LURES, REWARDS, PROMPTS AND BRIBES
What is the Difference??

Are you trying to teach your pup some new skills? Are you a dog owner looking to understand the difference between lures, rewards, and bribes when training your pup? You are not alone! Many pet owners struggle to decide which of these methods is most effective for teaching their furry friends good manners. All can be used successfully in different circumstances, but understanding which works best with your pup can be the key to successful behavior modification. We will explore exactly what lures, rewards, prompts and bribery is, the differences between lures, rewards, prompts and bribes, and give tips for choosing the right kind and using it effectively. We'll also discuss the pros and cons of using lures, rewards, prompts and bribes with pets so you can make an informed decision. So if you are still confused about when to use lures, rewards, or bribes with your pet, read on, and we'll help you.

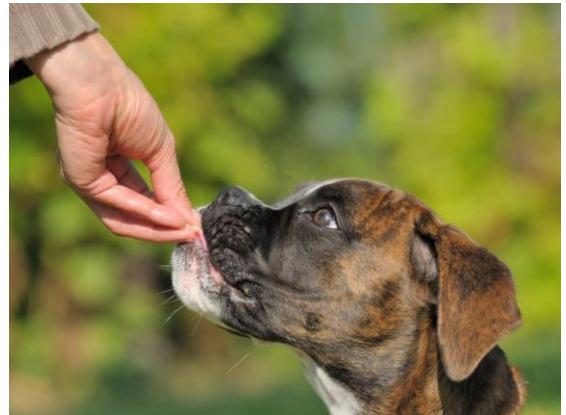## What are Lures, Prompts, Rewards and Bribes?
Lures, rewards, and bribes are all methods used to incentivize or motivate animal behavior. Thoroughly understanding these methods is essential for any successful animal training. Let's look at each in more detail.

In dog training, people have different definitions of Lure, Reward, Prompts and Bribes. We will define each.

1. Lure – A lure is food item or toy that can be used to encourage the dog to perform a specific behavior. It differs from a reward/reinforcer, in that it usually comes first before the behavior has been achieved. Common lures include letting a dog nibble off a treat, or hanging onto a tug toy.

Luring helps to teach new behaviors, move an animal from point A to point B or introduce dogs to unfamiliar activities.

For example, if you wanted to teach a dog to sit, you could hold a treat in front of his nose and move it back towards him until he sits.

2. Prompts – A prompt is when you show the animal a quick glance of what he might receive if he performs the behavior. This is a way of getting the dogs attention back on you. Prompting should be used very sparingly. It is meant to stimulate the olfactory system or as a visual reminder of what their reinforcer will be. It is important that if you use a prompt that you will also deliver that same prompt as their reinforcer/reward once the desired behavior has been achieved.

3. Bribes – A bribe is analogous to prompts except when using a bribes are not given to the animal when they complete the behavior after you have shown the bribe to the animal. We do not recommend using bribes. It would be like a tease, or being deceitful.

4. Rewards/Reinforcers – Rewards and/or reinforcers are used once the animal has performed certain behaviors. Rewards can be anything the dog enjoys, such as treats, toys, or verbal praise. The reward should always follow the behavior and help to reinforce it.

Rewards are essential to any training program as they help create positive associations with performing particular behaviors or tasks.

However, it is essential to remember that rewards should only be given when the behavior has been performed correctly. Otherwise, you may be reinforcing a behavior that you may not want.

Unlike lures, rewards don't necessarily have to be given right when the behavior is performed, but they should be given immediately after the behavior has been completed. This helps the dog understand what he did that was correct or desirable. Rewards can range from verbal praise and petting to treats or toys.

Tips on Using Lures, Rewards, and Prompts?

When you start, use a lure, such as food or a toy, to get your dog's attention and give him verbal commands. As soon as he responds, reward him with a treat or toy. This will help train him to respond more quickly to verbal commands.

1. Start with Lures – When teaching a new behavior, it is essential to start with lures. A lure is used to move an animal into a position, create muscle memory by guiding the animal into the position that you are creating. As an example to create a "sit". A "sit: would be bum on the floor. In order to achieve this you would use a lure and raise that lure over the head of the animal. When the animal is nibbling on the Lure and their head is raised, their bum will, most likely go down.

When rewarding, it is essential to make sure they understand what behavior is expected from them. We achieve this by creating a repetitive muscle memory exercises, by using the Drop, Stick, Push Process during the Stages of Shaping. Once they understand the muscle memory thru lure and reward, we then will add a cue and consistently reward the desired behavior; this will help your pet learn quickly and effectively. See our document on "How to create or change behavior using positive reinforcement.

2. Gradually Discontinue Lures – Once your dog has learned the behavior, it is essential to discontinue luring. Instead, focus on rewarding them for performing the behavior without being prompted. This will help ensure your dog performs the behavior independently rather than relying on the lure.

3. Monitor Your Dog's Response – When using lure and reward to teach your dog a new behavior, it is essential to monitor their response. If your dog does not respond positively, take a step back and adjust your approach accordingly. This will help ensure that you provide the right incentives for your dog and that they learn effectively. Being patient and consistent with your training is also essential, as this will help ensure your dog learns the behavior quickly and effectively.

4. Use Positive Reinforcement – Reinforcement is much more effective than punishment regarding training. Always reward desired behaviors rather than punishing undesired ones, as this will help your pet understand what is expected of them. It is also important to consistently reinforce the behaviors you want; if you do not reward them every time they respond correctly, they may become less motivated to perform the behavior. You also want to refer to fading the lure and intermittent reinforcement to be more successful in your training. See Whats the science got to say?

5. Use Appropriate Rewards – When rewarding your dog for performing a behavior, using an appropriate reward they find desirable is essential. Do not give them too much of one type of reward, as this could make them bored or uninterested. Try to vary your rewards and ensure they are appropriate for the behavior. See types of Rewards/Reinforcers.

6. Give Rewards Immediately – It is essential to reward immediately when your pet performs a desired behavior; the quicker they receive their reward, the more likely they will remember it and perform it again. This also helps ensure that rewards will be associated with the correct behavior; if you wait too long, your pet may not be able to connect their behavior to the reward.

7. Use Prompts Sparingly – Prompting can be helpful when teaching a new behavior but should not be used as a regular training technique. If you need to use prompts too often, it may be best to take a step back and reevaluate your approach. Prompts should only be used in certain situations and when necessary. Using them too often can lead to your dog expecting treats or other rewards when asked to do something, which is not the desired outcome. Instead, focus on positive reinforcement and building a strong relationship with your dog. This will help create trust between you and lead to better results in the long run.

8. Monitor Your Response – Finally, monitoring your own response when using lure, reward or prompts is also essential. Ensure you reward your dog in a way that will reinforce its positive behavior. If you are frustrated or angry with your dog, take a step back and adjust your approach. This will help ensure that your dog is learning in a positive environment and has the best chance of succeeding.

By combining lures with positive reinforcement reward based approach, you can successfully train your dog to respond to verbal commands. Remember to be patient, consistent, and monitor your and your dog's responses. You can eventually teach your dog to respond to verbal commands with practice and patience.
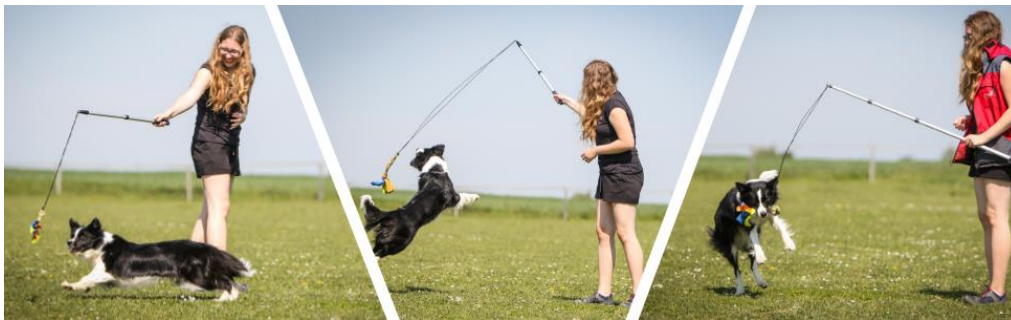
Types of Rewards/Reinforcers

When choosing a reward/reinforcer for your pet, it is essential to consider the type of behavior you are trying to reward or encourage. Rewards/Reinforcers can come in many forms, including food, toys, games, activities, verbal praise, and physical affection. It is also essential to consider your pet's needs and temperament when deciding which reward to use. Let's explore each option in more detail. Also, depending on the behavior you are trying to teach/create, change or extinguish will also possibly change the reinforcer/reward needed.

When selecting a reward, ensure it is desirable for your pet. Food rewards are often effective, but consider your pet's preference and be mindful of portion sizes. Toys and games can also be effective rewards; when choosing toys, ensure they are appropriate for your pet's size and do not pose a choking hazard. Physical activities, verbal praise, and physical affection are also all good rewards to use with your pet. When working with problematic behaviors such as, separation anxiety, leash reactivity, or fear based behaviors, space, distance, praise or affection may become a desired reinforcer for the animal.

1. Food – Food is often the most effective way to reinforce and encourage desired behaviors. It is essential to use treats that are high value for your pet, something they enjoy. Many pets have a preferred type of treat or exceptional food, so it would be wise to cater to their tastes. It would help if you also thought about the treat size when training; small treats are usually preferred as they can be quickly consumed with minimal distraction. When using food to reinforce, it is essential to remember how much you are giving your pet. Too many treats may lead to weight gain or other health issues, so know the recommended amounts for your pet's size and breed.

2. Toys and Games – Toys or games as a reinforcer can get your pet's attention and encourage desired behaviors. You should consider the toy's size, shape, and material when selecting options for your pet; choose toys that suit your pet's size and will not pose a choking hazard. Additionally, consider whether it is an interactive toy you can use with your pet or a solo toy they can enjoy on their own. Interactive toys are especially effective for keeping your pet's attention and providing extended playtime after the initial reward.

3. Physical Activity and Activities – Physical activity and activities can be very effective in rewarding desired behaviors. Particular activities, such as going for a walk, playing fetch in the yard, or going to the park, are great motivators that allow your pet to have fun while also getting rewarded. It is important to remember that your pet should be active for the right reasons; reward them for good behavior and make sure they are not overexerting themselves. Additionally, think about activities that will help you bond with your pet.

4. Verbal Praise – Verbal praise is often a great reward or bribes to use with your pet. Generally speaking, positive reinforcement is much more effective than negative reinforcement regarding training. The best way to use verbal praise is to use a specific word or phrase your pet will recognize as a reward for their behavior. This can include words like "good," "yes," or even the pet's name. It is also important to consistently reinforce desired behaviors; if you do not praise every time your pet responds correctly, they will become less motivated to perform the behavior.

Verbal praise is an effective way to reward your pet for desired behaviors. It is much more effective than negative reinforcement when it comes to training. The best way to use verbal praise is to use a specific word or phrase that your pet will recognize as a reward for their behavior; for example, if you want your pet to sit, saying "good sit" can reinforce the behavior. Additionally, it is essential to praise consistently and enthusiastically when rewarding desired behaviors.

5. Physical Affection – Physical affection can be a great reward or bribe, providing physical and emotional reinforcement. This can include petting, cuddling, or even a gentle scratch behind the ears. It is crucial to provide physical affection that does not cause your pet distress; for some pets, this means avoiding certain areas or being careful with pressure and movement. Additionally, it is essential to recognize when your pet needs space and let them have it. Giving too much physical affection can often make pets uncomfortable, so it is vital to use your judgment when deciding how much to offer.

6. Consider Your Pet's Needs and Temperament – When deciding which reward or bribe to use, it is essential to consider your pet's needs and temperament. All pets are different, so the best way to find out what works for you is to experiment with different rewards occasionally. Once you understand your pet's preferences better, it will be easy to decide which reward or bribe is the most effective for encouraging desired behaviors.

7. Variety is the Spice of Life – It is essential to keep your pet interested and motivated by providing a variety of rewards or bribes. Treats, toys, activities, verbal praise, and physical affection will help keep your pet engaged during training sessions. If you rely too heavily on the same reward for every session, it will become less effective, and your pet will become disinterested.

8. Be Consistent – Consistency is key when it comes to rewarding or bribing your pet. If you are not consistent with rewards, your pet may become confused or indifferent about what behavior is expected of them. Additionally, if the reward does not always come, they will find other activities more exciting and be less motivated to obey commands.

By following these tips, you can ensure that your pet will understand what is expected of them and be more likely to adhere to the desired behavior. Ultimately, rewards, lures, and prompts are great tools for training, but it is essential to use them properly to get the desired results.

The Pros and Cons of Using Lures, Rewards, and Prompts?
Using lures, rewards, and prompts can teach dogs basic obedience skills. Lures are used to get the dog to move into the desired position. Rewards are given when the dog performs correctly, while prompts are offered beforehand to incentivize proper behavior. The pros of using these tools include reinforcing positive behaviors and motivating the dog to learn. However, there are some cons to consider as well. Let's take a closer look at each Pro and Cons.

The pros of using lures, rewards, and prompts:

1: Reinforces and creates more consistent responses - Rewards can be an effective way to reinforce positive behaviors in dogs. When a dog is rewarded for performing the desired behavior, it reinforces that behavior and encourages the dog to repeat it. This can lead to more reliable performances from the dog, making training more effective overall.

2: Provides Motivation For Learning – Using lures, rewards, and prompts can be an effective way to encourage the dog to learn. This is especially true when teaching more complex commands or behaviors. Providing a reward for each successful attempt reinforces the behavior and encourages the dog to continue trying until he succeeds. This creates a positive learning environment in which the dog is motivated to learn and perform.

3: Creates an Enjoyable Learning Environment & Enhances the Bond between Dog and Handler – Providing rewards for successful behaviors encourages the dog to have fun while learning. This makes the learning process more enjoyable for both the dog and the handler, which can lead to better training results.

Using lures, rewards, and prompts can also help to enhance the bond between dog and handler. By providing rewards for successful behaviors, it helps to create a stronger connection between the two. This bond is essential for effective training, as it encourages the dog to trust its handler, which can lead to better results.

Lures, Rewards, Prompts & Bribes, By: *Creature Connections Behavior Alliance, LLC* ©

The Cons of Using Lures, Rewards, and Prompts:

1: Can Lead to Unwanted Behaviors – Using lures, rewards, and prompts can backfire if not used properly. If a reward is given too often or for the wrong behaviors, it can lead to unwanted behavior such as aggressive barking or jumping. This can be especially problematic when teaching new behaviors, as it can lead to confusion on the part of the dog.

2: Can Lead To Dependency On Rewards – If rewards are used too often or for too long, it can lead to a dependence on rewards from the handler. This means the dog will only perform the desired behavior if rewarded. This can make training more difficult, reducing the dog's willingness to cooperate without rewards. We must look at fading the lure & move to intermittent or random schedules of reinforcement quickly.

Also, if we don't fade the lure or change our schedules of reinforcement it could mean that they will begin to expect rewards for even the most basic of tasks, which can reduce their overall motivation and desire to work. Ultimately, this can make training more difficult, as the dog may no longer be willing to cooperate without a reward.

3: Can Lead To Over Stimulation – Using lures and rewards can lead to over-stimulation in some dogs. This is especially true when using food rewards, as the dog may become overly excited when presented with food. This can lead to difficulty concentrating and reduce the effectiveness of training sessions.

4: Can Lead To Complacency – Using lures and rewards too often can lead to complacency in the dog. They will begin to expect a reward for even the simplest of tasks, which can reduce their overall motivation to learn. This can decrease performance, as the dog will no longer be challenged or motivated to work harder.

Conclusion
In conclusion, lures, rewards, and prompts can be powerful tools in helping to train a pet. While lures and rewards, can help teach pets new behaviors, it is essential to remember to use them sparingly and only in the right circumstances. Additionally, fully understanding the process and tools involved is crucial to successfully using these three. They can all harm one's relationship with a pet if not correctly implemented.

Positive reinforcement with rewards should always be used when training. Prompts & Lures should be faded quickly to alleviate any dependence on showing the food.

Overall, there are many different options for rewards and bribes that you can use when training your pet. It is essential to consider your pet's needs when deciding which option will be best. Experiment with different options until you find the one that works best for you and your pet! With patience and consistency, your pet will soon be a well-behaved family member.