



Doberman Pinscher Puppy *Personality Test*

The Test Formulation

As an introduction, the Tackleberry Solution's personality test is a modified version of the Volhard Test. To expound, during our work with the Volhard Test, we discovered that it was just designed for any breed in particular and did not tailor to a Doberman's unique traits.

Furthermore, this was compounded by the designated role of the Doberman as a protection, work, or service based canine. Consequently, we made subtle improvements to areas of weakness needed to focus on this unique breed's intelligence and instinct.





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Base Rules

To begin, you will need the caretaker, the observer and the tester. Crucially, the tester needs to be an individual that the Doberman is not familiar with in order to get the most clear results.

For example, during the social attraction test, the puppy will be tested to see if it will come to the tester. The problem arises when the tester doubles as the handler. Of course the puppy is going to go to the one that feeds them. As a result, you influence the results of the test.

Likewise, the observer needs to be familiar with the testing process, is knowledgeable on reading a Doberman's body language and is an impartial party that has no stake in the outcome of the test.

Foundationally, every aspect required for the observer is very critical. One that is not familiar with reading a Doberman's body language, that doesn't understand the test, or that has a financial interest in the outcome will look for the traits they desire and can miss crucial cues to the contrary no matter how willing they are to do judge fairly.



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Secondly, you must ensure that the puppy is well rested and wide awake. This is especially critical if you're testing an entire litter since they tire quickly. Clearly, puppies that are tired are not going to interact as well as they would when fully energized.

As a result, it is best to begin testing first thing in the morning with numerous testers or rests between depending upon the number of puppies needed to gauge. Furthermore, this provides a more streamlined approach to prevent the test from taking too long and wearing out the puppies.

Age of Testing

Markedly, studies have shown that the best day for testing a puppy's personality is exactly at **49 days old**. Any older and you enter into their various fear stages and learned reactions, any younger is just too young.

Critically, this test focuses on the behavioral direction that the puppy is taking. As a result, continued personality assessments and a tailored environment for optimal behavioral growth is ideal for Dobermans scheduled in specialized training or work roles.



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Required Items

Before testing, be sure that you have everything that you need to complete each phase in order and in one session.

*** It is recommended that you fully review the test and what is required so that the process goes more smoothly upon enacting.** You will need:

- At least one tester
- Caretaker
- Observer (takes notes, direct the test, & grade results)
- Filmer (optional for those that want to have video footage for repeat study)
- Dog toy or tug rope
- Towel or deer hide tied to a long string
- Umbrella
- Metal pot and spoon

For the sound and stability test, be sure to use items that the puppy is NOT familiar with. If they've been around umbrellas and are familiar with the loud sound of pots and pans banging together, you will need to come up with a safe replacement stimulus. The goal is to provide something unexpected that the puppy is not familiar with without causing trauma.



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Test must be performed on neutral territory in an unfamiliar environment with limited distractions.

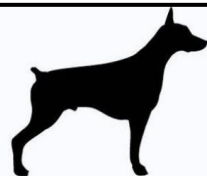
Phase 1: Social Attraction

- Tester sits with their back towards the entrance of the room or space.
- Caretaker enters with the observer, placing the puppy about 4' away from the tester.
- Tester can twist slightly, but should not get up or turn around.
- Tester then calls to the puppy in an attempt to get it to come to them.

Grade results with the following guidelines:

- Came readily, eager to play - A
- Came readily, curious - B
- Came readily, cautious - C
- Came hesitantly, scared - D
- Didn't come at all, looked - D
- Didn't come at all, showed no interest and/or exhibited stress - F

Observer's Notes:



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Phase 2: Following

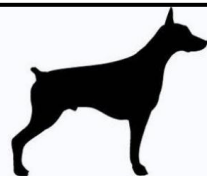
- Tester engages with the puppy and gets their attention
- Tester stands up and slowly walks away, calling the puppy to follow

Grade results with the following guidelines:

- Followed happily, eager to play - A
- Followed happily, curious - B
- Followed happily, cautious - C
- Followed scared - D
- Did not follow, just watched - D
- Did not follow, and turned away - F

*Redo the test if the puppy turned away due to a distraction

Observer's Notes:



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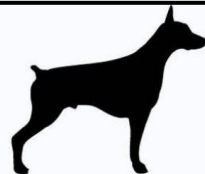
Phase 3: Restraint

- Tester gently puts puppy on its back and softly holds it there for 30 seconds *Release the puppy early if it shows clear distress

Grade results with the following guidelines:

- Struggled fiercely, mouthed hands - A
- Struggled fiercely - B
- Settled, struggled, settled, made some eye contact - C
- Struggled, settled - D
- No struggle - D
- No struggle, showed fear, started shaking - F

Observer's Notes:



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Phase 4: Social Dominance

- Tester sits next to and engages with puppy - gently and calmly petting it from the head to the back.
- Tester continues until the puppy exhibits a reaction that can be graded

Grade results with the following guidelines:

- Squirmed, mouthed, tries to play - A
- Tries to play, cuddle, or lick face - B
- Makes eye contact then looks away, may lick hands - C
- Avoids eye contact - D
- Shows fear or aggression - F

Observer's Notes:



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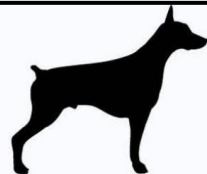
Phase 5: Retrieving

- Tester has a toy (deer hide *ideal*, rope, or ball, etc.)
- Tester engages with the puppy for a moment
- Tester throws the toy 4' or less away

Grade results with the following guidelines:

- Chased object, picked it up and ran away - A
- Chased object, stood over it and did not return - B
- Chased object, picked it up and returned to Tester - C
- Chased object, returned to tester without it - D
- Started to chase, lost interest - D
- Watched object get thrown, did not chase - D
- Showed no interest in object at all - F

Observer's Notes:



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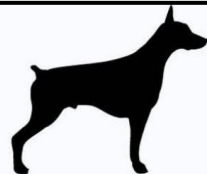
Phase 6: Play Drive

- Caretaker places puppy in the center of the room
- Tester takes a toy, hide, or rag tied to a string and playfully drags it around in front of the puppy about 2' away

Grade results with the following guidelines:

- Pounced on object, tried to tug it away - A
- Pounced on object - B
- Chased or investigated object happily - C
- Watched with curiosity, tail down - D
- Stood behind tester or caretaker for comfort - D
- Showed visible fear of object - F

Observer's Notes:



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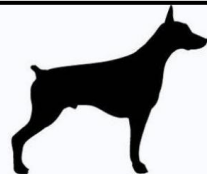
Phase 7: Dominance

- Tester holds puppy facing them at eye level
- Tester makes eye contact with puppy for about 10 seconds

Grade results with the following guidelines:

- Briefly makes eye contact, wants down - A
- Makes eye contact, licks nose - B
- Briefly makes eye contact, looks away - C
- Avoids eye contact - D
- Shows aggression or fear - F

Observer's Notes:



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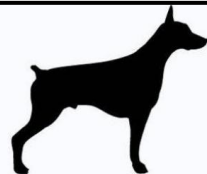
Phase 8: Stability

- Caretaker places puppy in the middle of the room next to standing Tester with an umbrella in their hand
- Tester smoothly, but **not** aggressively opens umbrella in front of puppy and places it near them

Grade results with the following guidelines:

- Runs to umbrella, tries to play with it - A
- Walked to umbrella, curious - B
- Slowly approaches, cautious - C
- Sat and looked but does not get closer - D
- Showed small startle or no interest - D
- Runs away from the umbrella to hide behind caretaker - F

Observer's Notes:



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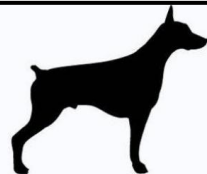
Phase 9: Sound Sensitivity

- Caretaker places puppy in the center of the room
- Tester stands about 5' away with a metal pot and spoon
- Tester bangs pot and spoon together to make a sudden, loud noise

Grade results with the following guidelines:

- Runs towards noise - A
- Walks towards noise - B
- Looked, showed curiosity - C
- Slightly startles and looks - D
- Ignores noise, shows no reaction - F

Observer's Notes:



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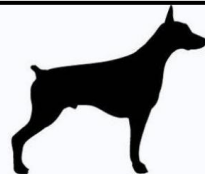
Phase 10: Touch Sensitivity

- Tester holds puppy
- Tester takes the webbing of their paw between two fingers
- Tester slowly applies pressure to the webbing of the paw as a gradual pinch while counting to 10
- Tester releases pressure the instant the puppy shows any reaction

Grade results with the following guidelines:

- 8 - 10 count before response or no response at all - A
- 6 - 8 count before response - B
- 5 - 6 count before response - C
- 3 - 5 count before response - D
- 1 -2 count before response - F

Observer's Notes:



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Grading Personality/Temperament Scores

Add up the total of the puppy's scores:

- A: _____
- B: _____
- C: _____
- D: _____
- F: _____

Observer's Notes:

Name or ID# of puppy:

Name of tester:

Name of observer:

Mostly A's:

This is the most desirable score for a Doberman looking into potential specialized training. This is especially applicable for professional protection work.

This exhibits an Alpha personality with a strong desire to be the leader. A personality like this has a tendency to set the rules while engaging with other dogs. Best explained as an extrovert. As a result, socializing (while still critical) should be easy as they are not likely to show fear of strangers.

However, due to the high quality of their personality, a trainer that can clearly establish authority without damaging their confidence will be needed.

Date of test:



Majority Score:

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Grading Personality/Temperament Scores

Mostly B's:

Next up in line for the alpha role, this puppy also indicates leadership qualities and confidence. While not as assertive as an A, they should be easier to establish authority but still show potential for professional roles such as military or law enforcement work and indicate excellent family protection potential as well.

While a confident hand will also be needed for this type of personality, the handler will not need to work as hard for the alpha role as they would with an A.



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Grading Personality/Temperament Scores

Mostly C's:

A puppy that continues to develop with this personality score is likely to be friendly but cautious towards strangers and visitors. While they would not be recommended for military or law enforcement, they do show potential as excellent family protectors.

As a result, a personality score of this type would be ideal for those looking for protection but not wanting to have to worry so much about establishing authority.

However, because of their slightly more timid nature, socializing is going to be needed more extensively.



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Grading Personality/Temperament Scores

Mostly D's:

Contrary to school scores, a D is not a failing grade. This just indicates their level of confidence. To explain, a puppy with this type of personality would need to gain more confidence before they would be suitable for protection work. However, they still show potential as an excellent quality therapy dog or family pet. *This is of course, pending their trainability.

Furthermore, they are more likely to show submissive behavior and be overly concerned with their owner's approval. As a result, punishment for bad behavior should be done with caution so as not to damage what little confidence they do have.

*I will note that I have seen puppies with who have initially scored a D perform a 180° change in character and exhibit A type potential once becoming a fully mature adult at 2 years old. **This is of course, pending the proper environment, care, and socializing tailored to improve their confidence level.***

In summary, consider a D-type Doberman as more of an introvert.



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Grading Personality/Temperament Scores

Mostly F's:

There are two types of F's. One is overly aggressive. The other is overly fearful. The extremely fearful one is actually more dangerous because they are more unpredictable.

In either case, this type of behavior is not natural. Such an outcome is rare and indicates inbreeding or the puppy experienced some type of traumatic experience. Other times it can be the result of wild-based bloodlines from animals such as wolves or coyotes who are more independent natured, less predictable, and not concerned with the approval of their handler.

Above all, a Doberman that fails the personality test should not be considered for any type of specialized training. While healing measures can be implemented in order to improve their scores, it is recommended that the Doberman be homed with an individual that has experience dealing with these types of dogs and will not have children around them. Either way, this score is not suitable for specialized training in work related roles.



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Final Considerations

At times, repeat testing may be required if the observer or the caretaker are able to identify any interrupting influences during the test.

For example, there is a stressful environment, if there is a rush of time, the puppy has gotten tired, distractions appear, etc.

Such things also need to be considered carefully before assigning the puppy with their official results. However, careful note-taking is important. This includes the fact that if there was a repeat test done and what both test results were.

***Note* If a repeat test is conducted, the stability and sound sensitivity tests may need to be altered slightly so as to provide unexpected stimulus in order to fully gauge the puppy's instinctual response.**



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Point of Contact

For questions or more information regarding the Tackleberry Solution's personality test, please contact us:

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God bless,

Amy Arthur

Author & Tackleberry Doberman Breeder

