

# The New York Times

For Kids

EDITORS' NOTE:  
THIS SECTION SHOULD NOT BE READ BY  
ADULTS (OR DOG PEOPLE)

## CATS RULE!

DOGS DROOL\*



\*BUT IF  
YOU LIKE DOGS,  
FLIP THE  
SECTION OVER.

## DOGS: THEY CAN BE ANYTHING WE WANT

### MORE DOG FACTS!

**F**YOU HAD never seen or heard of dogs before, and you suddenly encountered a Chihuahua and an English mastiff, they wouldn't seem to have much in common. One might weigh four pounds, the other 200. One might have golden fur, the other black. Their snouts and ears aren't really the same shape. Their personalities are pretty different, too. So you'd probably be surprised to learn that they're the same species. Even crazier: They both come from a genetic ancestor who doesn't look all that much like either of them: the wolf.

So how did we end up with hundreds of different kinds of dogs? Thousands of years of selective breeding. Selective breeding is a process in which individual animals with certain characteristics are mated in order to produce offspring that also have those traits — the ability to hunt a fox, for example, or even just a really friendly personality (see "They Love You Sooo Much" on Page D2). But it was only in the Victorian era in England that dog enthusiasts came up with formal rules for what certain breeds were supposed to look like. And people began intentionally mating different breeds together to make new breeds. That ultimately led to a whole rainbow of dog shapes, sizes and personalities we know and love today.

### BIG MOMENTS IN DOG HISTORY

**1. THE BEGINNING** Exactly when dogs originated and were domesticated is still a matter of fierce debate. One group of researchers claims it was anywhere from 40,000 to 20,000 years ago, while another group argues it happened more like 15,000 years ago. What they agree on: Today's dogs descended from wolves.

**2. FIRST ENCOUNTERS** Eventually, some of those wolves began encountering strange creatures: humans. Wolves were attracted to the trash and leftovers people generated — sort of like how dogs beg for scraps at the kitchen table. The ones that were naturally disposed to be less afraid of human stuck around.

**3. FAMILY PETS?** The first evidence of pet dogs comes from an ancient grave in Germany that dates to around 14,200 years ago, containing the bones of a man, a woman — and a young pup.

**4. PUT TO WORK** Humans in ice-covered Siberia may have been the first to breed dogs for a specific purpose: to pull sleds. Scientists have analyzed 9,000-year-old dog bones from a Siberian island and found that the dogs were a similar size and shape to modern Siberian huskies.

**5. THE FIRST LEASHES?** Some of the earliest images of dogs were carved into rock in Saudi Arabia 9,000 to 8,000 years ago, depicting dogs hunting alongside humans. A few of the dogs have lines connecting them to the humans — like leashes.

**6. GOOD SHEPHERDS** With the domestication of the sheep between 9,000 and 5,000 years ago, dogs were put to work guarding and later herding flocks. The ancient Romans took their herds and sheepdogs throughout Europe when they conquered new areas — including Britain in A.D. 43. Those dogs became the ancestors of today's Border collie.

**7. BEWARE OF DOG** One of dogs' first jobs was to guard homes and property. A 2,000-year-old floor mosaic in the ancient Roman city Pompeii depicts a ferocious dog with the words *cave canem* underneath — that's Latin for "Beware of the dog."

**8. RELEASING THE HOUNDS** Throughout history, royalty and nobility have owned hounds to hunt, track and kill other animals. According to the merchant-explorer Marco Polo, Kublai Khan, a Mongol ruler in the 1200s, had 5,000 hunting dogs.

**9. RISE OF THE LAP DOG** Under the reign of French kings in the 1700s, miniature poodles became extremely popular. Their ornate palace, Versailles, even contained a richly decorated room where the many palace dogs could sleep.

**10. BEST IN SHOW** In 1859, the first dog show was held, in Newcastle, England. By categorizing dogs based on how they looked, not what they did, the Victorians changed the way we think about the varieties of dogs.

**11. CANINE GOOD CITIZENS** In 1928, a German shepherd named Buddy successfully guided her blind owner, Morris Frank, across a dangerous intersection in New York, making her the United States' first guide dog. Frank went on to help found the Seeing Eye guide-dog school.

**12. PUREBRED PROBLEMS** Purebreeding dogs — only breeding together dogs of the same breed — can lead to health issues. Bulldogs, for example, can have breathing problems, bone disorders and skin conditions.

**13. PART OF THE FAMILY** People today own more dogs than ever: Over 38 percent of American households have one or more. But dogs' deeply bred instincts are still there, even in family pets. For example, have you ever noticed how many golden retrievers — originally used to retrieve hunters' prey — live to play fetch?

## WHO WINS?



BY CHELSEA LEU (WITH FUN FACTS BY KATHERINE CUSUMANO)  
ILLUSTRATION BY ARNA MILLER

## DOGS?



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