

BULLDOG

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

Companion dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

[ed. from FCI Breed Standard No. 149]

The Bulldog was first classified as such in the 1630s, though there is earlier mention of similar types referred to as 'bandogs', a term reserved today for a type of fighting dog. Used originally for bull-baiting, the Bulldog also fought its way through the dog pits, but after 1835, began to evolve into the shorter faced, squatter version we now know. It entered the show ring in 1860 and the ensuing years saw a big personality change to a delightfully ugly dog with a pugilistic expression, which belies a loving, affectionate nature to family and friends. The Bulldog is one of the oldest indigenous breeds, known as the national dog of Great Britain, and associated throughout the world with British determination and the legendary John Bull.

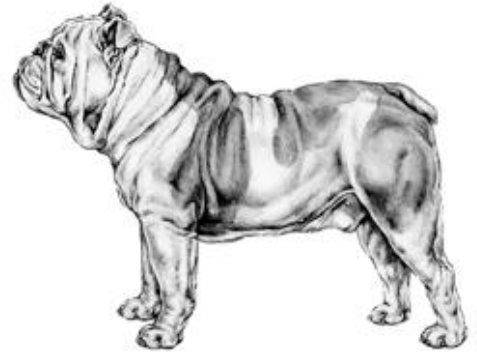


Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Smooth-coated. Fairly thick set, rather low in stature, broad, powerful and compact. Head, fairly large in proportion to size but no point so much in excess of others as to destroy the general symmetry, or make the dog appear deformed, or interfere with its powers of motion. Face relatively short, muzzle broad, blunt and inclined upwards although not excessively so. Dogs showing respiratory distress or making excessive respiratory noise unacceptable. Body fairly short, well knit, limbs stout, well-muscled and in hard condition with no tendency towards obesity. Hindquarters high and strong. Bitches not so grand or well developed as dogs.

CHARACTERISTICS

Conveys impression of determination, strength, and activity.

TEMPERAMENT

Alert, bold, loyal, dependable, courageous, fierce in appearance, but possessed of affectionate nature.

HEAD

Skull relatively large in circumference. Viewed from front, appears high from corner of lower jaw to apex of skull; also broad and square. Cheeks well-rounded and extended sideways beyond eyes. Viewed from side, head appears very high and moderately short from back to point of nose. Forehead flat, with skin on and about head slightly loose and finely wrinkled, without excess, neither prominent nor overhanging face. From defined stop, a furrow extending to middle of skull being traceable to apex. Face from front of cheek bone to nose, relatively short, skin may be slightly wrinkled. Muzzle short, broad, turned upwards, and deep from corner of eye to corner of mouth. Nose and nostrils large, broad and black, under no circumstances liver colour, red, or brown. Nostrils large, wide, and open, with well-defined vertical straight line between. Over-nose wrinkle, if present, whole or broken, must never adversely affect or obscure eyes or nose. Pinched nostrils and heavy over-nose roll are unacceptable. Distance from inner corner of eye (or from centre of stop between eyes) to extreme tip of nose should not be less than distance from tip of the nose to edge of the under-lip. Flews (chops) thick, broad, and deep, covering lower jaws at sides, but joining underlip in front.

Teeth not visible. Jaws broad, strong, and square, lower jaw slightly projecting in front of upper jaw, with moderate turn-up. Viewed from front, the various properties of the face must be equally balanced on either side of an imaginary line down centre.

Eyes:

Seen from front, situated low down in skull, well away from ears. Eyes and stop in same straight line, at right-angles to furrow. Wide apart, but outer corners within the outline of cheeks. Round, of moderate size, neither sunken nor prominent; in colour very dark – almost black – showing no white when looking directly forward. Free from obvious eye problems.

Ears:

Set high – i.e. front edge of each ear (as viewed from front) joins outline of skull at top corner of such outline, so as to place them as wide apart, as high, and as far from eyes as possible. Small and thin. ‘Rose ear’ correct, i.e. folding inwards and back, upper or front inner edge curving outwards and backwards, showing part of inside of burr.

Mouth:

Jaws broad and square, with six small front teeth between canines in an even row. Canines wide apart. Teeth large and strong, not seen when mouth closed. When viewed from front, under jaw directly under upper jaw and parallel.

NECK

Strong, muscular neck, well-arched, moderate in length with clear definition between head and shoulders. Some loose skin about throat, forming slight dewlap on each side.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders broad, sloping and deep, very powerful and muscular, giving appearance of being ‘tacked on’ body. Brisket round and deep. Well let down between forelegs. Ribs not flat-sided, but well-rounded. Forelegs very stout and strong, well-developed, set wide apart, thick, muscular, and straight, bones of legs large and straight, not bandy nor curved, and short in proportion to hind legs, but not so short as to make back appear long, or detract from dog’s activity. Elbows low and standing well away from ribs. Pasterns short, straight and strong.

BODY

Chest wide, prominent, and deep. Back relatively short, strong, broad at shoulders. Slight fall to back close behind shoulders (lowest part) whence spine should rise to loins (top higher than top of shoulder), curving again more suddenly to tail, forming slight arch over the loin – a distinctive characteristic of breed. Body well ribbed back with good length of sternum. Belly tucked-up and not pendulous. Firm muscular condition highly desirable.

HINDQUARTERS

Legs large and muscular, slightly longer in proportion than forelegs. Hocks slightly bent, well let down; legs long and muscular from loins to hock. Stifles turned very slightly outwards away from body.

FEET

Forefeet:

Straight and turning very slightly outward; of medium size, and moderately round.

Hind feet:

Round and compact. Toes compact and thick, well split up, making knuckles prominent and high.

TAIL

Set on low, jutting out rather straight and then turning downwards. Round, smooth, and devoid of fringe or coarse hair. Moderate in length – rather short than long – thick at root, tapering quickly to a fine point. Downward carriage (not having a decided upward curve at end) and never carried above back. Lack of tail, inverted, or extremely tight tails are highly undesirable.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Appearing to trot with short, quick steps on tips of toes, front feet landing just inside width at point of shoulder, hind feet not lifted high, appearing to skim ground in a semi-circular like motion from inside to out, and tracking virtually behind the front feet. The body weight is transferred from side to side creating the distinctive Bulldog roll. When trotting and viewed from the side, a correct topline should be maintained. Soundness of movement is of the utmost importance.

COAT

Fine texture, short, close, and smooth (hard only from shortness and closeness, not wiry).

COLOUR

- Whole (solid) colour or ‘smut’ (whole colour with a black mask or muzzle).

- Whole colours are red, fawn, white.
 - Red or fawn may have white markings i.e. red and white, fawn and white.
 - Brindle – solid background colour marked with darker stripes: red brindle, fawn brindle. Brindles may have white markings, i.e. red brindle and white, fawn brindle and white.
 - Pied – white background with markings of any of the above-listed colours.
- * Colours should be brilliant. Any of the colours listed may have dark tips or ticking.
- * Any other colour or combination of colours unacceptable.

SIZE

Weight:

Males: 25kg

Females: 23kg

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. 149: BULLDOG

FCI Classification: Group 2 – Pinscher and Schnauzer, Molossoid breeds, Swiss Mountain and Cattle Dogs.

Section 2.1.7. Molossoid breeds, Mastiff Type.
Without working trial.