

A QUICK GUIDE TO BREED GROUPS

An overview of the 7 breed groups of the American Kennel Club

SPORTING GROUP



Bred to assist in locating and retrieving game, usually birds

Pointers locate game, while setters and spaniels flush out game. Retrievers are meant to retrieve it without causing damage to it. Dogs in this group tend to be tolerant, cooperative, alert and active. They require regular exercise and make great companions! Popular breeds: Labrador Retriever, Golden Retriever, Cocker Spaniel.

HOUND GROUP



Bred to track and hunt

This varied group includes breeds designed to hunt many different types of game. Sighthounds (like the Greyhound) chase down and exhaust prey, while scent hounds (like bloodhounds) use their powerful noses to track. Keep in mind that many hounds “bay,” which can be very loud. Popular breeds: Beagle, Dachshund, Basset Hound.

WORKING GROUP



Bred to perform a variety of tasks

The working group contains dogs bred for jobs like guarding, pulling carts and water rescue. These dogs tend to enjoy having a job to do, so mental and physical exercise are essential. These dogs are intelligent, strong but can be challenging pets. Popular breeds: Boxer, Rottweiler, Doberman Pinscher.

TERRIER GROUP



Bred to hunt and kill rodents above and below ground

Terriers are feisty, energetic and full of personality. Hunting vermin doesn't require much cooperation, so they tend to be independent and intolerant of other dogs. Many dogs in this group tend to bark and dig, and they may lack good bite inhibition. Popular breeds: Miniature Schnauzer, West Highland White Terrier.

TOY GROUP



Bred for companionship

Their small size and cute expressions make these dogs very popular pets, especially in urban areas, but they are still real dogs! They need proper training and handling to keep everyone happy and healthy. Many of these little dogs are smaller versions of other breeds. Popular breeds: Yorkshire Terrier, Chihuahua, Pug.

NON-SPORTING GROUP



Bred for jobs that no longer exist or are obsolete

This group is made up of a wide variety of dogs bred for very different purposes. These are sturdy breeds, each with its own temperament, behavior and history. Popular breeds: English and French Bulldog, Poodle, Dalmatian.

HERDING GROUP



Bred to control the movement of other animals

Herding dogs can be divided into 4 types: heelers, drovers, headers and tending dogs. Since herding requires intense focus and movement, these breeds may herd family members, especially children. Mental stimulation is vital! Popular breeds: German Shepherd, Collie, Corgi.

PRO TIP:

Study up on your breeds! Breed affects more than just appearance. If we know what breeds are in a particular dog's genetic makeup, we know what we should expect from that dog behaviorally, and we can make decisions about how to train and meet each dog's needs. We recommend starting with breed groups before diving into each individual breed.