BRIDGING

A bridge is a word, sound or action that marks the behaviour and tells your dog reinforcement is coming.

OUR VERBAL BRIDGE



Our deliberate verbal bridge is “Yes!”.

A BRIDGE CAN ALSO BE AN ACTION



A bridge can also be an action. For example, moving your hand towards your treat pouch. If that movement repeatedly predicts food, your dog can learn that the movement itself means reinforcement is coming.

TAKE A PHOTO



Think of the bridge as taking a photo of the exact behaviour you want.

DOGS NOTICE PATTERNS QUICKLY

Dogs notice patterns in our body language incredibly quickly. We can accidentally create bridges without realising it, such as:



Hand to treat pouch | Moving towards food | Reaching into a pocket | Changing body position

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU WANT



Focus on behaviours you want, rather than constantly focusing on behaviours you don’t want.

“No” has no useful behavioural information.

What do you actually want them to do instead?

Find that behaviour → bridge it → reinforce it.

1 “YES” = 1 REWARD

1 You have made a promise



- Every time you say “Yes”, you have made a promise.
- 1 “Yes” = 1 reward.
- Reward within 1–2 seconds wherever possible.

2 They still get the reward



If you say “Yes” and the puppy then walks away:

- They still get the reward.
- You marked what they were doing at the exact moment you said “Yes”.

3 If you want a repeat



If you want them to repeat the behaviour:

- Get/reset them back into the behaviour.
- This time say “Good girl” / “Good boy”.
- Do not say “Yes” again unless you intend to give another reward.

4 Know the difference

Yes! Marks a moment.

Good! Can encourage continuation.

Be deliberate about which one you are using and why.