



## When Your Dog Can't Stop Barking in Class

Some dogs get excited in class and bark, a lot. There are many reasons dogs bark, as a rule, including:

- To get something, like your attention;
- To avoid something, like your picking up something they have;
- To elicit play from other dogs;
- To try and make other dogs (or people) go away.
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Though barking is an accepted form of communication (“*Someone is at the door!?*”), in a classroom setting, it is disruptive to learning, of the barker, and to the other canine and human students.

Your instructor gave you this handout to try and help decrease your dog’s barking in class. If, after trying these techniques, your dog still cannot adjust to the classroom setting without being a disruptive barker, you may be converted to private instruction for the remainder of the curriculum. This is not a failure! It is simply best for you, your dog, and our other students.

### **If Your Dog Will Bark in Class:**

*Remember, our common goal is teaching you how to train your dog the behaviors in our curriculum!*

1. Barking is better prevented when possible. This is because if the dog barks, you say “Quiet,” and give them a treat, you are rewarding both “Bark-Quiet,” at the same time.

So, *bring to class:*

- Your dog’s preferred rewards (make sure you do the “Paired-Choice Preference Assessment”), more than you think they will consume in class, in pea-sized pieces. A silicone squeeze bottle filled with peanut butter or lite cream cheese (or canned dog food) is a good option for licking! *Bring these to each and every class.*



- Something they can safely chew/lick and will not guard, e.g. a bully stick or lick mat;
- A new, inexpensive toy that does not squeak that they might enjoy destroying



2. Reward quiet: It can be hard to hear quiet behavior, but if, from the second you walk into class you start giving your dog a treat every 2-3 seconds, quiet behavior will increase.
3. Instruction vs. “downtime:” When the instructor is speaking, feed your dog a “long” reward, like the lick mat or squeeze bottle. Practice what the instructor is recommending, using lots of treats. When it is not your turn to demonstrate, go back to working with your dog, watching your dog for quiet behavior you can reward.
4. If barking breaks out: It’s okay to ask to be excused for a few minutes; take your dog outside of the classroom and let them sniff around and perhaps do some sits/downs or practice what you are learning in class that day. *Make sure that when you come back in, you start rewarding quiet immediately.*
5. Barrier use: There are rolling partitions in each classroom. These are for dogs who have trouble barking at others in the classroom; not being able to see other dogs can help them to be less stressed. Your instructor may request you and your dog work behind the partition. Please do not be embarrassed! Many dogs work behind the barrier, successfully coming out over the weeks...or not.

Our first and foremost goal is that you and your dog are able to learn the class curriculum. If your instructor determines that your dog is not able to learn in the group class setting, do not be dismayed. They will arrange for you to get the training your dog needs. We are always here to help!

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