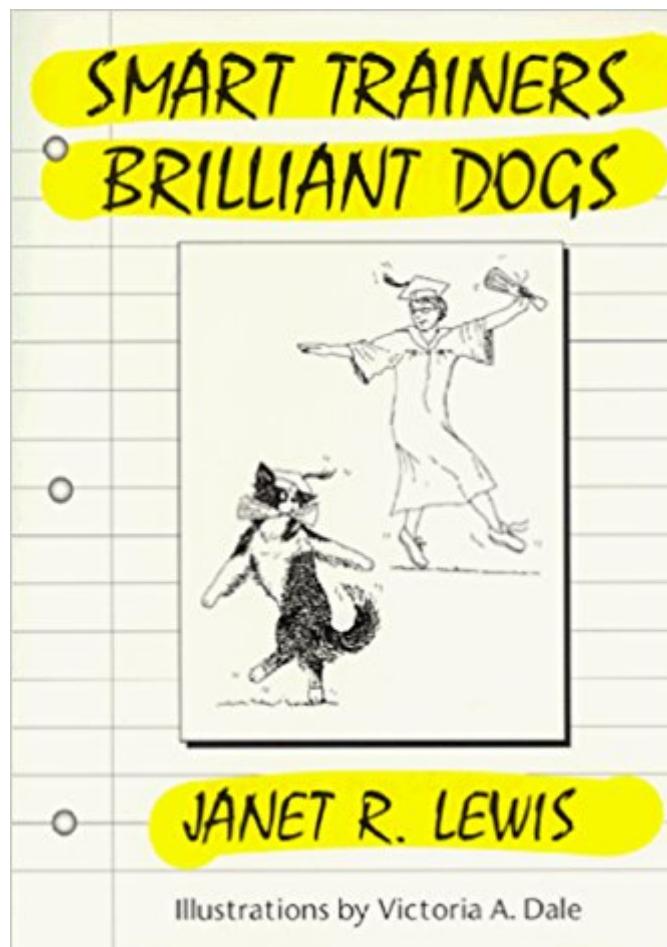


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# Smart Trainers: Brilliant Dogs



## **Synopsis**

This book walks you through your dog's mind and explains step-by-step how dogs perceive our commands and respond to them. This book is guaranteed to improve your training skills and strengthen your bond with your canine friend.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 164 pages

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## **Customer Reviews**

"This is an excellent book for learning or being reminded of all the steps It takes to work, from a dog who knows nothing to a dog that is ready and Willing . . . gave a "pile" of them away for Christmas gifts to beginners and multi yeared veterans alike. Great read!" -- Clean Run, Dec. 1997

Janet Lewis has been training her own and others' dogs for over 20 years. She wrote this book to demystify dog training theory and to explain the terminology of dog training, such as "positive punishment," and "conditioned reinforcer." Her clarity and sense of humor make this book a must for every dog trainer.

This book is written by a woman who is a Philosophy Professor, so it is a bit different from your frequently encountered "training manual". There is a WHOLE LOT of material here regarding the learning process of dogs...so you better be interested in the learning process of dogs or this one will have you flipping through its pages looking for some "instruction". I actually think the book is interesting, but I view it as a reference, not a training manual. Better to stick with folk who train

hunting dogs (where things such as obedience are necessary), and have figured out how to do so.

This book goes beyond the basics and into some specific signs to watch for in your dog's behavior that you probably never noticed before. Excellent! A short easy read that you can refer to again when you need it.

I've never understood why this book has not enjoyed as much widespread popularity as Excel-erated Learning by Pam Reid. Now, Excel-erated Learning is a very good book, but I think that if you are venturing into learning theory for the first time, Smart Trainers Brilliant Dogs is THE best way to go. It is presented in a very lay style, not as academic as others on the subject. If you handle it ok, then branch out to some of the other learning theory books to deepen your understanding. But if you just want a basic working knowledge of how learning occurs, this is my favorite book. No, it is NOT a "how to teach each obedience exercise" book, and does not claim to be. She gives examples, using obedience exercises, but the book is learning theory, and operant conditioning. I find it unfair to read negative reviews of books that "were different" than what the reader \*thought\* they were going to be. Look inside the book before you buy! There are lots of "how to teach obedience exercises" books out there-if that is what you are after, go buy one of those. If you want to become a more informed, knowledgeable, educated and fair trainer to your dog, read this book. All of the reviews I've seen discuss this aspect, and for that, this book is wonderful. Janet's seminars are great, too, if you get a chance, check her out.

I'm sorry, but I don't agree with the previous reviewer. I just didn't think this had a lot of useable material. It read like a textbook (not surprising, since she is a professor); very dry. I finally ended up skimming the last 5/8ths. Had I not bought and paid good money for it (say, someone had lent it to me), I would have quit after about 20 pages! (I recently tried again to read it, thinking it may have been a bad day when I read it the first time, and quit even sooner because I already knew it wasn't going to get any better!) Even an attempt at organizing and contrasting the ideas (well done technically) didn't clarify a great deal or produce any more ideas and suggestions for hands-on obedience training. (Can we not cover Skinner and operant conditioning in 15 pages or fewer?!) The book is written for people preparing their dogs for competitive obedience (my reason for buying it), not well-behaved-family-pet training ("how to potty train, how not to jump on people," etc.). This notwithstanding, I didn't find a lot of material I could apply. I would not have bought this book had I spot-read at several points in the book to evaluate. (I bought it on the strength of an ad, full of

glowing comments - none of the persons identified....) Caveat emptor. Read thru the sample pages here. mbUPDATE: See instead: EXPERT OBEDIENCE TRAINING FOR DOGS [Strickland]. This book is exactly what I was looking for. Includes tracking, brace, and agility, help for which is very hard to find! The grandmama of dog training books, TRAINING YOU TO TRAIN YOUR DOG [Saunders], contains very good information, obviously, or it wouldn't be the standard, but you may blanch at the words "punishment" and similar punitives. See my complete review under this title.

This is a must-read for trainers who want to show their dogs in competition. While Janet focuses on obedience competition, any serious competitor will enjoy this book. Janet does an excellent (and often humorous) job of explaining how to use food in training, bypassing the usual pitfalls. This is the best that I have seen on the subject. She also decodes for the term-impaired, jargon such as "negative reinforcement," "punishment," "conditioned reinforcer," and "classical conditioning." There were many real-life examples given that made these terms come alive. I especially liked the chapter on the "ring-wise" dog. The illustrations were well done, too. If you want to show your dog competitively in obedience, tracking, agility, or freestyle, you will get sound training theory from Janet Lewis!

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