



## Dog Showmanship

The goal of dog showmanship is to show the judge your knowledge of handling and posing your dog. In this competition the judge will evaluate the dog, yourself, and how you work together as a team. The dog will be assessed on appearance in regards to grooming and proper presentation of the breed. You will be evaluated on appearance, skills, attitude, and ability to answer questions of some of the basic questions about dogs such as their gestation, internal and external parasites, and some of the parts of the dog. You should find members enrolled in the 4-H dog project, as well as review the Michigan State University 4-H Dog Junior Showmanship Manual.

### Handling Dogs

Dogs are the only species of animal that are shown on the left side of the person. They go around the ring counter clock-wise. All other species go around the ring clockwise. Dogs are traditionally worked on the left side of the person because the first dog trainers were hunters. Most hunters held their rifle in their right arm and the dog was safely on the left. When you hold a showmanship lead you hold it all in one hand (whichever side you are gaiting on) and have all of the excess lead gathered in your hand. All you need is enough lead to allow the dog to gait alongside of you.

Gait is the way the dog moves. To gait while showing you want to keep the dog at a steady trot. You need to make sure that you aren't going too fast for the dog so that it is running and that you aren't going too slowly for the dog so that it is walking. Also remember that with a larger dog you will have to move a little faster and make sure you move slower with a smaller dog. There are four main gaiting patterns that you may be asked to do. They are: gaiting in a circle, the down and back, the triangle, and the "L" patters. Always remember to keep the dog between yourself and the judge!

### Posing Dogs

Posing, or stacking, your dog is simple. First stand your dog inside the edge of the line. Next all you need to do is place each foot so the dog is standing square, making sure all feet and legs are perpendicularly aligned, pointed forward, and set at the width of shoulder and hip. It is also important to determine the proper head and tail position based on the breed of the dog. For yourself, stand at least an arm's length away from your dog to make sure you are not crowding your animal and there is enough room to move around your dog while always keeping it between you and the judge.

### Examination of the Dog

During showmanship the judge will examine your dog individually. If your dog is a larger breed, you will pose your animal in the same way outlined before. If your dog is a smaller breed and a table is available, you will stack the dog in the upper left-hand corner closest to the judge.

**To contact an expert in your area, visit [msue.anr.msu.edu/experts](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/experts) or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464)**

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## Showmanship Questions and Answers

### Questions:

- What is the gestation period for a dog?
- What are two types of internal parasites commonly found in dogs?
- What are two types of external parasites commonly found on dogs?
- What are two AKC Breed Groups?
- What kind of dog are you showing?
- If the dog has a long tail with feathers or a small “standup” tail, do I hold it?
- What are gaiting patterns?

### Answers:

- 63-65 Days
- Roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, tapeworms, and heartworms
- Fleas, mites, and ticks
- Sporting, Hound, Working, Terrier, Toy, Non-Sporting, and Herding Groups
- Ask the owner of the dog before you begin
- YES, but Long tails without feathers don't need to be held.
- There are four main gaiting patterns that you may be asked to do. They are: gaiting in a circle, the down and back, the triangle, and the “L” Patterns. Chewing the cud.

