

Breeds of Dogs

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Breeds of Dogs



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Curly-coated retriever puppy

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Domestic dogs come in many shapes and sizes and have always provided companionship, help, and affection.

Introduction

Did you ever notice how many different kinds of dogs there are? There are big dogs, small dogs, long dogs, short dogs, hairy dogs, and even hairless dogs. There are dogs with big ears, little ears, big noses, little noses, long legs, short legs, long tails, and no tails at all.

Why are there so many kinds of dogs? The reason is because there are lots of breeds of dogs. Breeds are kinds of dogs that are kept separate from other breeds during mating time. If each breed of dog only mates with its own kind, the puppies will be that same kind of dog, too. These dogs are purebred, which means that since their parents are the same, they will be the same, too. A male and female bulldog will have pups that are bulldogs.



Other dogs are called mixed-breed dogs. They are a mix of two or more kinds of dogs. Mixed-breed dogs are sometimes called mutts.



How did different kinds of dogs come to exist? Long ago, there were no dogs—there were only wolves. When people first began living in villages, their garbage became a food source for wolves. Over time, some of the wolves eating human garbage became tamer. These wolves slowly changed to be better at living close to people and began to look and act more like modern dogs.

People saw that some of these early dogs were better at running. Other dogs were better at hunting, and others were better at digging.

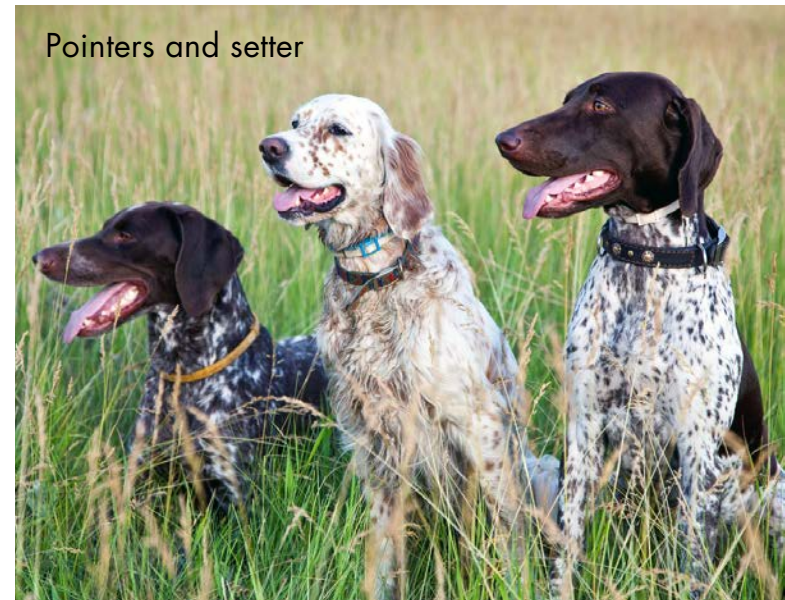


Some people wanted a dog who was even better at one of those tasks. So they started only letting good runners mate with good runners. And they only let good diggers mate with good diggers. Over many thousands of years, the dogs people kept as pets changed into the breeds of dogs we know today. Of course, the wild wolves stayed wild and are still wild today.

There are seven groups of dogs, and each one has many breeds. Let's learn about these groups and some of their members.

Sporting Dogs

Sporting dogs were bred to help hunters. Some sporting dogs help a hunter find the game—the animal that is being hunted. Other sporting dogs find game that has been shot and bring it back to the hunter.



The pointer is a sporting dog that was bred to see and point at game. A pointer freezes in place with one front leg up and points with its nose.

Labrador retriever



The Labrador retriever, or Lab, is a popular sporting dog that is also a good family dog. It was first bred to retrieve, or bring back, birds that had been shot if they fell into a pond or lake. Labs have webbed feet to help them swim well. Their waterproof coat keeps them warm in cold water. They have strong jaws for carrying heavy birds.

Hounds

The job of hounds is to chase game on the ground. There are two kinds of hounds. Sighthounds use their eyes to chase game. Scenthounds use their nose to follow the scent, or smell, of game. Hounds may bark to let a hunter know they have cornered the game, or they may kill the game themselves.



Irish wolfhound with terrier pal

The Irish wolfhound, a sighthound, is one of the tallest dogs in the world. It can be .9 meters (3 ft) tall at the shoulder. It was bred to hunt and kill wolves. Its long, strong legs make it a fast hunter.



The best scenthound is the bloodhound. It has loose skin on its face and long, floppy ears. Both of these things help stir up smells so that the bloodhound can find game animals easily. Bloodhounds are also good at finding lost people.



Working Dogs

Working dogs are smart and tough. They do jobs like guarding, protecting, rescuing, and pulling sleds and carts.

The Newfoundland is a large, sturdy dog. It has a thick, waterproof coat that keeps it warm. Long ago, Newfoundlands were used to pull boats and heavy fishing nets through the water. Today they are used in Europe to rescue drowning people.

Herding Dogs

Herding dogs are fast-moving and smart. They were bred to control other animals, such as sheep or cattle. Herding dogs control animals by barking, staring, or nipping. Herding dogs are easily trained. They are independent, eager workers.



Samoyeds

The Samoyed comes from the coldest parts of Asia. Samoyeds were first used to guard and herd reindeer. Today, they work as sled dogs. Their weatherproof coat is extra thick for warmth. Their stocky shape helps keep body heat inside.



Welsh corgi

The Welsh corgi is a sturdy, quick, short-legged dog. It was first bred to drive cattle. Because it is short, it can duck under cows and nip at their ankles. It is able to move quickly to keep from being kicked.



The border collie was made famous in *Babe*, a movie about a pig that herded sheep. Babe learned this skill from a border collie. Border collies were bred to herd sheep and cattle, and they still do that work today. They are athletic dogs that can run very fast. They are good at making sheep and cattle obey them.



Terriers

Terriers are usually small or medium in size. Most terriers were bred to find and kill fierce pests like rats, otters, foxes, and badgers. They had to be very brave to hunt these fierce animals. As pets, terriers can be stubborn and hard to train.

The Airedale is the largest terrier. It was originally bred to kill badgers, weasels, and otters. It is a natural watchdog and has also been used as a police dog.



Jack Russell terriers became very popular because they starred on American television shows such as *Frasier* and *Wishbone*. However, this dog is not right for everyone. It needs lots of exercise and activity every day. Otherwise, it will be difficult and destructive.

Toy Dogs

Toy dogs have been bred for their small size. Some toy breeds originally had jobs hunting or killing pests. But most toy dogs were first bred as companions to people.



The papillon is a small, friendly, smart dog with big ears. *Papillon* is the French word for butterfly. This dog's ears look like butterfly wings.

Hairless Chinese
crested



The hairless Chinese crested is bald except for puffs of hair on the head and feet. It has dark gray skin with pink spots. It needs sunblock lotion in the summer. In the winter, it needs to wear a coat to stay warm.

Nonsporting Dogs

This group of dogs includes many breeds that don't fit into the other groups. These breeds no longer perform the jobs they were first bred for. Their job now is mostly to be companions to people.



The Shar-pei is an unusual-looking dog. Its skin is wrinkled and loose, and its mouth is shaped like a hippo's mouth. The Shar-pei was first bred as a Chinese fighting and guard dog. Its loose skin made it possible for the dog to twist away if another animal grabbed it.



Dalmatian puppies are born completely white. Their spots develop in the first few weeks of life. Dalmatians were trained to trot beside a horse-drawn coach. If farm animals got in the road, the Dalmatian would move them out of the way. It also protected the horses from wild dogs. The Dalmatian had to be very strong so it could trot for many miles.



Choosing a Dog

Purebred dogs can have health problems. Many people believe that mixed-breed dogs are healthier. Mixed breeds come in all sizes and colors. They often have lively personalities.

Bringing a dog into your family is a big decision. It is very important to keep a dog healthy with regular visits to the vet. It is also very important to train the dog to behave well.

Now you know more about why there are so many kinds of dogs. Dogs really do come in most every shape and size. They have many kinds of personalities, too. If you get a dog, be sure to choose one that will get along well with your family. A dog can be a good friend for many years.



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