

Why is a clicker used?

By Karen Pryor

The essential difference between clicker training and other reward-based training is that the animal is told exactly which behavior earned it a reward. This information is communicated with a distinct and unique sound, a click, which occurs at the same time as the desired behavior. The reward follows.

Without hearing a click during an action, an animal may not connect the reward with that action. Or, the animal may associate the reward with another, unwanted action. With the click, a trainer can precisely "mark" behavior so that the animal knows exactly what it was doing. That's why clicker trainers call the click an "event marker." The click also bridges or connects the behavior and its reward, and so is also called a "bridging signal."