

1

Dog Breed Identification

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this chapter, the reader should be able to:

- recognize common breeds of dog species;
- identify and describe American Kennel Club (AKC) recognized dog breeds;
- discuss and describe the seven classes of dogs.

1.1 Introduction

Dogs are direct descendants of the wolf. The wolf is classified as *Canis lupus* and the dog as *Canis familiaris*. Dogs have become the second most popular animal in pet ownership, with over 73 million pet dogs in the United States alone. It is estimated that there is on average one dog per household in half of all American family homes. There are over 230 known pure breeds of dogs recognized by the American Kennel Club (AKC). The purpose of the AKC is to uphold the integrity of dog breeds, promoting purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Founded in 1884, the AKC advocates the purebred dog as a family companion, advancing canine health and well-being, working to protect the rights of all dog owners, and promoting responsible dog ownership.

Points to remember. There are over 230 recognized pure dog breeds.

1.2 Characteristics of Dogs

Dogs have a large variety of size ranges (height to weight). The height of dogs at the shoulder ranges from 6 to 40

inches and weight varies from 2 to over 200 pounds. Life expectancy ranges from 9 to 15 years, with some dogs now living into their early 20s. Small dogs have a longer life expectancy than large and giant breeds (Figure 1.1). Dogs share the following common traits:

- shedding hair once per year;
- non-retractable claws;
- 42 adult teeth, 28 baby teeth;
- pointed canine teeth;
- sweat glands located on nose and feet;
- panting;
- hearing two times better than in humans and at higher frequencies;

1.3 Classes of Breeds

Dog breeds are classified by the reason for their development and purpose or use. There are seven groups of dogs that have been organized based on the dog's original purpose and the traits it possesses in today's world (Table 1.1).

Points to remember. There are seven groups of dogs based on their reason for development.

1.3.1 Herding Group

The herding group developed in 1983 and is the newest AKC classification (Figure 1.2). All herding breeds share the ability to control the movement of other animals, by driving, moving, and containing livestock in specific locations. Many of these dogs will nip at the heels of animals to move them in set directions. Many herding dogs, as household pets, never cross paths with a farm animal. Nevertheless, pure instinct prompts these dogs to gently herd their owners, especially children within



Figure 1.1 Small breed dogs have a longer average life expectancy than large and giant breeds. The larger the dog breed, the shorter the life span. *Source:* Courtesy of Shari Krause.

the family. Herding dogs are among the most intelligent, making excellent companions, and also obedience and agility dogs. Herding breeds are high in energy and bond strongly to their human companions.

Table 1.1 Groups of dogs.

Group	Breeds	Purpose
Herding	Shepherds, Collies, Sheepdogs, Corgi	Driving, moving, and containing livestock
Hound	Beagle, Greyhound, Foxhound, Bloodhound	Use of senses for hunting and tracking, such as hearing, sight, and smell
Non-sporting	Dalmatian, Bulldog, Poodle, Boston Terrier	Pets and companions
Sporting	Retrievers, Pointers, Setters, Spaniels	Active hunting by scents in the air and ground
Terrier	Airedale, Schnauzer, West Highland, Scottish	Catching and flushing out rodents and small game
Toy	Chihuahua, Pug, Pomeranian, Shih Tzu	Pets and companions
Working	Boxer, Mastiffs, St Bernard, Rottweiler	Guarding, guiding, herding and obedience



Figure 1.2 The Collie is an example of a herding group dog breed.

1.3.2 Hound Group

The hound group shares the common traits used for hunting (Figure 1.3). Some dogs have acute senses, such as smell, hearing, and sight. Others demonstrate relentless stamina as if they will run forever. The hound group is diverse, with sight hounds that are slim and built for speed and foxhounds and bloodhounds that are larger boned and built for tracking and hunting. Some hounds share the distinct ability to produce a unique barking or baying sound. Many dogs within the hound group have floppy to drooping ears.



Figure 1.3 The Greyhound is an example of a hound group dog breed.

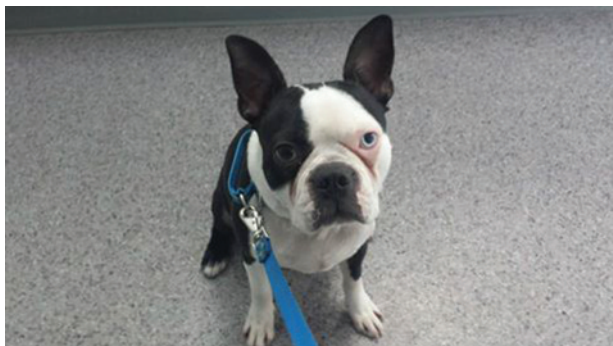


Figure 1.4 The Boston Terrier is an example of a non-sporting group dog breed. *Source:* Courtesy of Shari Krause.

1.3.3 Non-Sporting Group

The non-sporting group is another diverse group (Figure 1.4). This group used to be classified as miscellaneous and has a variety of size differences, coat types, and personalities and vary in popularity. Each breed in the non-sporting group has a specific background but most are no longer used today for their original development purposes. The non-sporting group breeds do not fit easily into other groups.

1.3.4 Sporting Group

The sporting group is naturally active, alert, and honest companion dogs used in many types of hunting sports (Figure 1.5). Known for their instincts in water and woods, many of these breeds actively continue to participate in hunting and field trial activities, and also



Figure 1.5 The English Springer Spaniel is an example of a sporting group dog breed. *Source:* Courtesy of Shari Krause.



Figure 1.6 The Parson Russell Terrier is an example of a terrier group dog breed.

show obedience and agility. Sporting dogs require regular exercise and activity and human attention. The sporting group breeds include the Retrievers, Spaniels, Pointers and Setters.

1.3.5 Terrier Group

The terrier group has a wide range of sizes and personalities (Figure 1.6). The breeds are feisty, energetic dogs that typically have little tolerance for other animals, including other dogs. These breeds were bred to hunt and kill rodents and vermin. Many continue to project the attitude that they are always eager for a spirited argument. Most terriers have wiry and dense coats that require special grooming known as stripping in order to maintain a characteristic appearance. The terrier breeds are relatively smaller in size and were bred to go into dens to retrieve and flush out animals. The terriers tend to have independent personalities.

1.3.6 Toy Group

The toy group is small but mighty and often the dogs do not recognize their small stature (Figure 1.7). The toy breeds are known to be quite vocal and lively but are loving companion animals. They are popular with city dwellers and people without much living space. They make ideal apartment dogs and terrific lap dogs.



Figure 1.7 The Chihuahua is an example of a toy group dog breed.

1.3.7 Working Group

The working group was bred to perform such jobs as guarding property, pulling sleds, and performing water rescues (Figure 1.8). They have been assets to humans throughout the ages. This group of dogs are intelligent, quick to learn, capable animals that make solid companions. Their considerable size and strength alone, however, make many working dogs not suitable for all people. They require training and obedience for proper control.

Sources

- American Kennel Club (AKC) (2016).
 APPA (2014) *2013–2014 APPA National Pet Owners Survey*. American Pet Product Association, Greenwich, CT.
 AVMA (2012) *U.S. Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook*, American Veterinary Medical Association, Schaumburg, IL.

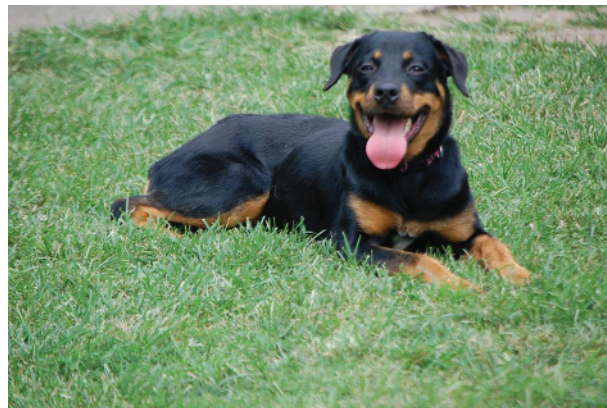


Figure 1.8 The Rottweiler is an example of a working group dog breed. *Source:* Courtesy of Kimberly Wilson.

The miscellaneous group includes dog breeds that are awaiting full approval by the AKC. The breeds on the waiting list vary from year to year and upon full approval will be assigned to the appropriate group.

1.4 Summary

Dogs have adapted over the years through breeding and cross-breeding with a variety of breeds and characteristics. Knowledge of the classes of dogs will aid in the identification of dog breeds. It is important to remember that many purebred breeds of dogs are crossed and we are seeing more and more hybrid breeds and designer breeds that some day may be a recognized registered dog breed. Dog breed roles were focused around types of work and services for improving human lives. The vast number of activities and uses in which dogs were once involved has resulted in the formation of a wide variety of breeds. Most dogs serve a companion-type role in today's society. However, many breeds are still involved in their traditional roles.

Further Reading

- American Kennel Club (2015) *The New Complete Dog Book*, 21st edn., i-5 Publishing, Irvine, CA.
 Bell, J.S., Cavanaugh, K.E., Tilley, L.P., and Smith, F.C.W. (2012) *Veterinary Medical Guide to Dog and Cat Breeds*, Teton NewMedia, Jackson, WY.
 Coile, D.C. (2015) *Encyclopedia of Dogs*, Barron's Educational Series, Hauppauge, NY.
 Edwards, R. (2016) *Cats and Dogs Encyclopedia*, CreateSpace.