

BULL TERRIER

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/01/2026

ORIGIN

Great Britain.

UTILISATION

Terrier.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

[ed. from FCI Breed Standard No. 11]

It was a certain James Hinks who first standardised the breed type in the 1850s, selecting the egg-shaped head. The breed was first shown in its present form at Birmingham in 1862. The Bull Terrier Club was formed in 1887. The truly interesting thing about the breed is that the standard says quite deliberately, "There are neither weight nor height limits, but there should be the impression of maximum substance for size of dog, consistent with quality and sex. Dog should at all times be balanced."

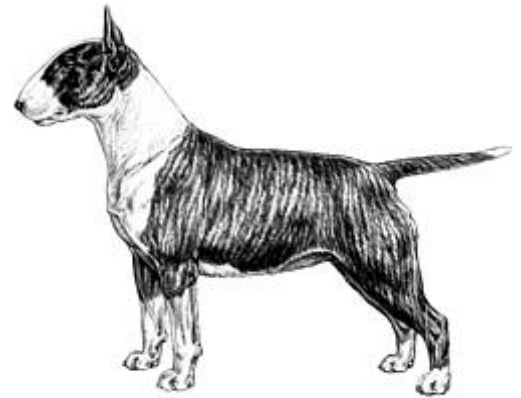


Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Strongly built, muscular, well-balanced, and active, with a keen, determined and intelligent expression.

CHARACTERISTICS

Courageous, full of spirit, with a fun-loving attitude. A unique feature is a down-faced, egg-shaped head. Irrespective of size, dogs should look masculine and bitches feminine.

TEMPERAMENT

Of even temperament and amenable to discipline. Although obstinate, is particularly good with people.

HEAD

Head long, strong, and deep right to end of muzzle, but not coarse. Viewed from front, egg-shaped and completely filled, its surface free from hollows or indentations. Top of skull almost flat from ear to ear. Profile curves gently downwards from top of skull to tip of nose, which should be black and bent downwards at tip. Nostrils well-developed and underjaw deep and strong.

Eyes:

Appearing narrow and triangular, obliquely placed, black or as dark brown as possible so as to appear almost black, and with a piercing glint. Distance from tip of nose to eyes perceptibly greater than that from eyes to top of skull. Blue or partly blue eye undesirable.

Ears:

Small, thin, and placed close together. Dog should be able to hold them stiffly erect, when they point straight upwards.

Mouth:

Teeth sound, clean, strong, of good size, regular, with perfect, regular, and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws. Lips clean and tight.

NECK

Very muscular, long, arched, tapering from shoulders to head and free from loose skin.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders strong and muscular without loading. Shoulder blades wide, flat, and held closely to chest wall, and have a very pronounced backward slope of front edge from bottom to top, forming almost a right angle with upper arm. Elbows held straight and strong, pasterns upright. Forelegs have strongest type of round, quality bone; dog should stand solidly upon them and they should be perfectly parallel. In mature dogs length of foreleg should be approximately equal to depth of chest.

BODY

Body well-rounded with marked spring of rib and great depth from withers to brisket, so that latter nearer ground than belly. Back short, strong, with the backline behind the withers level, arching or roaching slightly over broad, well-muscled loins. Underline from brisket to belly forms a graceful upward curve. Chest broad when viewed from front.

HINDQUARTERS

Hind legs in parallel when viewed from behind. Thighs muscular and second thighs well-developed. Stifle joint well-bent, and hock well-angulated with bone to foot short and strong.

FEET

Round and compact, with well-arched toes.

TAIL

Short, set on low, and carried horizontally. Thick at root, it tapers to a fine point.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

When moving, appears well-knit, smoothly covering ground with free, easy strides and with a typical jaunty air. When trotting, movement parallel, front and back, only converging towards centre line at faster speeds, forelegs reaching out well, and hind legs moving smoothly at hip, flexing well at stifle and hock, with great thrust.

COAT

Short, flat, even, and harsh to touch, with a fine gloss. Skin fitting dog tightly. A soft-textured undercoat may be present in winter.

COLOUR

- For White dogs: pure white coat. Skin pigmentation and markings on head not to be penalised.
- For Coloured dogs: colour predominates; all other things being equal, brindle preferred. Black brindle, red, fawn and tri-colour acceptable.

* Tick markings in white coat undesirable.

* Blue and liver highly undesirable. Any other colour or combination of colours unacceptable.

SIZE

There are neither weight nor height limits, but there should be the impression of maximum substance for size of dog consistent with quality and sex.

***N.B.** Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.*

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 upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

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When judging this breed at FCI International Shows, use:

FCI Standard No. 11: BULL TERRIER

FCI Classification: Group 3 – Terriers.

Section 3 – Bull-type Terriers .

Working trial optional.