



Evaluating the Dog

During the ATTS temperament evaluation every dog is scored at each substation by a chief tester, two testers and up to three apprentice testers. The evaluators are spread out over the field to observe the dog from different angles. When a dog has completed the test, the chief tester leads the other testers in reviewing the scoring, encourages questions and offers clear answers and detailed explanations. Unless specifically invited by the chief tester, station workers are not a part of this discussion.

The chief tester and the two testers determine the dog's final score. The pass/fail verdict is reached unanimously by all three or by consensus of two – either the chief tester and one tester or the two testers.

In evaluating the reactions of the dog to the various stimuli of the Temperament Test, many factors may be taken into consideration. Several of these factors are specified by the owner/handler on the entry form and are reviewed by the chief tester before each dog begins the test. The factors are:

- The breed of the dog (hereditary purpose)
- The training the dog has received
- The dog's age
- The dog's gender
- Whether it has been spayed or neutered
- The dog's physical health (dog in season)
- Whether it is a house dog or kennel dog

Additional factors which may influence a dog's performance are:

- Weather conditions
- Field conditions
- External influences (spectators, traffic, etc. too close to testing area)
- Other environmental factors

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Handler mannerism could influence a dog's reaction and should also be taken into consideration. (This is one reason for all handlers to attend a walk-through prior to taking a dog through the temperament test.)

The following table summarizes the evaluation system. The average dog for any breed, taking the above factors into consideration, is scored as a "5." More positive reactions are scored higher, while negative responses are scored lower. A "No Response" is scored as such.

Testers Guide to Evaluating Temperament Test Responses

Score	Rating	Subtests	
		1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	3, 5
10	Superior	Outstanding Reactions	Immediate Investigation
9 8 7	Above Average	Dog Shows Positive Exceptional Initiative	Dog initiates Investigation without Encouragement
6 5 4	Average	Positive Response; Immediate Recovery from any Negative Reaction	No Encouragement or Mild Encouragement is required
NR	No Reaction	Dog ignores Stimulus No Reaction	No Investigative Response; Dog shows NO Fear
3 2 1	Below Average	Dog Shows Negative Reactions; Slow to Recover	Strong Encouragement is required for dog to Investigate
0	Failure	Unprovoked Aggression Strong Avoidance Panic – No Recovery	

Generally, the most desirable responses fall in the average range.

The ATTS temperament test consists of ten subtests divided into five subcategories:

I. Behavior Toward Strangers

Objective: To measure the dog's reaction to strangers in a non-threatening situation.

Subtest 1 - Neutral stranger

A stranger to the dog approaches the handler, shakes hands with the handler and engages the handler in a brief conversation, ignoring the dog.

The purpose of this subtest is to evaluate the dog's reaction to passive socialization and the dog's protective instinct.

Subtest 2 - Friendly stranger

A stranger to the dog approaches happily and briskly, is very friendly to the dog and pets the dog.

The purpose of this subtest is to evaluate the dog's active social skills.

II. Reaction to Auditory Stimuli

Objective: To measure the dog's reaction to auditory stimuli and the dog's investigative behavior.

Subtest 3 – Hidden Noise

The handler/dog team approaches a hidden assistant who rattles a metal bucket filled with rocks and sets this bucket in the path of the team. The handler may encourage the dog to investigate the bucket only when asked to do so. The handler's focus must be on the bucket, not the dog.

The purpose of this subtest is to test alertness and curiosity.

Subtest 4 – Gunshots

The handler stops at a designated marker with his/her back toward a well hidden assistant. The assistant fires three shots using a .22 cal. starter pistol (SHOT-PAUSE-SHOT-SHOT).

The purpose of this subtest is to measure the dog's recovery response to a sudden noise.

III. Reaction to Visual Stimulus

Objective: To measure the dog's reactions to a sudden visual stimulus.

Subtest 5 – Umbrella

The handler/dog team approaches an assistant sitting in a chair holding a closed umbrella parallel to the ground at a 90 degree angle to the approaching team. When the dog is five feet from the assistant, the umbrella is opened. The handler may encourage the dog to investigate the umbrella only when asked to do so. The handler's focus must be on the umbrella, not the dog.

The purpose of this subtest is to measure the dog's startle-recovery response to a sudden visual stimulus and to measure its investigative behavior.

IV. Reaction to Tactile Stimuli

Objective: To measure the dog's reaction to unusual footing.

Subtest 6 – Plastic Footing

Both the handler and the dog walk the entire length of a 15-foot by 6-foot clear plastic strip.

Subtest 7 – Wire Footing

Only the dog will walk the entire length of a 12-foot by 3-foot unfolded exercise pen.

The purpose of these subtests is to measure the dog's sensitivity to unusual footing, its ability to recover from the fear of unusual footing and to measure its investigative behavior to the unusual footing.

V. Self-protective/Aggressive Reaction

Objective: These tests collectively evaluate the dog's capacity to recognize an unusual situation, its threshold to provocation, its protective instincts, and its propensity to realize when that situation becomes a threat.

Subtest 8 – Non-Threatening

The handler/dog team stops at the designated marker. A weirdly-dressed stranger crosses the path 38 feet in front of the team.

The purpose of this test is to test the dog's alertness to an unusual situation.

Subtest 9 - Threatening

The weird stranger advances 10 feet toward the stationary handler in a threatening manner.

The purpose of this subtest is to evaluate the dog's ability to recognize when an unusual situation turns into provocation.

Subtest 10 - Aggression

The weird stranger advances within 18 feet of the stationary handler in an aggressive manner.

The purpose of this subtest is to evaluate the dog's protective instincts.

At the conclusion of this subtest, the handler will receive a critique about the dog's performance.

A SOUND MIND IN A SOUND BODY