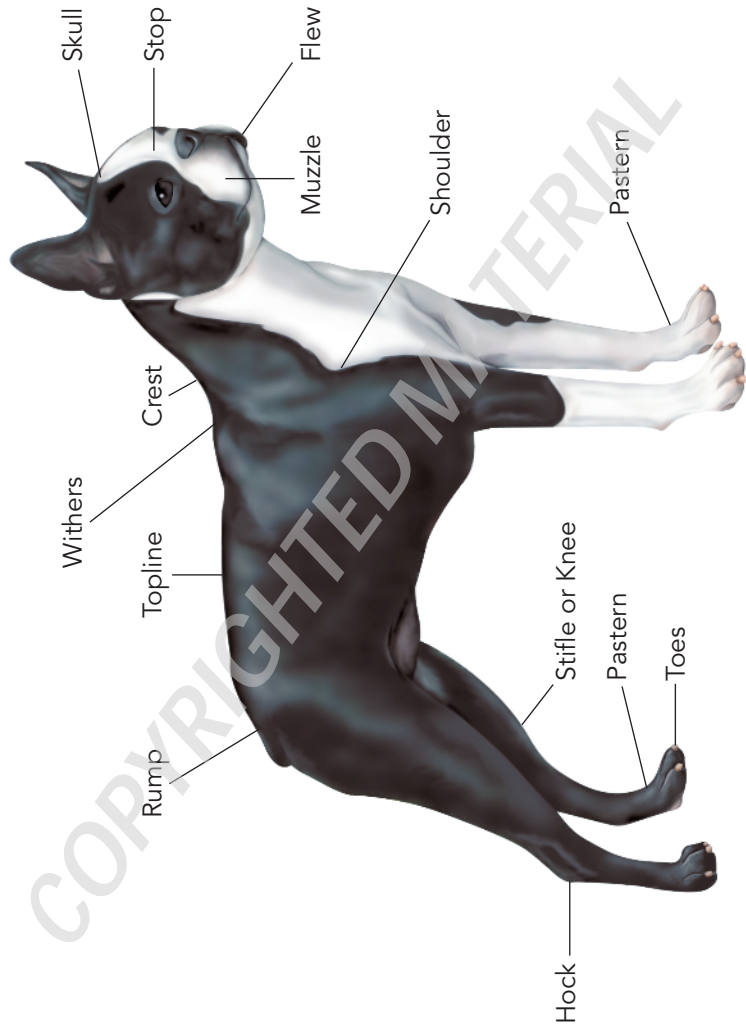


The Boston Terrier





Chapter 1

What Is a Boston Terrier?



A Boston Terrier is everyone's favorite prom date. Dressed to the nines in a black and white tuxedo, he is quite the dog. With manners galore, this Yankee Doodle boy is outgoing and lively without ever being pushy or snooty. All that's missing is the carnation boutonniere and a stretch limo.

The Boston's nickname is the American Gentleman, and it's a fitting description. Although descended from grand old English stock, he's a true all-American canine success story. The Boston is one of only a few breeds developed in the United States.

The Boston Terrier is friendly and lively, affectionate, loyal, and intelligent. He's a good watchdog and is good with children. He sheds very little, and needs minimal grooming and moderate exercise. In fact, the only special care you must take is that he needs to be kept cool outdoors in warm weather.

It's no wonder that the Boston Terrier placed either first and second in American Kennel Club (AKC) registration statistics from 1905 to 1939, and has always ranked in the top twenty among all breeds registered with the AKC.

A Non-Sporting Breed

The Boston Terrier is a member of the Non-Sporting Group. The Non-Sporting Group is one of seven groups of breeds (the others are Sporting, Hound, Working, Terriers, Toys, and Herding) set up by the AKC. The dogs in each group share similar characteristics, such as their appearance, history, personality, and what job they were originally bred to perform for their owners. Dogs in the

What Is the AKC?

The American Kennel Club (AKC) is the oldest and largest purebred dog registry in the United States. Its main function is to record the pedigrees of dogs of the breeds it recognizes. While AKC registration papers are a guarantee that a dog is purebred, they are absolutely not a guarantee of the quality of the dog—as the AKC itself will tell you.

The AKC makes the rules for all the canine sporting events it sanctions and approves judges for those events. It is also involved in various public education programs and legislative efforts regarding dog ownership. More recently, the AKC has helped establish a foundation to study canine health issues and a program to register microchip numbers for companion animal owners. The AKC has no individual members—its members are national and local breed clubs and clubs dedicated to various competitive sports.

Non-Sporting group are diverse, perform a variety of tasks, and are generally not regarded as game hunters.

While you might think at first that the Boston Terrier should belong to the Terrier Group because of his name, he technically isn't a terrier. You can learn more about the Boston's ancestry in chapter 2, but the "terrier" part of his name comes from the fact that the Boston was the result of breeding a Bulldog to the now-extinct White English Terrier.

Careful, selective breeding over the years produced a dog with a body that is more like a terrier's than a Bulldog's, although Bostons inherited their friendliness toward people from the Bulldog.

The Ideal Boston

The ideal Boston Terrier is probably sitting on your lap right now. To many pet owners it doesn't matter what their Boston's ears look like or how long his body is, as long as he doesn't run out of kisses for everyone in the family and is healthy and active.

Conscientious breeders think these characteristics are first and foremost, but they work very hard to raise the bar. There are many small dogs who are good looking, sweet, and fun-loving, but it's the Boston Terrier's head and his distinctive tuxedo markings that set him apart from all other breeds.

This chapter briefly describes the Boston Terrier's breed characteristics, as outlined in the breed standard. To read the official breed standard, refer to the web sites of the AKC or the Boston Terrier Club of America (listed in the appendix).

Size

The AKC breed standard divides Bostons into three weight classes for show purposes: under 15 pounds, 15 pounds to under 20 pounds, and from 20 to 25 pounds. According to the standard, you should be able to tell the difference between males and females just by looking at their overall size; the females should also look slightly more refined.

Although the standard doesn't mention how tall Bostons should be or how much males and females should weigh, breeders generally produce females who weigh 12 to 14 pounds, and males who range between 15 and 18 pounds. Breeders like to see Bostons no taller than 12 inches at the top point of the shoulder (called the withers) and no shorter than 9 inches.



Bostons come in a few sizes, but all are definitely small.

Neck, Topline, and Body

The Boston's body is small, compact, and square, not spindly or coarse. The head and neck help balance the dog, so the neck should be just the right length, slightly arched, and in balance with the head.

If the dog's tail curves upward, it's a fault, and it's a serious fault if it is ever docked (cut to make it shorter). It's a serious fault if the Boston has a sway back (sags in the middle), a roach back (an upward curvature of the spine), or is slab-sided (flat ribs without much spring to create a rounded appearance).

The Boston's back should look short; just short enough to square the body.

Head

The Boston's breed standard has 100 points, with each feature of the dog assigned a certain number of those points. Because the Boston's head sets him apart from all other breeds and is an important characteristic, 15 points are assigned to the head.

Like his overall appearance, the Boston's head should be square and in proportion to the rest of the body. A Boston with a correct head can take your breath away. The head should be free from wrinkles, and have flat cheeks with a well-defined stop. (The stop is the indentation where the nose joins the skull.) The expression should be alert and kind, which indicates intelligence.



His square, well-proportioned head sets this breed apart.

Eyes

Look into a Boston's eyes and you will see his soul. His eyes should be set wide apart, and be round and dark. The eyes should not show too much white or haw, which is the third eyelid. Blue eyes or any trace of blue disqualifies a Boston in the show ring. There are very few Bostons with blue eyes because responsible breeders never use dogs with blue eyes for breeding. Veterinary researchers have suggested that there is a slight correlation between blue eyes and deafness.

What Is a Breed Standard?

A breed standard is a detailed description of the perfect dog of that breed. Breeders use the standard as a guide in their breeding programs, and judges use it to evaluate the dogs in conformation shows. The standard is written by the national breed club, using guidelines established by the registry that recognizes the breed (such as the AKC or UKC).

The first section of the breed standard gives a brief overview of the breed's history. Then it describes the dog's general appearance and size as an adult. Next is a detailed description of the head and neck, then the back and body, and the front and rear legs. The standard then describes the ideal coat and how the dog should be presented in the show ring. It also lists all acceptable colors, patterns, and markings. Then there's a section on how the dog moves, called *gait*. Finally, there's a general description of the dog's temperament.

Each section also lists characteristics that are considered to be faults or disqualifications in the conformation ring. Superficial faults in appearance are often what distinguish a pet-quality dog from a show- or competition-quality dog. However, some faults affect the way a dog moves or his overall health. And faults in temperament are serious business.

Ears

The ears are small and erect, and should be as close to the corners of the head as possible. They can either be cropped or left natural. The desired effect is for the ears to stand erect.

When a puppy is teething, between 12 and 18 weeks of age, his ears will frequently be a little floppy and stick out slightly from the side. They settle into their permanent position by about 8 months old.

When they are finished teething, many Bostons have ears that naturally stand erect. When they don't, some breeders will have them cropped, which means surgically removing the extra piece of earflap that prevents them from standing

erect. Many breeders can tell early on what the ears will look like when the dog is full grown. They may use tape to reinforce the soft cartilage in the ear if it is folded over.

Cropping is controversial and is prohibited in Britain, New Zealand, and some other countries. If you want a Boston with perfect ears and want to have them cropped, this procedure must be done when he is just a few months old. Only a very experienced veterinarian who specializes in this procedure should perform this surgery. Before proceeding, discuss cropping thoroughly with your dog's breeder and your veterinarian. There is a great deal of care required after the surgery.

No matter what position your Boston's ears eventually assume, he will always be a wonderful pet for your family.

Muzzle and Nose

The Boston's muzzle is short and must be proportionate to the skull. It should be free from wrinkles and shorter than it is wide or deep. From the stop to the end of the nose, the muzzle is parallel to the top of the skull.



The cute, scrunchy muzzle and upturned nose are important for maximum adorableness.

The nose should be black with a well-defined line between the nostrils. If a dog has a Dudley nose, he's disqualified from competing in the show ring. (A Dudley nose is a flesh-colored nose without any black pigmentation; it is more susceptible to sunburn.)

When a Boston's mouth is closed, his tongue and teeth should not be showing. If so, it's a serious fault in conformation competition.

Color and Markings

Three colors are mentioned in the Boston Terrier breed standard—brindle, seal, and black—all with white markings. Brindle is a pattern in which layers of black hairs in regions of a lighter color produce irregular stripes. Seal is black with a red cast when viewed in the sun or

bright light. According to the breed standard, brindle and white is the preferred Boston color, but a black and white coat is permissible.

Solid black, solid brindle, or solid seal without white markings is a disqualification. The Boston must have a white muzzle band, a white blaze between the eyes, and white on his forehead.

There is no such thing as a Boston of a rare color such as red, blue, or all white. Sometimes unscrupulous breeders or brokers will try to sell dogs of these colors for a very high price and say they are rare and special Bostons. But they absolutely are not Bostons, no matter what they tell you. Here's why: A Boston is a Boston because he's brindle, seal, or black, with white markings. That's what the breed standard says, and the standard is what defines the breed. So buyer beware!

Gait

The Boston Terrier does not have a job that requires specific athletic ability, such as running after game or chasing down a fox. His main job is to be a treasured companion. Nevertheless, it's still important that the Boston's gait be sure-footed and that he move with perfect rhythm, with each step showing grace and power.

It's a fault if the dog weaves, rolls, or paddles his feet when he trots. It's a serious fault if one foot crosses in front of the other while the dog is moving. The idea here is that the Boston's movement should be straight and efficient without being cumbersome.

Temperament

The breed standard says that the Boston's disposition should be friendly and lively. Of course, you probably already knew that!