# *Poised for Success Freestyle*



# *Guide to Festival of Props*



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# *Introducing Etude Titles!*

Etude Titles are "Special Event" Titles that are offered by Poised for Success Freestyle for a limited time.

In music, an "etude" is a short musical composition that is designed to provide practice material for perfecting a particular musical skill in an aesthetically pleasing way.

Likewise, the Etude Titles provide Poised for Success Freestyle teams with the opportunity to create short practice exercises to perfect a particular Freestyle skill in an enjoyable way and to earn titles for performing those exercises.

These are offered through Poised for Success Freestyle at certain times throughout the year, and each one is offered for a limited time.

Anyone is eligible to enter submissions for Etude Titles. No prerequisite titles are necessary. All you need is a Poised for Success Registration number. For information on how to register, see the "Titling in Musical Freestyle" page on the Poised for Success website.

http://www.poisedforsuccessfreestyle.com/titling-in-musical-freestyle

# *Titling Classes*

Three titling classes are offered for the Etude Titles:

- **Debut Class:** Puppies and adult dogs who are new to training are eligible to enter the Debut Class

- **Laude Class:** Senior dogs and dogs with disabilities are eligible to enter the Laude Class

- **Performer Class:** All dogs are eligible to enter the Performer Class

For teams in the Debut and Laude Classes, treats may be visible to your dog during a performance, and you may treat at any time during the performance. Handlers are encouraged to reinforce in a way that maintains as much flow as possible within the performance, although loss of flow for reinforcement will not cause a team to NQ.

For teams in the Performer Class, treats may not be visible to your dog during a performance, although you can have them in a pocket or bait bag, and you may not treat until after the performance is fully complete.

A team may enter any given Etude event in one titling class only per offering of that event.

However, a team that enters in the Debut Class one year can enter the same event in the Performer Class in another year, once the dog is ready to do so. And a team that enters in the Performer Class in one year can enter the same event in the Laude class in a later year, once eligible to perform in that Class.

## *Festival of Props*
## *Title Open for Entries from June 15th – September 15th*

<u>This title is now open at three levels:</u>

- First Level - Festival of Props
- Second Level - Festival of Props – Sonata
- Third Level – Festival of Props - Concerto

Teams who earned the first level Festival of Props or Sonata last year may go on to submit for the Festival of Props Sonata or Concerto title this year. New teams begin with the first level but may go on to submit for Sonata and/or Concerto this year.

In addition, teams who complete all three levels will earn a special distinction – Festival of Props Virtuoso, which is the championship title for Festival of Props and the highest honor conferred.

Teams who earn the Concerto title in the Debut or Laude class will be awarded the Festival of Props Debut Virtuoso or Festival of Props Laude Virtuoso title.

Any dog and handler team may become a Virtuoso in the Debut, Performer, and Laude classes, but each Concerto entry must be submitted in different years. In extenuating circumstances, this requirement might be waived. Contact for Kristine in the case of such circumstances.

## *First Level – Festival of Props*

- Design five sequences, each of which incorporates the use of one prop.

- Each of the sequences must incorporate a different prop, so five props are needed in total.

- The prop used for a given sequence can be a ground prop or a hand-held prop. A prop can be any item that a dog can perform behaviors with safely. For this title, no humans or other live animals can serve as props.

- The five props should all be different from one another.

  An upturned bucket, a suitcase, a cane, a chair, and a hoop would all be five different props, for instance. Props do not have to be themed, and training equipment, dog sport equipment, and dog fitness equipment may be used as props for this title, in addition to themed props, or everyday household items.

- For at least four of your submitted video clips, only one single prop may be used. For one video clip, a pair of identical items may be used as a set and that will be considered one prop. This is an option and is not required.

The Sequence

A "sequence" is a series of Freestyle moves that are chained together and performed in flow (one after the other with no deliberate pauses in between, unless the pause is part of a move, such as a pose on a prop).

Once you have chosen your props, design five movement sequences - one featuring each prop. These five sequences will be performed separately.

Each sequence must consist of:

- A prop behavior

- A non-prop behavior

- A second, distinct prop behavior, using the same prop.

These skills should be performed in flow within the sequence, with one behavior flowing into the next.

Prop Move or Prop Behavior

For this title, **a "prop move"** or "prop behavior" is a trained and cued behavior that the dog performs using a prop in some obvious way, or that the dog and handler use together.

Examples of prop moves include: dog jumps over prop, dog places paws on prop, dog and handler circle a prop together with dog moving in position or in opposite directions, dog performing a cued behavior on or inside of a prop, dog performs a figure 8 around two ends or parts of a prop, dog touches a prop with a paw, dog holds a position on a prop while handler circles dog, dog circles both prop and hander as handler hold the prop, etc.

Creativity is encouraged, and if you have any questions about use of a particular prop, please ask on the Poised for Success Freestyle Facebook Group.

A hand-held prop may be used in any way that is safe, and it may be moved in any way the handler sees fit throughout the movement sequence.

A ground prop may be moved only if moving the prop does not interrupt the overall flow of the movement sequence. For instance, a ground hoop might be very quickly picked up for a second use as a hand-held hoop.

However, the flow of movement should not be stopped in order to change the configuration of a ground prop.

Non-Prop Move or Non-Prop Behavior

A non-prop move or behavior is any trained and cued behavior that the dog performs that does not include use of the prop, even though the handler might still be holding a prop in hand.

The non-prop behavior does not have to be a transition move, and a separate transition can be performed to set your dog up to return to the prop. In that case, the move and the transition will be considered a "combined transition" for judging purposes. However, the non-prop behavior can be a transition move, and a separate transition move is not required.

In addition, the non-prop behavior may be a very short movement skill, such as a bit of backing, lateral movement, or heelwork in a distinct pattern or configuration, such as a circle or figure 8.

A few things to note for Festival of Props:

- No two movement sequences can be the same, nor should any of the sequences simply be a reverse of another that you are submitting for this title.

- A move used on or with a prop can be repeated as the non-prop move. For instance, if your dog performs a spin on a prop, another spin can be performed on the ground, as a stand-alone move, or as a transition.

- No two behaviors can be repeated as the prop behavior within a performance. For instance, if your dog circles the prop as the first behavior, the second prop behavior cannot be two circles around the prop in the same direction.

  And, while distance work with props is welcome and encouraged, the same move performed with the prop both close to you and at a distance is still considered that one prop move.

- A move with a prop can be repeated on the prop if it is a necessary part of another prop move. For instance, if your dog puts two front paws on the prop as the first behavior, the two paws can be placed on the prop again to perform a pivot with it as the second behavior.

- All moves must consist of a distinct performance of a behavior by the dog. It is fine if handler movement is included. A dog may get on a prop and the handler may circle the prop as the dog holds a "wait". Or a dog and handler may circle a prop together. Or a dog and handler can circle a cane simultaneously in opposite directions.

  However, the handler should not use the prop without the dog as one of the prop behaviors. For example, the dog sits on the floor off to the side while the handler circles a cane. That said, if the dog is sitting and holding the cane with his or her paws and the handler circles the dog-with-cane, that would be fine.

- Each distinct prop move, or behavior, can only be used a maximum of three times over the course of the five separate performances.

- Each distinct non-prop move, or behavior, can only be repeated once over the course of the five separate performances.

- A single item with different related "parts", such as an Agility jump, is considered one prop. A dog could jump the bar for one prop move and circle one of the end posts of the jump as another. However, two separate items cannot be placed next to each other to create a single prop, with one exception …. (see next bullet point item)

- For one video clip only, a set of two identical items may be paired together to form "one prop". Two chairs, two flowerpots, two lanterns, etc.

Train and Video

See "Train and Practice" and "Video Your Performance" below for details about creating your submission video.

Demo Video:

**Festival of Props Example Sequence:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stOlfBDAD08

**Festival of Props 2023 Promo Video (First Level only)**:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6iAfh0FrDc

Exam**ple: Non-Prop Move is a Combined Transition:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnM_HDoAGsA

Title Offered

The Title consists of only this one leg, and teams who qualify on this single submission will earn the Festival of Props Etude Title.

**PFS – FOP**

Or

**PFS – FOP (Debut)**

Or

**PFS - FOP (Laude)**

## *Second Level – Festival of Props - Sonata*

To earn this title, the handler must design three sequences and film them as three separate video clips, each of which incorporates two props. Each of the sequences must incorporate two distinct props, so six props are needed in total.

(See "The Sequence" under "First Level" for a refresher on the Festival of Props sequences)

For each sequence, create a setup with two different props in the video frame.

Team should then perform:

- One single prop behavior
- One to three non-prop behaviors on the floor, which may include transitions and combinations
- Two prop behaviors in flow

  These two behaviors may be performed with one of the props, or in flow from one prop to the other.

  "In flow" means that one prop behavior must flow right into the next, without a transition in between.

- Optional closing pose (on or off prop)

  If a closing pose is performed on the prop, it may also be the second prop move. However, it could also be a third distinct pose.

  Example: After completing the non-prop behaviors, dog jumps over a jump, and then gets onto a platform and performs a spin. If the dog were to sit and give paw on the platform as a closing pose, that would be fine as an optional closing pose. Such a pose is not required, but permitted.

  However, if the dog were to perform the jump and the sit on the platform and offer paw as the second behavior, with no other closing pose, that is fine, too.

Both props must be used at least one time in the sequence.

Prop and Non-Prop Behaviors

See information provided under "Festival of Props" above for explanations of prop and non-prop behaviors.

Props

The same rules and guidelines that apply to the first level Festival of Props title apply to the second level. Please note, in particular ….

- A prop can be on the ground, or it can be hand-held. Since two props are needed per sequence for this level, if a hand-held prop is used, the other cannot be.

- One prop in one sequence can consist of two identical items (two jump stanchions, two flowerpots, etc.) However, these two items are considered a "set", and cannot be used as two separate items.

A few things to note for Festival of Props (Second Level):

- No two movement sequences can be the same, nor should any of the sequences simply be a reverse of another that you are submitting for this title.

- A move used on or with a prop can be repeated as one of the non-prop moves. For instance, if your dog performs a spin on a prop, another spin can be performed on the ground.

- No two behaviors can be repeated as a prop behavior within a performance. For instance, if your dog circles a prop as the first behavior, the in-flow sequence in that same performance cannot include a circle around the prop.

  However, a prop behavior performed as one of the single prop behaviors in one sequence can be performed again as one of the in-flow sequence behaviors in another one. So, if your dog circles a prop as the first behavior in one sequence, you can include a circle around a prop as part of the in-flow sequence in the performance of a different sequence.

- A move with a prop can be repeated on the prop if it is a necessary part of another prop move. For instance, if your dog puts two front paws on the prop as the first behavior, the two paws can be placed on the prop again to perform a pivot with it as the second behavior.

- All moves must consist of a distinct performance of a behavior by the dog. It is fine if handler movement is included. A dog may get on a prop and the handler may circle the prop as the dog holds a "wait". Or, a dog and handler may circle a prop together. Or, a dog and handler can circle a cane simultaneously in opposite directions. But, the handler should not use the prop without the dog as one of the prop behaviors.

- Each distinct prop move, or behavior, can only be used twice over the course of the three separate performances.

- There is no restriction on repetition of non-prop moves, but the non-prop portion of the three sequences should not be identical across the three performances.

Additional Information

- There is no minimum time for each video clip, but the maximum time for each of the three video clips is 1 minute per clip. I expect that most of the video clips will be considerably shorter.

- Please be sure that music is playing in the background for each of your videos.

  No music overlays can be used for this title.

- No food or toys may be in your hand in your submission clips unless your dog is performing in the Debut or Laude Classes. You may have food in a pocket or bait bag, or a toy concealed.

- For submission, the three video clips may be edited together into a single video, or they may be submitted as a Playlist.

Demo Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZJNrdweWEo

Title Offered

The Title consists of only this one leg, and teams who qualify on this single submission will earn the Festival of Props Sonata Title (Festival of Props – Second Level)

**PFS – FOP - Sonata**

Or

**PFS – FOP - Sonata (Debut)**

Or

**PFS – FOP - Sonata (Laude)**

## *Third Level – Festival of Props - Concerto*

- Design three sequences and film them as three separate video clips, each of which incorporates either two or three props.

  Each of the sequences must incorporate two or three distinct props, so six to nine props are needed in total. Note well: It is permissible to "mix and match". One sequence could include three props and two sequences could include two or vice versa.

  (See "The Sequence" under "First Level" for a refresher on the Festival of Props sequences)

- For each sequence, create a setup with two or three different props in the video frame.

Team should then perform:

- Opening pose (may be performed on the prop or on the ground)

- One single prop behavior (on any of the props – may double as opening pose but does not have to).

- Two to five non-prop behaviors on the floor, which may include transitions and combinations.

- Three prop behaviors in flow, using both, or all three props in some way, with no other moves in-between.

  "In flow" means that one prop behavior must flow right into the next, without a transition in between.

  Both props must be used at least one time in the sequence, or, if three are used, all three must be used in the sequence.

- Closing pose (on or off prop)

  If a closing pose is performed on the prop, it may also be the third prop move. However, it could also be a fourth distinct pose.

Prop and Non-Prop Behaviors

See information provided under "Festival of Props" above for explanations of prop and non-prop behaviors.

Props

The same rules and guidelines that apply to the first level Festival of Props title apply to the third level. Please note, in particular ….

- A prop can be on the ground, or it can be hand-held. Since two or three props are needed per sequence for this level, only one can be a hand-held prop.

- One prop in one sequence can consist of two identical items (two jump stanchions, two flowerpots, etc.) However, these two items are considered a "set", and cannot be used as two separate items.

A few things to note for Festival of Props (Third Level):

- No two movement sequences can be the same, nor should any of the sequences simply be a reverse of another that you are submitting for this title.

- A move used on or with a prop can be repeated as one of the non-prop moves. For instance, if your dog performs a spin on a prop, another spin can be performed on the ground.

- No two behaviors can be repeated as a prop behavior within a performance. For instance, if your dog circles a prop as the first behavior,

the in-flow sequence in that same performance cannot include a circle around the prop.

However, a prop behavior performed as one of the single prop behaviors in one sequence can be performed again as one of the in-flow sequence behaviors in another one. So, if your dog circles a prop as the first behavior in one sequence, you can include a circle around a prop as part of the in-flow sequence in the performance of a different sequence.

- A move with a prop can be repeated on the prop if it is a necessary part of another prop move. For instance, if your dog puts two front paws on the prop as the first behavior, the two paws can be placed on the prop again to perform a pivot with it as the second behavior.

- All moves must consist of a distinct performance of a behavior by the dog. It is fine if handler movement is included. A dog may get on a prop and the handler may circle the prop as the dog holds a "wait". Or, a dog and handler may circle a prop together. Or, a dog and handler can circle a cane simultaneously in opposite directions. But, the handler should not use the prop without the dog as one of the prop behaviors.

- Each distinct prop move, or behavior, can only be used twice over the course of the three separate performances.

- There is no restriction on repetition of non-prop moves, but the non-prop portion of the three sequences should not be identical across the three performances.

Additional Information

- There is no minimum time for each video clip, but the maximum time for each of the three video clips is 1 minute per clip. I expect that most of the video clips will be considerably shorter.

- Please be sure that music is playing in the background for each of your videos.

  No music overlays can be used for this title.

- No food or toys may be in your hand in your submission clips unless your dog is performing in the Debut or Laude Classes. You may have food in a pocket or bait bag, or a toy concealed.

- For submission, the three video clips may be edited together into a single video, or they may be submitted as a Playlist.

Demo Video (One Sequence, Two Props)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1gwOG122WM

Title Offered

The Title consists of only this one leg, and teams who qualify on this single submission will earn the Festival of Props Sonata Title (Festival of Props – Second Level)

**PFS – FOP - Concerto**

Or

**PFS – FOP - Concerto (Debut)**

Or

**PFS – FOP - Concerto (Laude)**

Virtuoso

In addition, once you and your dog have earned the Festival of Props Concerto title, you and your dog will be awarded the distinction of "Festival of Props Virtuoso". The distinction awarded will be in the class in which the team earned the Concerto title.

Virtuoso distinctions are as follows:

**Festival of Props Virtuoso**

**Festival of Props Debut Virtuoso**

**Festival of Props Laude Virtuoso**

A team can attain this distinction in any/all classes by earning the Festival of Props Concerto title in that particular class.

# *Preparing Your Entry*

Train and Practice

Once you have designed your sequences, try each one out and practice it with your dog until your dog can perform each sequence fluently.

As is always the case in Poised for Success Freestyle, both verbal and physical cues are welcome.

Video Your Performances

Once you have designed and practiced your performances, video each one in a separate video clip with music playing in the background.

Remember, as always in Poised for Success Freestyle, all of you and your dog should be in the picture throughout the performance. If you "lose" a bit of yourself or your dog briefly, it is OK, but the overall impression of the performance should be that you and your dog are both performing.

Additional Information

- Be sure that music is playing in the background for each of your videos.

  No music overlays can be used for this title.

- No food or toys may be in your hand in your submission clips unless your dog is performing in the Debut or Laude Classes. You may have food in a pocket or bait bag, or a toy concealed.

Submit Your Entry

The entry fee for each submission is $15.00. One video makes up a single submission for this Title. The Title consists of only this one leg, and teams who qualify on this single submission will earn the Festival of Props Title.

Each qualifying team will receive a printed certificate and flat ribbon in the mail. If you prefer to have your certificate emailed, please indicate that preference when you submit.

To enter, please submit payment of $15.00 to:

pfsfreestyle@gmail.com

Then, fill out the following entry form and submit online:

https://form.jotform.com/253188116592058

Entries – Festival of Props

Entries for the Festival of Props will open on June 15, 2026.

Entries must be received no later than September 15, 2026.

If corrections are needed to the entry, all corrections must be submitted by October 15, 2026

Enjoy! I look forward to seeing your entries!

