible. But if he races freely about your home, odds are you have inadvertently conditioned this mischief by responding to it. Attention strikes again! To correct this problem, you will need to redirect his jaunts by placing him on a leash. After all, he has no clue how to manage his freedom until you guide him. The leash will not merely restrain your dog, but also calm him by imparting a reassuring sense of order.

Your next step in creating a civilized home life is to identify the rooms in which your dog is welcome. In each of these rooms, establish a “welcome zone”—someplace easy to find but out of the flow of traffic, such as in a comfy corner or against a wall. Spruce up each zone with a mat or bedding, along with a favorite chew to occupy idle time.



Bring your dog along with you whether you are watching television, resting, or working. As you enter each room, send him to his designated area with a consistent phrase, such as "Settle." Of course, he still doesn't understand your language, but over time, repetition will link the sound to the action in your dog's mind. Do make sure that your dog has been fed, has exercised, and has pottied before expecting him to sit still.

Spending this time together provides conditioning opportunities not to be missed. Your dog is learning to follow your lead, contain his impulses around your home, and adjust to your rhythm. His reward? The pleasure of your company.

Note: A floor mat can be placed on furniture, specifying exactly which cushion is his.





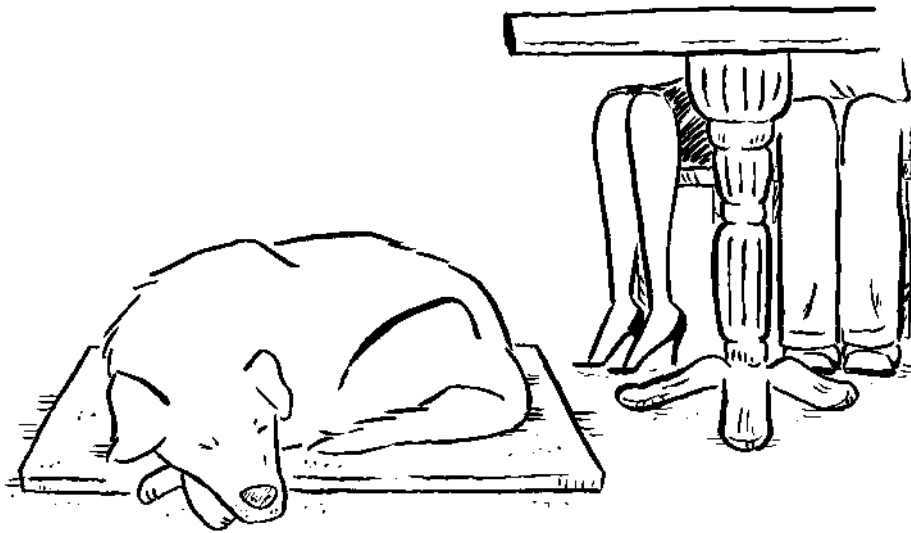
Miss Sarah Says



How would you like to be confined to a cluttered space with nowhere to relax? Wouldn't you rather be welcomed into a room with a comfortable chair and an activity to occupy your time? Your dog is no different.

1. Help your dog recognize his own areas in each room, just as you would for a visitor or a child.
2. Install comfortable bedding in a predetermined space in each room that you share.
3. Spruce up this space with a favorite chew or toy.
4. To reinforce the desired behavior, send your dog to his place when you enter the room together, saying "Settle" and then "Stay" once he is in his area.
5. If an activity raises your dog's curiosity, secure him to an immovable object, such as a piece of furniture, with a 3-foot leash to discourage his wanderings.

If he throws a tantrum, consider a head collar, a humane and safe way to condition calmness. Head collars can be purchased at most pet stores; ask a sales associate to help you select one that is appropriate for your dog.



Your dog may take days or weeks to cooperate. Teaching a dog to keep still in one location is like teaching a child to sit quietly at the dinner table: It takes practice and patience, but it will come together. Make sure that you offer an appropriate chew toy to help your dog displace his energies or anxiety.

Of course, you must set realistic expectations. A puppy's attention span is nearly nil. A puppy under 6 months of age can be expected to occupy himself for only fifteen minutes at a time, but that duration will gradually increase. Concentration improves with age and maturity.

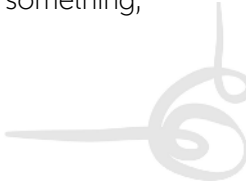
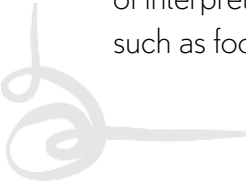


Miss Sarah Says

If you are using this book to help civilize a new puppy, you are in an excellent position. He will learn to behave properly within his first year of life. Good behavior makes everyone happy—especially your puppy.

As always, my best advice for you is this: Your attention is the most effective reward. Addressing your puppy or dog when he is exhibiting uncivilized manners will only confuse him. Your animation and frustration will be misunderstood as confrontational play, and your puppy will likely repeat any behavior that gleans a response. In the same vein, if you react to your dog when he is sitting calmly on his bed or playing with a toy, your attention will reinforce this good behavior. His repeat performance will be guaranteed—whether it is bad or good.

Note: Do not attempt to secure your puppy on leash until he is at least 12 weeks of age and has shown that he will accept the leash. Also be mindful of interpreting his signals—puppies often fidget when they need something, such as food, water, or potty time.





In the beginning, your behavior with your dog may be inconsistent. This is perfectly normal. After all, you are learning, too. Try to observe your own mistakes and learn from them. Be mindful of how your actions affect your dog. Forgive your dog's transgressions, and I shall forgive you yours.

A dog who displays the social graces, who has learned to sit still and occupy himself while the humans around him are busy, is a fine ambassador for his species. This is a dog you can brag about—a source of pride who is soon promoted from mere pet to full-fledged family member. This is my wish for each and every dog, especially yours.