

What Color Am I?

Canine Body Language Matching Game



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SUSAN BRIGGS

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What Color Am I? Dog Language Matching Game

Goal: Provide pet care staff a fun method to practice identifying dog body language.

Supplies:

1. Traffic Light Headers to categorize photos (option: mount on Green, Yellow & Red poster board)
2. Dog Photos (cut-out individual 5x7 pictures – laminated is a plus)
3. Optional Parking Lot for photos held as “in between colors of lime & orange” for group discussion

Game Options:

- Easy Version: Lay individual photos all mixed together on a table. Let staff take turns selecting a photo to put in correct color category (green, yellow or red). Have staff explain specific reasons for their color choice (e.g., ear position, facial wrinkles, body posture, etc). See how many of the other staff agree with their choice. Give a point for each correct picture placement. Continue round robin until all photos are placed. Give prizes for most points earned.
- Moderate Version: Assign staff (3 small teams) a traffic signal color. Deal an equal number of photos to each group. To complete their board they can trade photos when each can justify their color by describing the body language reasons. Groups that want the same photo they “steal it” by making the strongest case to the leader in describing the body language. Give prizes to the team that has the most correct photos on their board (tie goes to the quickest finisher). Give prizes to winning staff/team.
- Most Difficult Version: Print 3 sets of photos and traffic signal headers. Have the staff/teams “race” to complete their boards. Winner is staff/team that has quickest time overall; assign 10 second penalty for each incorrect photo placement
- Parking Lot Option: Print the optional “Lime & Orange Parking Lot” headers. Use these to park photos where the body language is mixed and case could be made for two colors. Lime is between green & yellow; orange is between yellow & red. Body language is a continuum and we will see discrepancies between parts of the dog and the signal colors. The parking lot is a great tool for deeper discussion of the challenges of reading dog body language.

Included:


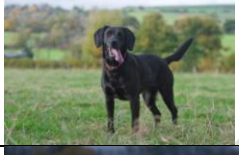




1. 24 Photos : lay-out two per page; print in color, cut out individuals photos and if possible laminate
2. Photo body language answer key: recommended signal color with reasons
3. Traffic signal color headers: print in color to post on wall, poster boards or table sections to designate areas for photos to be placed during the game
4. Resource listing of training tools for teaching staff dog body language

Photo Body Language Answer Key

The goal of this game is to build confidence in staff's understanding of canine body language. Game options provide opportunity to provide specific reasons for interpretation by describing the signals observed in each photo. The answer key includes thoughts on the best answer with specific reasons, however, interpreting dog body language is not a black and white decision. When you are scoring the photo responses do consider if the staff member had appropriate reasons for their answer even if it differs from the answer key. There are several instances when we would like to answer "lime (yellow-green)" or "orange" as arguments can be made for more than one choice. You may decide to use the option for "parking lots" as a way to facilitate those discussions. Extreme differences like green versus red would be considered an incorrect response.

Analyzing photos removes the context and environment surrounding the behavior so none of us are 100% certain of the correct answer. Dogs have not read Off-Leash Dog Play and frequently give mixed signals; again this is an important part of learning dog language and provides great discussion and teachable moments in your pet center.



Photo	Body Language Description
	Balanced posture, neutral ears, wide eyes, relaxed open mouth
	Balanced posture, ears forward, open mouth, tail up
	Balanced relaxed posture, neutral ears & tail, open mouth
	Neutral ear position, wide soft eyes, relaxed open mouth
	Neutral ears, soft eyes, relaxed open mouth
	Ears up, wide soft eyes, relaxed open mouth



