



Dog Facts: Dog Breeds & Groups

A **breed** is a relatively homogeneous group of animals within a species, developed and maintained by man. All dogs, impure as well as pure-bred, and several wild cousins such as wolves and foxes, are one family. Each breed was created by man, using selective breeding to get desired qualities. The result is an almost unbelievable diversity of purebred dogs which will, when bred to others of their breed produce their own kind. Through the ages, man designed dogs that could hunt, guard, or herd according to his needs.

The following is the listing of the 7 American Kennel Club Groups in which similar breeds are organized. There are other dog registries, such as the United Kennel Club (known as the UKC) that lists these and many other breeds of dogs not recognized by the AKC at present.

Sporting Group



Naturally active and alert, Sporting dogs make likeable, well rounded companions. Members of the Group include pointers, retrievers, setters and spaniels. Remarkable for their instincts in water and woods, many of these breeds actively continue to participate in hunting and other field activities. Potential owners of Sporting dogs need to realize that most require regular, invigorating exercise.

American Water Spaniel
Brittany
Chesapeake Bay Retriever
Clumber Spaniel
Cocker Spaniel
Curly-Coated Retriever
English Cocker Spaniel
English Springer Spaniel
English Setter
Field Spaniel
Flat-Coated Retriever
German Shorthaired Pointer
German Wirehaired Pointer
Golden Retriever
Gordon Setter
Irish Setter
Irish Water Spaniel
Labrador Retriever
Pointer
Sussex Spaniel
Vizsla
Weimaraner
Welsh Springer Spaniel
Wirehaired Pointing Griffon

Non-Sporting Group



Non-sporting dogs are a diverse group. Here are sturdy animals with as different personalities and appearances as the Chow Chow, Dalmatian, French Bulldog, and Keeshond. Talk about differences in size, coat, and visage! Some, like the Schipperke and Tibetan Spaniel are uncommon sights in the average neighborhood. Others, however, like the Poodle and Lhasa Apso, have quite a large following. The breeds in the Non-Sporting Group are a varied collection in terms of size, coat, personality and overall appearance.

American Eskimo Dog
Bichon Frise
Boston Terrier
Bulldog
Chinese Sharpei
Chow Chow
Dalmatian
Finnish Spitz
French Bulldog
Keeshond
Lhasa Apso
Poodle
Schipperke
Shiba Inu
Tibetan Spaniel

Terrier Group



People familiar with this Group invariably comment on the distinctive terrier personality. These are feisty, energetic dogs whose sizes range from fairly small, as in the Norfolk, Cairn or West Highland White Terrier, to the grand Airedale Terrier. Terriers typically have little tolerance for other animals, including other dogs. Their ancestors were bred to hunt and kill vermin. Many continue to project the attitude that they're always eager for a spirited argument. Most terriers have wiry coats that require special care known as stripping in order to maintain a characteristic appearance. In general, they make engaging pets, but require owners with the determination to match their dogs' lively characters.

Airedale Terrier
American Staffordshire Terrier
Australian Terrier
Bedlington Terrier
Border Terrier
Bull Terrier
Cairn Terrier
Dandie Dinmont Terrier
Fox Terrier (Smooth)
Fox Terrier (Wire)
Irish Terrier
Kerry Blue Terrier
Lakeland Terrier
Manchester Terrier
Miniature Bull Terrier
Miniature Schnauzer
Norfolk Terrier
Norwich Terrier
Scottish Terrier
Sealyham Terrier
Skye Terrier
Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier
Staffordshire Bull Terrier
Welsh Terrier
West Highland White Terrier

Hound Group



Most hounds share the common ancestral trait of being used for hunting. Some use acute scenting powers to follow a trail. Others demonstrate a phenomenal gift of stamina as they relentlessly run down quarry. Beyond this, however, generalizations about hounds are hard to come by, since the Group encompasses quite a diverse lot. There are Pharaoh Hounds, Norwegian Elkhounds, Afghans and Beagles, among others. Some hounds share the distinct ability to produce a unique sound known as baying.

Afghan Hound
Basenji
Basset Hound
Beagle
Black and Tan Coonhound
Bloodhound
Borzoi
Dachshund
Foxhound (American)
Foxhound (English)
Greyhound
Harrier
Ibizan Hound
Irish wolfhound
Norwegian Elkhound
Otterhound
Petit Basset Griffon Vendeen
Pharaoh Hound
Rhodesian Ridgeback
Saluki
Scottish Deerhound
Whippet

Toy Group



The diminutive size and winsome expressions of Toy dogs illustrate the main function of this Group: to embody sheer delight. Don't let their tiny stature fool you, Many are tough as nails. If you haven't experienced the barking of an angry Chihuahua, for example, well, just wait. Toy dogs will always be popular with city dwellers & people without much living space. They make ideal apartment dogs & terrific lap warmers. Incidentally, small breeds may be found in every Group, not just the Toy Group. Some will advise to consider getting a small breed, to minimize some of the problems inherent in canines such as shedding, creating messes & cost of care. Training aside, it's still easier to control a ten-pound dog than it is one ten times that size.

Affenpinscher
Brussels Griffon
Chihuahua
Chinese Crested
Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
English Toy Spaniel
Italian Greyhound
Japanese Chin
Maltese
Manchester Terrier
Miniature Pinscher
Papillon
Pekingese
Pomeranian
Poodle
Pug
Shih Tzu
Silky Terrier
Yorkshire Terrier

Herding Group



The Herding Group, created in 1983, is the newest AKC classification; its members were formerly members of the Working Group. All breeds share the fabulous ability to control the movement of other animals. A remarkable example is the low-set Corgi, perhaps one foot tall at the shoulders, that can drive a herd of cows many times its size to pasture by leaping and nipping at their heels. The vast majority of Herding dogs, as household pets, never cross paths with a farm animal. Nevertheless, pure instinct prompts many of these dogs to gently herd their owners, especially the children of the family. In general, these intelligent dogs make excellent companions and respond beautifully to training exercises.

Australian Cattle Dog
Australian Shepherd
Bearded Collie
Belgian Malinois
Belgian Sheepdog
Belgian Tervuren
Border Collie
Bouvier Des Flandres
Briard
Canaan Dog
Collie
German Shepherd Dog
Old English Sheepdog
Puli
Shetland Sheepdog
Welsh Corgi (Cardigan)
Welsh Corgi (Pembroke)

Working Group



Dogs of the Working Group were bred to perform such jobs as guarding property, pulling sleds and performing water rescues. They have been invaluable assets to man throughout the ages. The Doberman Pinscher, Siberian Husky and Great Dane are included in this Group, to name just a few. Quick to learn, these intelligent, capable animals make solid companions. Their considerable dimensions and strength alone, however, make many working dogs unsuitable as pets for average families. And again, by virtue of their size alone, these dogs must be properly trained.

Akita
Alaskan Malamute
Bernese Mountain Dog
Boxer
Bullmastiff
Doberman Pinscher
Giant Schnauzer
Great Dane
Great Pyrenees
Greater Swiss Mountain Dog
Komondor
Kuvasz
Mastiff
Newfoundland
Portuguese Water Dog
Rottweiler
Saint Bernard
Samoyed
Siberian Husky
Standard Schnauzer

Miscellaneous Class

Authorities acknowledge that in total throughout the world there are several hundred distinct breeds of purebred dog. Those officially recognized for registration in the Stud Book of the American Kennel Club. The AKC, however, provides for a regular method of development for a new breed which may result in that breed's full recognition. Briefly stated, the requirement for admission to the Stud Book is clear and categorical proof that a substantial, sustained nationwide interest and activity in the breed exists. This includes an active parent club, with serious and expanding breeding activity over a wide geographic area. Breeds in the Miscellaneous Class may compete in AKC obedience trials and earn obedience titles. They may also compete at conformation shows, but here are limited to competition in the Miscellaneous Class and are not eligible for championship points.

Dogs currently in the Miscellaneous Class include:

Anatolian Shepherd
Havanese
Jack Russell Terrier
Lowchen
Spinone Italiano

MIXED BREEDS

Although organized dog clubs generally focus on the maintenance of recognized "pure breeds," most dogs in the world today are mongrels. Purebred dogs constitute a category that has been created through human intervention by the selective breeding of dogs with very similar characteristics. Crossbred dogs result when two dogs of different pedigree mate and produce offspring.

In theory, any domestic dog, and many wild dogs, can interbreed with one another, though physical size and geographic range may limit this possibility. Sometimes, purebred dogs are deliberately outcrossed with other breeds to add stability, strength or variety to the existing breed.

Mongrel offspring combine the traits of both

parents and may be created deliberately to produce dogs with mixed skills or physical attributes. Since mongrels combine a more varied mix of genetic traits, they generally do not suffer from purebred ailments. Since interbreeding can lead to a variety of breed-specific weaknesses and diseases, mixed breeds are often more hearty and healthy.

Nearly every breed has been created by combining dogs and fostering a new line, meaning that even pedigreed dogs began their evolutionary journeys as mongrels. Today, a new breed can become a recognized group if the repeatability of the genetic line is established and it is proven that inbred weaknesses have been eliminated or diminished.

