



Scrabble 345715: What to Expect

Scrabble is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Scrabble is an adorably cute adolescent shepherd mix with a lot of happiness in his heart! He adores playing with toys, going for walks, and romping in the yard with his dog friends! Scrabble would absolutely love to be your adventure buddy, joining you on hikes, walks, and river dates! He has never met a stranger and loves all his friends, both human and canine! When excited, Scrabble may jump up on his handlers, and if overstimulated further, may grab onto loose fitting clothing, the leash, or bags/purses with his mouth. During his time at Oregon Humane, we have been successful helping him regulate these big emotions through training; by teaching him to sit & wait for leashing or before throwing toys in the yard. Potential adopters will need to be prepared to continue his training using the same positive reinforcement-based techniques we use here at Oregon Humane. Due to Scrabble's excitability and rough and tumble play style, we believe he would do best in a home with older, dog experienced children. Scrabble is still learning to control his emotions, and he might jump all over kids in excited play, steal their toys, or attempt to take food from their hands. He will likely see small children as other puppies to play with and not as humans. Scrabble would benefit from taking some training classes with his new owners and would love to learn more alongside his family in a training class. Training classes help strengthen the bond between owner and dog by creating clear and precise communication so there are no misunderstandings. You can find more info about our training classes on our website at (<https://www.oregonhumane.org/training/training-at-ohs/>).

While Scrabble does like to play with other dogs, those feelings of excitement and enthusiasm for life can cause frustration when seeing another dog and not being able to immediately run up to say hi. When on a leash, or behind a barrier such as a fence, if he sees another dog, Scrabble will pull on leash, whine, or jump up onto his handlers. It's important not to allow him to greet dogs on leash or when displaying these behaviors as greeting dogs will only reinforce to Scrabble that when he pulls & jumps, he gets to say hello. As an adolescent, he is learning to regulate all his newfound feelings and emotions, especially impulse control. We've been successful teaching Scrabble to sit and wait calmly & quietly before being allowed to say hi to any dogs or people. Using this method, we've successfully introduced Scrabble to a variety of dogs, and he has enjoyed playing one on one with other playful and social dogs. We believe Scrabble may enjoy living with another well-socialized and confident dog (or dogs), to help show him the ropes. But he may also enjoy being the center of attention, soaking up all the love and attention for himself. A pet meet is required to ensure dogs are a good match.

Here's how to help Scrabble settle in during your first months together:

If you're having people over, put Scrabble on leash so they learn to not dart out the front door or jump all over people. Once everyone is sitting down and calm you can drop the leash and allow your dog to decide if they want to go say hi to your guests. Ensure your guests ask Scrabble to sit before being pet so they're rewarded for keeping 4 feet on the floor.

Patience will come in handy for you. Scrabble responds best to positive reinforcement and reward-based training. They will need an understanding, calm owner who has the time and desire to work on helping them learn to live in a home. Scrabble will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

Scrabble needs daily exercise to reduce stress. Scrabble loves to go for runs, walks, play fetch, and chase a flirt pole. Giving your dog a healthy outlet for some of their energy will help them settle during calm hours at home.

Don't take Scrabble to busy places where they will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people/dogs (such as Saturday Market, off-leash dog parks, coffee shops, walks down Hawthorne St., Home Depot, etc.).

Work on having Scrabble settle on a mat, dog bed, or cot and gently praise them for lying down. If they get up to pace, call them back and use a treat to lure them into a down again. If Scrabble is on leash, you can hold them with approximately 4 feet of leash and wait until they offer a settle by lying down. Softly praise and treat when they do this.

Walk Scrabble on an appropriate walking tool. We have been using a special head halter, called a [transitional leash](#), to help guide Scrabble to walk nicely on leash with little to no pulling. When Scrabble sees other dogs on walks, they become incredibly excited and then frustrated that they cannot run up to say hello and play, causing them to jump, pull, whine, bark, and sometimes attempt to grab onto the leash. It will be important to never let Scrabble run up to other dogs on leash as that can reinforce their frustrations.

Practice crate training. Start by feeding meals in a wire crate and work your way up from there. It will be in your best interest to **slowly** increase time in the crate, so they view it as a safe, comfortable spot. When you cannot monitor your dog in the home, allow them some time to settle and relax in the crate.

“Puppy proof” your home and practice tether training to prevent them from getting into puppy/adolescent trouble. When home have Scrabble on leash, attached to you or tethered to a large piece of furniture as you go about your daily routine. This will help with potty training, bonding, and creating boundaries within the home. Let Scrabble drag the leash around the house or yard from time to time to simulate “freedom”, but do not let them off leash until they can 100% be trusted not to get into things they shouldn’t. This could take up to a few weeks. Crate Scrabble when you cannot watch them. This will ensure their puppy curiosity doesn’t get them into any trouble. You will have long lasting success if you follow this method.

Visiting the Vet: Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Scrabble does very well at the vet, they handle meeting new people well. The vet can still be a scary place. Bringing tasty treats like cheese and/or hot dogs can help make the experience more pleasant.

Try using **Adaptil (Dog Appeasing Pheromone)** or **Rescue Remedy by Bach Flower Essences**. These products may help dogs settle in new environments by easing the stress associated with change.

We’re here to help!

We want Scrabble to be successful in your home. We’re available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Scrabble, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact us at **(503) 285-1145** or BMODTrainers@oregonhumane.org.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you now and in the future. Reach out if you have questions or concerns, or just to give an update. We love to see photos and hear how our friends are doing! Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new dog!