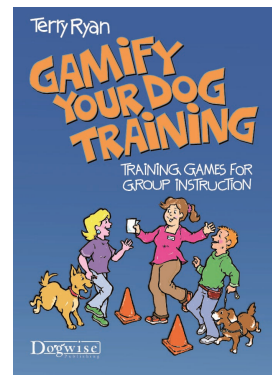


An excerpt from

Gamify Your Dog Training Setting the Stage and Pick a Card

by Terry Ryan, Dogwise Publishing.
800-776-2665, www.dogwise.com

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Both humans and dogs are social animals. We enjoy each other's company. Games can be a natural extension of the good times dogs and people can have together in a group setting. Training classes, neighborhood barbecues, holiday parties and doggy play-dates are all good excuses for people and dogs to play games. Games provide the often under-served aspect of mental and physical exercise for people and dogs.

Gamify or *Gamification* are the buzz words for a popular trend in adult education. Dog training classes fall under adult education even though we seem to be (somewhat wrongly) concentrating on the dogs. Too serious-minded to “play games”? Okay. Just replace the word “game” with the phrase “training exercise” and we will still be on the same page. It works to think of this book as a curriculum development resource—including some strategies for effective instruction—with a heavy dose of games thrown in! For decades I have used games in each level of my training classes to provide opportunities to practice the basic core behaviors through fun. My goal is to create a learning environment of minimal stress and reduce the possibility of inter-student competition at a time best spent on improving personal bests for each individual couple.

(The following is an example of one of the 70+ games presented in the book. It shows how Terry explains each game, step by step.)

Pick a Card

Prerequisites and benefits

Your choice of exercise cards will determine the prerequisites. The game requires calmness and focus during organized chaos. Several couples will perform different behaviors at the same time. It will teach players strategies for politely staying out of each other's way.

Set-up

You'll need a large playing area. Spread the exercise cards face down in the middle of the area. You'll need a timing device.

Description

Set the timer for two minutes. In a group, the couples go into the center and choose a card. They perform that exercise, or, if they prefer, they can put it back face down and pick up a different one. It's important to do the exercise properly! An Assistant Game Leader is watching—and coaching if needed!! The player collects the completed exercise card and goes on to choose another until the time is up.

Game variations

Competitive? The player or team with the most cards when the time is up wins. To make winning more random, write points on the cards and add up the points instead of the number of cards.

Multitask with a larger number of players: Under the supervision of an Assistant Game Leader, half of the couples form the perimeter circle and help their dogs maintain a sit or down while the other half plays the card game in the middle. For every dog that stays, a point can be added to their team's card total. The Game Leader can lead several rounds, but shuffle the deck of cards between rounds.

A coachable moment

As a pregame warm up, have all players perform a couple of exercises together as a group. Training tips can be given at this time.

Terry Ryan is a noted author, trainer and instructor. She has been a leading proponent of effective, force free training methods. She continues to help local clients, yet maintains a busy international workshop schedule. She and her husband Bill, and flock of chickens, live on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State. Terry is a faculty member of the Karen Pryor Academy and the author of *Coaching People to Train Their Dogs* and *The Toolbox for Building a Great Family Dog*.