



GROUP VI: NON-SPORTING DOGS

BULLDOG

RECOGNIZED: 1889

Effective: July 2026

The breed standard outlines the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance of a breed, and ensures that a dog can carry out its original purpose. Breeders and judges should be mindful to prioritize dogs that are healthy and sound in both mind and body.

ORIGIN & PURPOSE

Bull baiting was introduced to Britain by the Normans in the 12th century when they used mastiff-type dogs (referred to as Bandogs) to torment bulls. By the 16th century, bull baiting became extremely popular for all classes and a smaller, thick-set dog with a strong head and powerful jaw replaced the leggier mastiff-type dog. The ancestor of the modern Bulldog had emerged. When bull baiting was made illegal in 1835, the future of the breed was threatened as the dogs no longer had a purpose. In 1860 the Bulldog made its entry in the show ring. The ensuing years saw the breed evolve to have a pugilist expression and a loving affectionate nature to family and friends; these dogs provided the nucleus for the regeneration of the breed. When the Kennel Club of England was organized in 1873, the Bulldog was among the first of the breeds to be recognized and he remains today the iconic British breed, thought to symbolize the spirit of the country.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The perfect Bulldog must be of medium size and smooth coat; with heavy, thick-set, low-swung body, massive short-faced head, wide shoulders and sturdy limbs. The general appearance and attitude should suggest great stability, vigour and strength. The demeanour should be pacific and dignified. These attributes should be countenanced by the expression and behaviour. The “points” should be well distributed and bear good relation one to the other, no feature being in such prominence from either excess or lack of quality that the animal appears deformed or ill-proportioned.

In comparison with specimens of different sex, due allowance should be made in favour of the bitches that do not bear the characteristics of the breed to the same degree of perfection and grandeur as do the dogs.

TEMPERAMENT

The disposition should be equable and kind, resolute and courageous (not vicious or aggressive).

SIZE

Weight: The size for mature dogs is about 22.75 kg (50 lb); for mature bitches about 18.25 kg (40 lb).

COAT

The coat should be straight, short, flat, close, of fine texture, smooth and glossy (no fringe, feather or curl). The skin should be soft and loose, especially at the head, neck and shoulders.

COLOUR

The colour of coat should be uniform, pure of its kind and brilliant.

Allowable colours: red, white, fawn, fallow or any combination of the foregoing. Solid black is very undesirable but not objectionable if occurring minimally in piebald patches.

Patterns and markings may include brindle, piebald, ticking, black masks, black tipping, and a minimal amount of solid black in piebalds. All other colours or markings are a disqualification. The merle pattern is a disqualification.

HEAD

The head and face should be covered with heavy wrinkles. The **skull** should be very large, and in circumference, in front of the ears, should measure at least the height of the dog at the shoulders. Viewed from the front, it should appear very high, from the corner of the lower jaw to the apex of the skull, and also very broad and square. Viewed at the side, the head should appear very high, and very short from the point of the nose to occiput. The forehead should be flat (not rounded or domed), neither too prominent nor overhanging the face. The cheeks should be well rounded, protruding sideways and outward beyond the eyes. The temples or frontal bones should be very well defined, broad, square and high, causing a hollow or groove between the eyes. This indentation, or stop, should be both broad and deep and extend up the middle of the forehead, dividing the head vertically, being traceable to the top of the skull. **Muzzle:** The face, measured from the front of the cheekbone to the tip of the nose, should be extremely short, the muzzle being very short, broad, turned upwards and very deep from the corner of the eye to the corner of the mouth. The chops or flews should be thick, broad, pendant and very deep, completely overhanging the lower jaw at each side. They join the underlip in front and almost or quite cover the teeth, which should be scarcely noticeable when the mouth is closed. **Nose:** Nose should be large, broad and black, its tip being set back deeply between the eyes. The distance from bottom of stop, between the eyes, to the tip of nose should be as short as possible and not exceed the length from the tip of nose to the edge of underlip. The nostrils should be wide, large and black, with a well-defined line between them. **Mouth:** The jaws should be massive, very broad, square and undershot, the lower jaw projecting considerably in front of the upper jaw and turning up. The teeth should be large and strong, with the canine teeth or tusks wide apart; the six small teeth in front, between the canines, in an even, level row. **Eyes:** Eyes seen from the front should be situated low down in the skull, as far from the ears as possible, and their corners should be in a straight line at right angles with the stop. They should be quite in front of the head, as wide apart as possible, provided their outer corners are within the outline of the cheeks when viewed from the front. They should be quite round in form, of moderate size neither sunken nor bulging, and in colour should be very dark. The lids should cover the white of the eyeball, when the dog is looking directly forward, and the lid should show no haw. **Ears** should be set high in the head, the front inner edge of each ear joining the outline of the skull at the top back corner of skull, so as to place them as wide apart, and as high, and as far from the eyes as possible. In size they should be small and thin. The shape termed “rose ear” is the most desirable. The rose ear folds inward at its back lower edge, the upper front edge curving over, outwards and backwards, showing part of the inside of the burr. (The ears should not be carried erect or prick-eared or buttoned and should never be cropped.)

NECK

The neck should be short, very thick, deep and strong and well arched at the back. At the throat, from jaw to chest, there should be two loose pendulous folds, forming the dewlap.

FORQUARTERS

The **shoulders** should be muscular, very heavy, widespread and slant outward, giving stability and great power. The elbows should be low and stand well out and loose from the body. The **forelegs** should be short, very stout, straight and muscular, set wide apart, with well-developed calves, presenting a bowed outline, but the bones of the legs should not be curved or bandy, nor the feet brought too close together. The **feet** should be moderate in size,

compact and firmly set. Toes compact, well split up, with high knuckles and with short stubby nails. The front feet may be straight or slightly out-turned.

BODY

The **back** should be short and strong, very broad at the shoulders and comparatively narrow at the loins. There should be a slight fall in the back, close behind the shoulders (its lowest part), whence the spine should rise to the loins (the top of which should be higher than the top of the shoulders), thence curving again more suddenly to the tail forming an arch (a very distinctive feature of the breed) termed roach back or, more correctly “wheel back.” The **brisket** and **body** should be very capacious, with full sides, well-rounded ribs and very deep from the shoulders down to its lowest part, where it joins the chest. The chest should be very broad, deep, and full. It should be well let down between the shoulders and forelegs, giving the dog a broad, low, short-legged appearance. The body should be well ribbed up behind with the belly tucked up and not rotund.

HINDQUARTERS

The **hind legs** should be strong and muscular and longer than the forelegs, so as to elevate the loins above the shoulders. **Hocks** should be slightly bent and well let down, so as to give length and strength from loins to hock. The **lower leg** should be short, straight and strong, with the **stifles** turned slightly outward and away from the body. The **hocks** are thereby made to approach each other, and the hind feet to turn outward. The **hind feet** should be pointed well outward.

TAIL

The tail may be either straight or screwed (but never curved or curly), and in any case must be short, hung low, with decided downward carriage, thick root and fine tip. If straight, the tail should be cylindrical and of uniform taper. If screwed, the bends or kinks should be well defined, and they may be abrupt and even knotty, but no portion of the member should be elevated above the base or root.

GAIT

The style and carriage are peculiar, his gait being a loose-jointed, shuffling, sidewise motion, giving the characteristic “roll.” The action must, however, be unrestrained, free and vigorous.

FAULTS

Any departure from the aforementioned ideals shall be considered faulty to the degree in which it interferes with the health and well-being of the dog and the breed’s traditional purpose.

- Feathered, fringed or curly coat
- Any nose colour other than black
- Short-faced head lacking thrust of jaw
- Incorrect layback of head
- Rounded or domed forehead, too prominent or overhanging the face
- Ears cropped, pricked, buttoned or carried erect
- Splayed front feet or weak pasterns
- Any topline other than wheel back
- Curved or curly tails
- Aggressive or vicious temperament

DISQUALIFICATIONS

- Liver or brown nose
- Blue or green eye(s) or particoloured eye(s)
- All coat colours not listed in the colour section
- Merle pattern

SCALE OF POINTS

General Properties

Proportion and symmetry	5	
Attitude.....	3	
Expression	2	
Gait.....	3	
Size	3	
Coat.....	2	
Colour of coat.....	4	22

Head

Skull	5	
Cheeks.....	2	
Stop.....	4	
Eyes and eyelids.....	3	
Ears	5	
Wrinkle.....	5	
Nose.....	6	
Chops	2	
Jaws	5	
Teeth.....	2	39

Body, Legs, etc.

Neck.....	3	
Dewlap	2	
Shoulders.....	5	
Chest	3	
Ribs.....	3	
Brisket.....	2	
Belly	2	
Back	5	
Forelegs and elbows.....	4	
Hind legs.....	3	
Feet	3	
Tail.....	4	39

TOTAL		100
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