



Kennel Union of Southern Africa

KUSA BREED JUDGES LEARNING PROGRAMME

STUDY GUIDE #10: LEVEL 2

HOW TO PREPARE BREED ASSIGNMENTS

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WHY THE BREED ASSIGNMENTS?

Imagine you're about to judge a class of Boxers. You have studied the breed standard thoroughly and you can recall it word for word. Now you look at the first Boxer and begin to recite the whole standard, mentally ticking off each attribute as you go through all the standard's requirements. Half an hour later, you are ready to begin judging the next dog in the class! Yeah right.... so that's not going to work! So what's the point of memorising every single breed standard word for word, in the correct word order!! Wouldn't it be better to know and understand the breed and its standard?

Learning a breed standard parrot fashion leads to poor memory recall if you miss just one word clue, which leads to no recall of the breed standard at all, which leads to judging a dog on the basis of an imaginary show dog, which leads to fault judging, which leads to awarding an apparently-faultless, generic dog, that is actually a somewhat mediocre specimen of its type.

If, on the other hand, a judge who studies the breed standard by analysing it, comparing it with others, summarising it, and memorising key points is likely to **know** and **understand** what goes into that breed. It's no longer a list of words on a piece of paper, but an understanding of a living, breathing creature and everything that makes it what it is.

Thus, you will be expected to complete two breed assignments per group, which comprise:

1. A brief list of breed hallmarks that succinctly encapsulate the essence of a minimum of 15 breeds.
2. An analysis of the breed standards to identify and compare similarities and differences between breeds, best organised in a table of breed-specific characteristics.

If you are studying a single breed at Breed Specialisation level, you will need to prepare written assignments as advised by the relevant Breed Councils or the NBJSC.

What are the desired outcomes of this module?

1. Identify unique breed characteristics from 15 breed standards
2. Synthesise the breed characteristics into lists of breed hallmarks
3. Identify and analyse breed characteristics to find similarities and differences
4. Synthesise information into a logical table

You will be required to prepare lists of breed hallmarks for a minimum of 15 breeds in your group, but you are strongly advised to prepare hallmark lists for all the breeds for your own study purposes.

There is no prescribed format – design these hallmarks in whichever layout suits you best, but you will gain the best benefit from this exercise if you consider how they will best assist you in the preparation for examinations and your future judging career. Consider, for example, a format that is easy and compact to carry with you when you travel to judging assignments.

The temptation to beg, borrow, steal or pay for someone else's breed hallmarks may be strong, especially if you are pressed for time and your portfolio is due. For the sake of your own learning process, try not to succumb to copying someone else's work. The act of learning is in the act of doing – you will cheat yourself if you do not actually work through the assignments yourself.

How to get started

Here's one way to prepare this assignment. For this example, we'll work with the Afghan Hound.

1. **Read the standard a couple of times** and while you do so, start to identify descriptions that are unique to this breed, keywords that you may want to highlight, characteristics that deserve special attention. Also, start to develop a picture of the ideal dog in your mind and try to *understand* why the standard is written the way it is. What is the function of this breed? Explore it with good depth of thought and insight. Reading the standard in a shallow manner, will, of course, be meaningless.
2. **Look at pictures** – preferably a good selection so that you can start to develop your eye for the breed. While looking at the pictures, recall the highlights of the breed standard. Find an illustration (if desired) that you will want to use to accompany your hallmark list.
3. **Highlight key words and phrases in the standard.** Here's where you start to find your hallmarks. There's no limit to the number of unique characteristics that will pop up in your analysis – some breed standards are full of unique descriptions and characteristics, some breed standards are rather bland and will require some searching.

Remember that we're only looking for unique characteristics and keywords. All dogs have shoulders, so it's unnecessary to include descriptions of the shoulder layback and angles, unless these are unique, as in the Ibizan Hound. All dogs have hindquarters, and unless the stifle needs to be fairly straight, as in a Chow Chow, it's not necessary to highlight bend of stifle, etc. Most dogs are required to display "*a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite*", therefore no need to mention teeth unless they need to be different from the norm, eg. the slightly undershot or level bite of the Shih Tzu.

Examples of generic characteristics that you need not include in your hallmark lists are "*straight forearms from elbow to pastern*", "*well-laid shoulder*" "*Balance between fore- and hindquarters*", "*well-turned stifles*" "*short hocks*", etc.

You'll also avoid descriptions that are obvious to your mind's eye of the breed's silhouette. It is well known, for example, that an Afghan Hound has a long, tapering head and his coat is long and free-flowing, therefore there's no need to mention these characteristics along with other more unique hallmarks.

Afghan Hound

GENERAL APPEARANCE: Gives the impression of strength and dignity, combining speed and power. Head held proudly.

CHARACTERISTICS: Eastern or Oriental expression is typical of breed. The Afghan looks at and through one.

TEMPERAMENT: Dignified and aloof, with a certain keen fierceness.

HEAD & SKULL: Skull long, not too narrow, with prominent occiput. Foreface long with punishing jaws and slight stop. Skull well balanced and mounted by a long "top-knot". Nose preferably black, liver permissible in light-coloured dogs.

EYES: Dark for preference, but golden colour not debarred. Nearly triangular, slanting slightly upwards from inner corner to outer corner.

EARS: Set low and well back, carried close to head. Covered with long silky hair.

MOUTH: Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws. Level bite tolerated.

NECK: Long, strong, with proud carriage of head.

FOREQUARTERS: Shoulders long and sloping, set well back, well muscled and strong without being loaded. Upper arm long and sloping. In profile this brings the elbow vertically below the wither. Forelegs straight and well boned, (straight with shoulder,) elbows close to ribcage, turning neither in nor out.

BODY: Back level, moderate length, well muscled, back falling slightly away to stern. Loin straight, broad and rather short. Hipbones rather prominent and wide apart. A fair spring of ribs and good depth of chest.

HINDQUARTERS: Powerful, well bent and well turned stifles. Great length between hip and hock, with comparatively short distance between hock and foot. Dewclaws may be removed.

FEET: Forefeet strong and very large both in length and breadth, and covered with long, thick hair; toes arched. Pasterns long and springy, pads well down on ground. Hindfeet long, but not quite as broad as forefeet; covered with long thick hair.

TAIL: Not too short. Set on low with ring at end. Raised when in action. Sparsely feathered.

GAIT / MOVEMENT: Smooth and springy with a style of high order.

COAT: Long and very fine texture on the ribs, fore and hindquarters and flanks. In mature dogs, from the shoulder backwards and along the saddle, hair short and close. Hair long from the forehead backwards, with a distinct silky 'topknot'. On the foreface hair short, ears and legs well coated. Pasterns can be bare. Coat must develop naturally. Any evidence of clipping or scissoring should be penalised.

COLOUR: All colours acceptable.

SIZE: Ideal height: Dogs : 68 - 74 cms (27 - 29 ins); Bitches: 63 - 69 cms (25 - 27 ins).

FAULTS: Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect on the health and welfare of the dog

NOTE: Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

4. **Now start putting together your list of hallmarks.** You may use the exact wording from the breed standard and/or you may phrase your list items as summaries of the breed standard wording. Take care to eliminate all padding words because you want the list to be as brief and succinct as possible. Remember to include unique keywords – these will come up in the examination, so you want to be prepared.
5. **Fine-tune your list** and eliminate superfluous descriptions and duplications (did you see the duplications in the Afghan Hound standard?) . Lay out the hallmarks in the style you prefer and add an illustration if desired. That's it – you're done!

AFGHAN HOUND



- proud head carriage
- Oriental expression
- keen fierceness.
- prominent occiput.
- punishing jaws
- top-knot
- triangular, slanting eyes
- level bite tolerated.
- body of moderate length
- prominent hipbones
- great length between hip and hock
- very large feet
- ring tail, raised in action
- smooth and springy
- style of high order
- saddle
- pasterns can be bare



Dogs : 68 - 74 cm (27 - 29 “); Bitches: 63 - 69 cm (25 - 27 “)

NB: Preparing your breed hallmarks does not put an end to studying breed standards in the future – you will still need to go through your breed standards before each appointment and for the examination, but the hallmarks help to refresh the most important breed characteristics to look for when judging.

Does a Bull Terrier have round eyes, almond eyes, or triangular eyes? Which of the Toy breeds has an extended hare foot? Which of the Collies has a slightly rounded skull? Which brachycephalic breed must display a “style of high order”?

Why do you need to know the answers to such questions?

Once again, we’re dealing with breed characteristics – the hallmarks that make that breed what it is. The shape and tilt of the eye, the shape of the skull, the texture and set of the ear – these characteristics have been carefully specified in each breed standard, so we need to look for them when we are judging. We’ve already listed the breed hallmarks – the special features that are unique to each breed, now let’s deal with the standard conformation. Every dog has two eyes, two ears, a nose and a mouth, and so on. But what should they look like? One way to study these details is to memorise every single word of every breed standard, parrot fashion. That’s all very well, but what if you’re standing in front of a Border Collie displaying a slightly-rounded skull and you’ve drawn a blank on the breed standard so you can’t remember if the skull should be slightly rounded or flat.

You need something easy to remember – something that strips away all the superfluous wording, something that you can compare for similarities and differences. You need a table of comparisons, which is the next part of your breed assignment.

As before, there is no prescribed way for you to prepare and present this assignment. The best learning experience lies in the task of finding a learning method that suits you best. Some folks learn best when they scribble tables roughly and pepper their work with little drawings and memory aids. Others prefer everything to be neat and attractive so that when they need to recall the facts, they can see the relevant page very clearly in their mind’s eye. It is also entirely possible that, as you work through one group of study after another, you will “invent” new ways to prepare your work. This will show development and insight. So rest assured, as long as you work your assignment with thoroughness and care – and it is your own work, not someone else’s – no Assessor will mark you down for the way you choose to present your assignment.

Feel free to use illustrations if you wish. It’s not compulsory, of course, but you may find them helpful.

And here’s the good news: Assessors will not evaluate your breed assignment for its content or style – they will simply record whether or not you have completed all the requirements.

How to get started

Here follows one method of preparing a breed comparison table:

1. **Find sub-groups in the group.** It's a good idea to divide the group into compatible or similar sub-groups. This will make comparisons more meaningful. After all, there's no point in comparing a Dachshund with an Irish Wolfhound, but it is useful to compare all the Setters, for example. How you divide your groups is arbitrary, but here are a few suggestions:

Gundog: Pointers, Retrievers, Setters, Spaniels, and/or...

Herding: Collies, Corgis, Long-coats, Shepherds, and/or...

Hound: Scenthounds, Sighthounds, and/or...

Terrier: Bull-type, Long-legged, Short-legged, and/or...

Toy: Smooth-coated, Medium-coated, Long-coated, and/or...

Utility: Brachycephalic, Long coated, Oriental, Smooth-coated, and/or...

Working: German, Mastiff, Mollossians, Nordic, Schnauzer-type, and/or...

2. **Draw up a table** with the appropriate number of columns. Use colour coding and illustrations if you wish.

	BEARDED COLLIE	ROUGH COLLIE	SMOOTH COLLIE	SHETLAND SHEEPDOG	BORDER COLLIE
					
Skull	flat	flat	flat	flat	slightly rounded
Face	skull & muzzle equal	skull & muzzle equal	skull & muzzle equal	skull & muzzle equal	skull & muzzle equal
Stop	moderate	slight	slight	slight	well defined
Nose	black, follows coat colour	black	black	black	black, brown, slate (no patches)
Eye size	large	medium	medium	medium	medium
Eye shape		almond	almond	almond	oval
Eye set	well apart	oblique	oblique	oblique	well apart
Eye colour	toning with coat colour	dark, blue blue flecked	dark, blue blue flecked	dark, blue blue flecked	dark, blue blue flecked
Ear size	medium	small	mod large	small	medium
Ear carriage	drooping	thrown back semi-erect	thrown back semi-erect	thrown back semi-erect	mobile erect or semi-erect
Ear set	alert: level with top of skull	not too close not too far	not too close not too far	fairly close	well apart
Proportion	longer than tall 5:4	slightly longer than tall	slightly longer than tall	slightly longer than tall	slightly longer than tall
Feet	oval	oval	oval	oval	oval
Tail length	long – to hock	long – to hock	long – to hock	long – to hock	long – to hock
Tail set	set low	set low	set low	set low	set low
Tail carriage	carried low slight upward swirl (not over back)	carried low slight upward swirl (not over back)	carried low slight upward swirl (not over back)	carried low slight upward swirl (not over back)	carried low slight upward swirl (not over back)

3. **Now that you have the characteristics** laid out in this manner, it is easier to see and remember the similarities and differences. From now on, you will always remember that a Smooth Collie's ears are moderately large, while its cousins, the Rough Collie and Shetland Sheepdog have small ears. From now on, you will remember that a Border Collie has a well-defined stop in comparison to the other Collies presented in this table, and so on. Adding colours or underlines may or may not improve your memory and recall – it's all up to your individual preference.

Here's a simple example – no colours, not highlights, no bangles or bows:

	AFGHAN HOUND	BASENJI	BORZOI	DEERHOUND	GREYHOUND
skull	long		long	long	long
		flat	slightly domed	flat	flat
	not too narrow	mod. wide	lean	broad at ears	mod. wide
		well-chiselled wrinkles on forehead and sides	in proportion to size convex profile		
occiput	prominent		prominent		
stop	slight	slight	imperceptible	none	slight
muzzle	punishing jaws	clean cheeks	well filled below eyes		well chiselled powerful
nose	black liver perm.	black	black	black	
eyes	dark	dark	dark	dark	pref. dark
	triangular	almond	almond		oval
	oblique	oblique	oblique		oblique
		inscrutable	not light, bulbous, staring	soft look in repose keen when alert	bright, intelligent
ear set	set low	set forward	set high	set high	
ears	well back close to head long, silky hair	small pointed erect hooded fine texture	small pointed delicate nearly touch at occiput folded back in repose may be erect when alert	small black or dark folded back in repose semi-erect when alert soft, like a mouse	small rose-shape fine texture
mouth	level bite tolerated				
neck	long	long	reasonably long		long
		well crested graceful curve	well arched		elegantly arched

Here's another example. This one has more detail in the table, essentially to serve as a study aid for the examination. In this table, the standard has been summarised into corresponding columns and the hallmarks have been highlighted.

RETRIEVERS			
			
Golden Retriever	Labrador Retriever	Flat-coat Retriever	Curly-coat Retriever
<p>symmetrical, balanced, active, powerful, level mover / biddable / intelligent / natural working ability / kindly, friendly and confident</p> <p>~ head: balanced and well chiselled / <u>skull broad</u> / foreface = length from stop to occiput</p> <p>~ stop: well defined</p> <p>~ nose: preferably black</p> <p>~ muzzle: powerful, wide and deep</p> <p>~ ears: moderate / set level with eyes</p> <p>~ eyes: dark brown, set well apart / dark rims</p> <p>~ neck: good length / clean and muscular</p> <p>~ shoulders: well laid back / <u>long in blade</u></p> <p>~ forearms: upper arm of equal length placing legs well under body</p> <p>~ feet: <u>round and cat-like</u></p> <p>~ body: balanced, <u>short-coupled</u>, <u>deep through heart</u> / ribs deep, well sprung</p> <p>~ hindquarters: strong and muscular / good second thighs / <u>well bent stifles</u> / <u>no cow-hocks</u></p> <p>~ tail: reaching to hocks / <u>without curl at tip</u></p> <p>~ gait: powerful with good drive / no hackney / <u>straight and true in front and rear</u></p>	<p>strongly built, short-coupled, very active / broad in skull / broad and deep through chest and ribs / broad / strong over loins & hindquarters / good tempered, very agile / excellent nose, soft mouth / keen love of water /</p> <p>~ head: <u>skull broad</u> / clean-cut without fleshy cheeks</p> <p>~ stop: defined</p> <p>~ nose: wide, nostrils well developed</p> <p>~ jaws: medium length / powerful not snipey</p> <p>~ ears: not large or heavy / hanging close to head and <u>set rather far back</u></p> <p>~ eyes: medium / expressing intelligence and good temper / brown or hazel</p> <p>~ neck: clean, strong, powerful / set into well placed shoulders</p> <p>~ shoulders: long and sloping</p> <p>~ forearms: well boned and straight elbow to ground</p> <p>~ feet: <u>round and compact</u></p> <p>~ body: <u>barrel ribs</u> / loins wide, <u>short-coupled</u> and strong</p> <p>~ hindquarters: well developed / no sloping / <u>well turned stifle</u> / <u>no cow hocks</u></p> <p>~ tail: <u>otter tail</u> / carried gaily but <u>not curl over back</u></p> <p>~ gait: free, covering adequate ground / <u>straight and true in front and rear</u></p>	<p>bright, active dog / medium size / intelligent expression / power without lumber / raciness without weediness / natural Gundog ability / optimism & friendliness / enthusiastic tail action / confident and kindly</p> <p>~ head: long and <u>nicely moulded</u> / skull flat, moderately broad</p> <p>~ stop: slight / <u>avoiding down or dish-faced</u> appearance</p> <p>~ nose: open nostrils</p> <p>~ jaws: jaws long and strong – <u>capable of carrying a hare or pheasant</u></p> <p>~ ears: small and well set on</p> <p>~ eyes: medium / very intelligent expression / <u>not obliquely placed</u></p> <p>~ neck: <u>free from throatiness</u> / <u>symmetrically set</u> / running well into the back to allow for <u>easy seeking of trail</u></p> <p>~ shoulders:</p> <p>~ forearms: straight, with bone of good quality throughout</p> <p>~ feet: round and strong with toes close and well arched / <u>soles thick and strong</u></p> <p>~ body: <u>foreribs fairly flat</u> / <u>gradual spring</u> and well arched in centre but rather lighter towards quarters / no open couplings</p> <p>~ hindquarters: <u>moderate bend of stifle</u> and <u>hocks well let down</u> / should stand true all round / no cow hocks</p> <p>~ tail: short, straight / <u>gaily carried</u>, not above level of back</p> <p>~ gait: free and flowing, straight and true as seen from front and rear</p>	<p>strong, upstanding / degree of elegance / distinctive coat / intelligent, steady, reliable bold, friendly, self confident and independent / may seem aloof</p> <p>~ head: <u>wedge-shaped</u> / in proportion / foreface = skull / parallel planes</p> <p>~ stop: slight</p> <p>~ nose: black in blacks and brown in others</p> <p>~ ears: small / set slightly above level of eye / <u>small curls</u></p> <p>~ eyes: oval-shaped / <u>obliquely set</u></p> <p>~ neck: <u>free from throatiness</u> / flowing freely into well laid back shoulders</p> <p>~ shoulders: shoulders well laid back muscular</p> <p>~ forearms: upper arm and shoulder blade = equal length /</p> <p>~ feet: round, tight with well-arched toes</p> <p>~ body: <u>chest oval in cross section</u> / forechest visible / slight tuck up to flank</p> <p>~ hindquarters: <u>moderate turn of stifle</u> / <u>hocks well let down</u> and well bent</p> <p>~ tail: ~ flows from topline / reach to hock / carried level</p> <p>~ gait: effortless, powerful gait with good extension and drive / <u>parallel movement</u> / <u>converge</u></p>

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