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 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 of larger size. 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 mankind 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

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. Crossbreed 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.