

In order to begin to understand dogs, you should become familiar with the different types or breeds of dogs as recognized by the American Kennel Club.

American Kennel Club

The American Kennel Club (AKC) was established on September 17, 1884. It is a nonprofit organization devoted to the advancement of **purebred** dogs. The AKC maintains a registry of recognized breeds, adopts and enforces rules governing dog shows, obedience trials and field trials, and fosters interest in the health and welfare of purebred dogs.



Purebred - Dogs whose mother and father belong to the same breed, and are themselves of unmixed descent since recognition of the breed.

FACT or FICTION

Dog obedience training is counterproductive to dogs being shown in dog shows for conformation.

Fiction

First of all, conformation refers to a dog's physical features, partnered with the absence of extreme shyness or aggression. Part of the reason behind this myth is that some of the obedience commands commonly taught might cause dogs problems in the show ring. For example, the Automatic Sit is often taught in obedience. When heeling the dog, the dog is encouraged to sit whenever the handler stops. This Automatic Sit response is not desirable in the conformation ring. A simple solution is to avoid teaching the Automatic Sit to dogs being shown for conformation.

Obedience training can enhance a dog's ring presence, which means how well she focuses on the handler. Obviously a dog taught to focus more strongly on the person walking her will likely appear more attentive in the show ring.

While obedience training is not a major advantage to a dog or handler in the show ring, it is certainly not a disadvantage.

Breeds

There are currently seven canine breed groups as established by the AKC:

1. Sporting
2. Working
3. Herding
4. Terrier
5. Non-Sporting
6. Hound
7. Toy

Trainers who become breed experts can often foster respect from their clients. When a client has a less common breed of dog and the trainer identifies that breed, it can be fairly impressive.

Also, a good working knowledge of dog breeds allows a trainer to present an educated guess as to the lineage of a **mixed breed** dog. Most owners appreciate not having to classify their dog as a “mutt.” Thus, most dog professionals refer to dogs of unknown parentage as **All-American** dogs.

Mixed Breed - Dogs born from parents who are not of the same breed and at least one of the parent's breeds is known.

All-American - Dogs born from parents whose breeds are unknown.



Sporting



American Water Spaniel

Clumber Spaniel

English Setter

Field Spaniel

German Wirehaired Pointer

Irish Setter

Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever

Sussex Spaniel

Welsh Springer Spaniel

Brittany

Cocker Spaniel

English Cocker Spaniel

Flat-Coated Retriever

Golden Retriever

Irish Water Spaniel

Pointer

Vizsla

Wirehaired Pointing Griffon

Chesapeake Bay Retriever

Curly-Coated Retriever

English Springer Spaniel

German Shorthaired Pointer

Gordon Setter

Labrador Retriever

Spinone Italiano

Weimaraner

Common Characteristics of the Sporting Breed Group

High Distractibility - While this characteristic helps dogs of these breeds notice and find birds and other game, it may make it difficult for them to achieve focused attention during exercises like Sit-Stay and Down-Stay. They may have trouble completing the Come cue in distracting situations. Sporting dogs may have a tendency to become distracted by other dogs and people in group class.

Sensitive - The Spaniels and Setters in this group may be overly *sensitive*. This may make them easy to correct, but they may not always be suitable to live with small children.

Insensitive - The Retrievers in this group may be overly *insensitive*. This may make them more difficult to correct but better suited to live with small children.

High Need for Daily Exercise - Sporting breeds are sometimes described as *hyper* since they have been bred to notice and react to everything, even while in motion. These dogs require vigorous daily exercise, such as running. A walk around the block is not enough. These dogs may develop problem behaviors like barking, digging, destructiveness, pacing or fence running if not sufficiently exercised.

Working



Akita

Bernese Mountain Dog

Bullmastiff

Giant Schnauzer

Greater Swiss Mountain Dog

Mastiff

Portuguese Water Dog

Samoyed

Tibetan Mastiff

Alaskan Malamute

Black Russian Terrier

Doberman Pinscher

Great Dane

Komondor

Neapolitan Mastiff

Rottweiler

Siberian Husky

Anatolian Shepherd

Boxer

German Pinscher

Great Pyrenees

Kuvasz

Newfoundland

Saint Bernard

Standard Schnauzer

Common Characteristics of the Working Breed Group

Dominant - These dogs have been bred to be dominant. The independent work they are asked to do like guarding and protecting people and property requires dominant, independent traits. Some of these dogs may try to dominate their owners if the owners don't show strong, fair, consistent leadership.

Territorial and Possessive - Dogs of working breeds may become overly territorial or possessive over objects like their toys, their owners, or even their favorite areas of the house and yard. This may make them difficult for inexperienced owners to handle.

Independent Nature - These dogs' independent nature may come off as stubbornness during training. The owner should be prepared to focus on positive reinforcement techniques. If the owner withholds everything the dog likes (food, petting, toys, etc.) and only gives those things as rewards for obedience, the dog will be more willing to obey. ABC refers to this concept as the **"No Free Lunch Policy."** This means that the dog will be given nothing she likes for free. She must obey an obedience cue before receiving anything.

Insensitive – Dogs of working breeds may be very insensitive and difficult to correct. They may

react to corrections by becoming aggressive or shutting down. This is another reason for the owners of these dogs to focus on positive reinforcement training. It is also important for the owners of these dogs to establish an appropriate rank and relationship with their dog (see *Leadership Exercises in Learning Theory*). These dogs must view their owners as strong, fair, consistent leaders.

Herding



Australian Cattle Dog

Belgian Malinois

Border Collie

Canaan Dog

German Shepherd Dog

Polish Lowland Sheepdog

Australian Shepherd

Belgian Sheepdog

Bouvier des Flanders

Cardigan Welsh Corgi

Old English Sheepdog

Swedish Vallhund

Bearded Collie

Belgian Tervuren

Briard

Collie

Pembroke Welsh Corgi

Shetland Sheepdog

Common Characteristics of the Herding Breed Group

High Prey/Chase Drive - This characteristic can make it difficult for these dogs to become desensitized to the activities of small children and moving objects like bicycles and skates.

Herding Behavior - This characteristic can also make it difficult for these dogs to become desensitized to the activities of small children. These dogs are likely to bark and nip when excited.

High Need for Mental Activity - Herding dogs may develop undesirable behaviors like barking, tail chasing, animal chasing, child chasing, pacing, fence running, digging or aggression if not given enough acceptable activities such as Fetch, obedience and tricks.

High Need for Daily Exercise - Without sufficient exercise, these dogs may develop excessive barking, tail chasing, animal chasing, child chasing, pacing, fence running, digging or aggression.

Easily Trained - Herding breeds are typically easier to train since they were bred specifically to work closely with humans. Herding requires an attentive, closely bonded dog who is very sensitive to her master's every movement and command.

Overly Attached - Since Herding breeds tend to have a high pack drive and desire to please, they can become overly attached to their owners. They are prone to developing separation anxiety if not taught to accept being apart from their owners at an early age. Crate training is highly recommended.

Terrier



Airedale Terrier

American Staffordshire Terrier

Australian Terrier

Bedlington Terrier

Border Terrier

Bull Terrier

Cairn Terrier

Dandie Dinmont Terrier

Glen of Imaal Terrier

Irish Terrier

Kerry Blue Terrier

Lakeland Terrier

Standard Manchester Terrier

Miniature Bull Terrier

Miniature Schnauzer

Norfolk Terrier

Norwich Terrier

Scottish Terrier

Sealyham Terrier

Skye Terrier

Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier

Smooth Fox Terrier

Staffordshire Bull Terrier

Welsh Terrier

West Highland White Terrier

Wire Fox Terrier

Common Characteristics of the Terrier Breed Group

Bred to be Active and Tenacious - This enables them to hunt vermin and not back down if attacked. This characteristic may make these dogs difficult for inexperienced dog owners to handle. These dogs may respond aggressively to common corrections that most dogs would back down from.

High Need for Daily Exercise - Terriers may be seen as destructive and *hyper* when not given enough exercise or acceptable work to do like Fetch, obedience and tricks.

Alert and Agile - These dogs are quite fast, which can make them difficult for their owners to keep up with. Inexperienced owners may feel left behind by these dogs, both mentally and

physically.

Digging and Hunting Instincts may Cause Problems - These dogs may become destructive if their energy is not properly channeled.

Can be Dog/Animal-Aggressive - Since many terriers were bred to hunt and kill vermin, they may hunt and try to kill small animals they encounter. Some terriers have been bred to fight other dogs.

Non-Sporting



American Eskimo Dog

Bulldog

Dalmatian

Keeshond

Poodle

Tibetan Spaniel



Bichon Frise

Chinese Shar-Pei

Finnish Spitz

Lhasa Apso

Schipperke

Tibetan Terrier



Boston Terrier

Chow Chow

French Bulldog

Löwchen

Shiba Inu

Common Characteristics of the Non-Sporting Breed Group

Mixed Group – The dogs in this breed group typically have less in common than the breeds of some of the other groups. Some members of this group have characteristics of the working group (Keeshond and Schipperke) while others have characteristics of the sporting group (Finnish Spitz, Poodle and Dalmatian). Other members were bred specifically to guard (Chow Chow, Chinese Shar-Pei and Lhasa Apso) while others were bred to be companion animals or gifts (Bichon Frise, Tibetan Spaniel, Boston Terrier, French Bulldog and Tibetan Terrier).

Difficult to Motivate - Since most of these dogs were not bred for labor-intensive purposes, they may be difficult to motivate for training. The No Free Lunch Policy can help increase motivation to obey obedience cues.

Make Better Pets - On the other hand, the fact that many breeds in this group were not bred to work can make them more suitable as pets. Less drive to hunt and chase can render these dogs easier for inexperienced dog owners to handle.

Hound



Afghan

American Foxhound

Basenji

Basset Hound

Beagle

Black and Tan Coonhound

Bloodhound

Borzoi

Dachshund

English Foxhound

Greyhound

Harrier

Ibizan Hound

Irish Wolfhound

Norwegian Elkhound

Otterhound

Petite Basset Griffon Vendéen

Pharaoh Hound

Plott

Rhodesian Ridgeback

Saluki

Whippet

Common Characteristics of the Hound Breed Group

Easily Distracted - Scent and sometimes movement (in the case of sight hounds) can easily distract these dogs. Owners should be prepared to increase their dog's motivation to focus on them by placing the dog on the No Free Lunch Policy. Being allowed to sniff around may actually be used as a reward for obedience.

Independent Nature - Hounds are bred to work independently of humans. Because of this, these dogs may have less pack drive or desire to please their owners. This sometimes comes off as stubbornness or stupidity. The owner should be prepared to decrease the number of repetitions they use when practicing obedience, as these dogs will quickly become bored. Rewards for obedience must be considered valuable by the dog and should be the highlight of her day. Again, the owner should also implement the No Free Lunch Policy.

Toy



Affenpinscher

Chihuahua

Havanese

Maltese

Papillon

Poodle

Silky Terrier

Brussels Griffon

Chinese Crested

Italian Greyhound

Toy Manchester Terrier

Pekingese

Pug

Toy Fox Terrier

Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

English Toy Spaniel

Japanese Chin

Miniature Pinscher

Pomeranian

Shih Tzu

Yorkshire Terrier

Common Characteristics of the Toy Breed Group

Size-Related Lenience - Sometimes a small dog's misbehavior is dismissed due to her size. For example, it is much easier to ignore a Maltese barking at strangers on a walk than it would be to ignore a Rottweiler exhibiting the same behavior. In addition, some dog owners view small dogs as surrogate children or "toys" and not the true dogs they are. Owners that treat their small dogs like this can inadvertently send the wrong message to their dog about their relationship, increasing the difficulty of obedience training. This skewed relationship often creates behavioral problems that would never be tolerated in a larger dog.

Training Small Stature Dogs - Training may be more difficult in the beginning because of the dog's stature. Some owners will find it frustrating to bend over repetitively to reward their dog. To help with this problem, the owner can place his dog on a table to train or train while he is seated on the floor or in a chair. Using a target stick or teaching the dog to catch tossed food treats can alleviate the need for the owner to bend down.

Small Dog, Big Attitude - Many dogs of the toy breeds do not realize that they are small and often behave as though they are larger dogs. It is common to see a toy breed dog confront a much bigger dog to play with or fight.

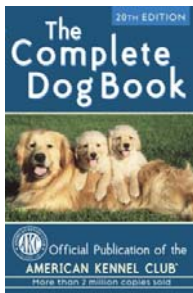
Delicate Physiology - Owners of toy breed dogs should be aware of their dog's delicate physiology. It is possible for a toy breed to break a leg just by jumping off a sofa or bed. Care should be taken to not overdo any physical methods of training or correction.

Miscellaneous Class

The Miscellaneous Class was established by the AKC as a transitory class for any breed desiring to advance to full AKC recognition. A breed is admitted into the Miscellaneous Class upon meeting specific requirements, such as a nationwide interest and an active parent club with serious and expanding breeding activity over a wide geographic area. When the AKC is satisfied that a breed in this class is continuing a healthy, dynamic growth, the breed becomes eligible for inclusion in one of the seven AKC recognized breed groups.

It is wise to become familiar with common characteristics for these breeds. While we have included a very general description of each breed group's characteristics, we would suggest that you do some more specific studying on your own.

SUGGESTED READING 📖



The Complete Dog Book

Published by Howell

The Complete Dog Book is an excellent resource guide that lists every recognized AKC breed along with detailed descriptions of each one.
