In preparation to the training: you will need to set aside some time every day over the next few weeks and have some uninterrupted one-on-one time with your dog. It is important that there are no distractions during training, that means: turn your phone OFF! ☺

5-15 minutes is all you need every day to be successful. Please have patience, don't expect your dog to know the commands right away. The first few days are often the most difficult as your dog has never had to do any schooling yet.

If you find that your dog has too much energy and is having a hard time focussing, you may have to go for a walk and get some energy out, don't tire them out though.

Each week we will be adding a few new commands. It is important to repeat the things you learned from previous lessons every week, so that by the end of the 6 weeks your dog will have everything mastered.

Some dogs will advance faster than other dogs, and that's fine. If you find that your dog is ready to continue: great! It is also fine if your dog takes a little longer to finish as well, no worries, don't feel frustrated, keep practicing, they will get it! If necessary wait a few weeks and try again.
Don't rush through the training either, most dogs need 6 weeks to master it all.

Before we get started I recommend you get the following items to help you train your dog over the next few weeks:

- ❖ A 6 foot leash – NOT retractable, also NO harness
- ❖ Lots of treats – very small pieces
- ❖ A treat pouch – so you can have your hands free
- ❖ A few toys – your dog's favourite ones.
- ❖ A clicker – for if you'd like to do clicker training.

The clicker is used ONLY at the moment your dog does the action correct at the very moment they do it. Do not use the clicker to get their attention, do not "play" with your clicker and tease them or it will not be effective.
If you are not using a clicker I recommend you pick a "marker" word. Words you can use: "Good", "Yes", "Good boy/girl" etc. This is a word you use every time when your dog completes a command successfully and will know that he's done it right and gets a reward after that. Also pick a "release" word; this is a word you use when the exercise is done. Kind of like "at ease soldier". I like to use the word "Okay". The release word suggests that the exercise has been completed and your dog can move freely till you need him to repeat the exercise again.

Alright, time for some action!

Sit

This is the most basic and probably the one command you will use the most in the lifetime of your dog, so let's do it right!

Exercise

❖ Have a treat between your index finger and thumb.
❖ Hold the treat in front of your dog so they see it.
❖ Move treat over dogs' head so that his head goes up (he's following the treat) and the body/back end goes down into a sit position.
❖ Say the word "Sit".
❖ As soon as the bum touches the ground, click the clicker or mark the behaviour with your "marker" word.
❖ Reward your dog with a treat and praise him.
❖ Use your release word to release your dog.

Your dog will likely get up now and wants to show affection. Now let's repeat it! Very soon your dog will sit as soon as you give them the command "Sit" without you having to move the treat over its head.

Troubleshooting When you move the treat over your dogs' head, some dogs will back up or jump up at the treat, rather than sitting. Be prepared to quickly more your hand away, so they don't get the treat until they sit. If they are not getting the idea that their bum needs to go to the ground, it is ok to gently push their bum toward the ground into the sit position. Immediately click/mark and reward.

Goal To get your dog to put its bum on the ground when you say "Sit", without having to move the treat over its head and to stay in that position for a few seconds without getting up right away.

Practical application I often use the term "nothing is for free". From now on, start using "sit" every time your dog wants something. If they want their food or water, have them sit first. They want to go outside? Sit first. A treat? Sit first. They want to go for a walk? Sit first, so you can attach the leash to their collar.

Watch Me

You don't have to make your dog sit for this command, but you can if you want to and if your dog is up for it.

Exercise

- ❖ Have a treat between your index finger and thumb.
- ❖ Hold the treat in front of your dog so they see it and follow it with their eyes.
- ❖ Move the treat close to your eyes and say "watch me".
- ❖ When they look at your eyes, click/mark and reward with treat.

After a few times with treat near eyes, lower treat a little bit and say "watch me".
They won't get the treat until they make eye contact.
Once they make eye contact, click/mark and reward with treat.
If they don't make eye contact, move the treat close to your eyes again and start over.

Continue to lower until dog looks to your eyes and not the treat for permission.
Click/mark and reward with treat and praise them.

Troubleshooting
This is one of those exercises that may take a few days for your dog to understand. So have patience and keep repeating. If they don't make eye contact when you lower the treat, move the treat close to your eyes again and start over. As you lower the treat some dogs see that as the "okay" to take the treat. Be prepared to quickly move your hand away or close it. You can use "ah-ah" to get them to realize they are not allowed to get the treat until they make eye contact.

Goal
You want to have your dog make eye contact first before they get the treat when you say "watch me".

Practical application
This is an added layer of "nothing is for free". The fact that your dog is now forced to look at your eyes before he gets the treat helps build respect. They have to look at you for permission, which makes you the alpha. As your dog gets more familiar with this term, start adding this to "sit". You want your food? Sit first, watch me, now you can have your food. Your dog wants to go outside? Sit first, watch me, now you can go etc.