Definition: **dog** from *Philip’s Encyclopedia*

Domesticated carnivorous mammal, closely related to the jackal, wolf and fox. Typically, it has a slender, muscular body; long head with slender snout; small paws, five toes on the forefeet, four on the hind; non-retractile claws; and well-developed teeth. Smell is the dog’s keenest sense; its hearing is also acute. The gestation period is 49-70 days; one or more puppies are born. Dogs developed from the tree-dwelling *miacus*, which lived c.40 million years ago, through intermediate forms to *tomarctus*, which lived c.15 million years ago. The dog was domesticated c.10-14,000 years ago. There are c.400 breeds, classified in various ways, such as terrier, sporting, hound, working, and toy. Length: 34-135cm (13-53in); tail 11-54cm (4-21in); weight: 1kg-68kg (2-150lb). Family Canidae; species *Canis familiaris*. See also individual breeds.

Summary Article: **Dogs**

from *Encyclopedia of Environment and Society*

DOGS HAVE BEEN human companions at least since the Mesolithic era, some 20,000 years ago. Oddly, whenever they are successfully trained by humans to comply with their specific duties, dogs are rewarded and considered as “intelligent” or “smart” by their masters. Therefore, the term *socialization* used in the case of dogs implicitly refers to the relationships between dogs and humans, and not among dogs.

Nowadays, no one would be too much alarmed to see an adult person having a discussion with a dog, even though we are aware that the animal can not really “understand” the nuance of words. Incidentally, a Canadian professor of psychology, Stanley Coren, has conducted years of research and has published six books about the possible ways of communicating with dogs and understanding the “dog language.”

Among their many social uses, dogs can help hunters and shepherds; serve as house guardians; assist the blind; or be used by the police to search for suspects, rescue lost persons, or for security purposes in airports. In Italy and France, the “truffle dogs” are trained in digging up high-value truffles in forests. In the Arctic, Huskies are not only a vital element for transportation, even in 21st century, but are also a true tradition going back thousands of years. Many charity organizations related to dogs have been created. In Canada, the “Fondation MIRA” (and founder Éric St-Pierre) have given a guide dog for free to the blind teenagers in Québec since 1990.

Dogs have contributed to social life in many countries, for instance with dog exhibitions and clubs, one of the first being the Birmingham Dog Show Society founded in 1859. Cities have created bylaws and regulations specially made for dogs. In several parks in New York City, there are special sections for pets, and sometimes separate sections for “big dogs” and “small dogs,” to avoid conflicts between animals and owners. On the sidewalks of Paris, dog owners must clean up after their pets; otherwise, a severe regulation imposes a penalty of more than $200.

Dogs are often seen as “man’s best friend,” but their relationships with people can sometimes be hazardous. In her book titled *Fatal Dog Attacks: The Stories Behind the Statistics* (2002), veterinarian Karen Delise from the National Canine Research Council states that there were “over 540 fatal dog

A DOG IN THE KITCHEN

Dogs are a part of many cultures, but their relationship with humans are set in many different ways and traditions. For instance, in many of France’s restaurants, dogs are allowed in kitchens; but in Canada, a restaurant could be closed if an inspector found a pet anywhere in a restaurant. Oddly, one of the world’s finest restaurants, founded in 1740 in Paris, is called *Au Chien Qui Fume* (“The smoking dog”).

There seem to exist an almost universal taboo against eating dog meat in most cultures, with the exception of China, Mexico, and a few societies in the Pacific Islands. This aversion for the idea of eating dog meat is cultural and probably comes from the fact that dogs are seen as puppies, as “a part of the family.” In Western countries, most people would accept to eat a common hot dog because they know sausages are in fact made with pork or beef. However, according to Kathleen E. McLaughlin, a correspondent with *The Christian Science Monitor*, the Animals Asia Foundation (AAF), an animalwelfare charity based in Hong Kong, “estimates that up to 8 million dogs are eaten every year in China. Most large restaurants offer a dog dish or two, and nationwide, dog meat is as easy to find in any big restaurant as a hamburger is in the United States.”

Dogs are a part of many cultures, but their relationship with humans are set in many different traditions.

DOGS IN POPULAR CULTURE

Dogs are present in art and popular culture. Countless popular songs refer to dogs. In 1948, bluesman Lightnin’ Hopkins sang “Let Me Play With Your Poodle.” Blues singer Big Mama Thornton recorded “Hound Dog” in 1953, which was later sung by Elvis Presley in 1955. Paul McCartney referred to his dog in his song “Martha My Dear” (1968), and included “Three Legs” on his *Ram* album (1971). David Bowie composed a song titled *Diamond Dogs* (1974), looking like a dog on the album’s cover. The group Pink Floyd also created a piece titled “Dogs” on the album *Animals* (1977). However, singer Iggy Pop was the canine champion with two provocative songs he wrote: “I Wanna Be Your Dog” (1969) and “Dog Food” (1980).
Director Jacques Godbout made a documentary film about the love for dogs in North America and France, titled *Aimez-vous Les Chiens?* (1975), that linked “De Luxe” dogs with our excessive, consumer’s society. The director argues that we treat dogs as we do for ourselves. The film explores hairdressers and restaurants for dogs. But before that odd film essay, dogs became heroes in many Hollywood movies and TV series: the first Rin-Tin-Tin (1916–32) appeared during the silent era, in *The Man From Hell’s River* (directed by Irving Cummings, in 1922). From 1943, the MGM also had its own dog star, Lassie. The first of a series of melodramas shot in color, Fred Wilcox’s *Lassie Come Home* (1943) told the story of a poor child who tried to find his beloved dog, sold by his parents to an aristocrat. Walt Disney and Ken Petterson issued many versions of *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1961).

In cases of anthropomorphism, many dog stars created for younger audiences often have human qualities. As Charles Schultz created Snoopy in his comics strips *Peanuts*, dogs were also very popular in French comic books: in Belgium, Tintin has his dog companion named Milou; in France, Astérix and Obélix have Idéfix, the little white dog. Apart from achieving many exploits, all these imagery dogs heroes could easily talk with their masters.

In ancient Egypt and Greece, artists used to make sculptures of dogs. In their book about the representation of dogs in Western art, Peter Peters Bowron, Robert Rosenblum, William Secord, and Carolyn Rose Rebbert acknowledge that the most important painters have included dogs in some of their works, from Gustave Courbet to Edouard Manet and Salvador Dalí.

An old Arab proverb says “The Dogs Bark But the Caravan Moves On,” which can take many different meanings: “No matter what people say, I carry on,” or “Those who are against us are worthless,” or “The dogs give us the signal so we can go on safely.”

**SEE ALSO:**
Animals; Children; Environmental Education; Parks; Pets; Smokey Bear; United States; Urban Planning.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**
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