

# Reinforcement learning cont

→ Actor critic  
(Both)

\* Ex's of RL: Games (Alpha Go, chess), Robotics,

Finance (stock predictions), Health care, self driving cars (Tesla)

↳ Ext of policy based  
(learn strategies)

↳ Value based (learn best moves)

\* Algos: Q-learning, DQN, SARSA, PPO, A3C, REINFORCE, etc

\* Challenges: sample inefficiency → Needs lots of trial and error

Exploration is hard → can get stuck on bad habits

Sparse rewards → sometimes the agent rarely gets feedback

Safety → in real world (cars) bad action can be dangerous

\* analogy: imagine training a dog

• state: Dog sees ball • action: Dog fetches or ignores

• Reward: Gets reward for fetching □ over time dog learns fetch = treat  
⇒ reinforced behaviour

\* Training (a training loop is trial and error learning):

1) initialize agent and environment

• agent starts with random policy (no clue what to do)

• Env is set (eg a game, sim robot)

2) interactive loop

• agent observes state ( $s_t$ ) • agent chooses action ( $a_t$ ) random at first  
(later learned from policy)

• Env responds with: • Reward ( $r_t$ ) (numeric feedback) • Next state ( $s_{t+1}$ ) → new situation

3) learning step (update step)

Policy parameter (PG) or

• Agent updates either: Value function (QL/DQL) or Both (actor critic)

• Goal = maximize expected cumulative reward over time

4) Repeat many episodes: the agent plays episodes (full seq of tasks till task ends)

• with each episode policy improves 102 • Try → Feedback → Adjust → Repeat