**Breed Traits and Tendencies**

Understanding your breed traits is extremely important. Breed traits predispose our puppies to certain behaviours, for example a dog that is bred to retrieve and carry items can be prone to possession aggression if not trained correctly. A dog bred to chase small prey can become reactive on a lead if not trained correctly.

If you are unsure of your puppies breed traits then please ask your instructor for more information.

The following are some general behavioural attributes of different breed types. These are not rules of behaviour. All dogs are individuals and have their own personality which is influenced strongly by hereditary characteristics (temperament of parent) and upbringing and training.

***Protection/Guarding Dogs***

Most protection dogs were bred originally as herding dogs or flock guards. We now use them for a variety of purposes, including police work, guarding property, or for specific leisure activities or sports, such as Schutzhund.

Breeds include: Japanese Akita, Rottweiler, Dobermann Pinscher, Bullmastiff and Mastiff, Great Dane, Boxer and Giant Schnauzer. German shepherd is included in this group as well as the herding group; the Rhodesian Ridgeback is used as a combination guard, protection and hunting dog.

Typical behavioural profile: *confident, extremely trainable, ability to work well with humans, protective, noisy, reactive.*

Typical problems: *aggression, separation anxiety, possessiveness, reactivity on a lead, territorial and protective in the home, garden and regular walks.*

***Flocking and Mountain Dogs***

Flock guards were bred to protect their herds of sheep or cattle from marauding predators. Many of them were bred to be white, so they would blend into the flocks. They tend to be quite protective of their families and fear very little. The most well known in this country are the Great Pyrenees, Komondor, and Kuvasz. Closely related to the flock guards are the mountain dogs: St. Bernard, Newfoundland and Bernese Mountain Dog. Also quite heavy-boned, with large, domed heads, these animals tend to be sweet-tempered, if stubborn.

Typical behavioural profile: *confident, protective, independent, tolerant, ability to work well with humans*

Typical problems: *aggression, wanderlust, possessiveness*

**Herding Breeds**

Herding breeds are used to herd sheep and cattle. They are often flock protectors as well. They are usually medium sized, agile, sensitive, and quick to use their teeth to move their flock.

Breeds include: Border Collie, Collie, Old English Sheepdog, German Shepherd, Belgian Shepherd (3 varieties), Australian Shepherd, Heeler, Cattle dog, Kelpie, Corgie and Shetland Sheepdog, Puli, Bearded Collie and Bouvier.

Typical behavioural profile: *anxious, demanding, protective, sensitive, loyal, great obedience dogs, ability to work well with humans, high energy*

Typical problems: *fear-based aggression, separation anxiety, destructive, noisy, herding and nipping of people or dogs.*

**Retrievers**

Retrievers retrieve - whether in water, on land or in the air. Most retrievers are “party animals,” good natured, outgoing and very energetic. People have bred specifically for particular aspects of the wolf’s prey drive - the chase, and bringing the prey back to the den.

Breeds include: Flat Coated Retriever, Golden Retriever, Curly Coated Retriever, Chesapeake Bay Retriever.

Typical behavioural profile: *energetic, happy, mouthy, ball or Frisbee o*riented, vocal, great obedience dogs, ability to work well with humans

Typical problems: *destructive, noisy, mouthy during puppy stage, overwhelmingly energetic, separation anxiety, possession aggression*

**Spaniels**

Spaniels are hunting dogs, bred to flush or “spring” game from bushes. They are conveniently sized for pets, and are quite popular because of that. Dogs bred for pets only generally have lots of hair - or feathering - on their ears and legs.

Breeds include: American Water, Clumber, American Cocker, English Cocker, English Springer, English Toy, Field, Irish Water, Sussex, Tibetan and Welsh Springer

Typical behaviour profile: *cheerful, fun-loving, energetic, “birdy,” love to fetch*

Typical problems: *possession aggression, unruliness, destructiveness, mouthy. A behavioural problem known as “rage syndrome” (thought to be a form of dominant aggression or possibly conflict behaviour) is prevalent in some strains of cockers and springers. The behaviour is characterized by attacking and biting, with no apparent provocation.*

**Pointers and Setters**

Pointers are highly energetic with normally happy temperaments and tolerant dispositions. The Dalmatian was originally a pointing variety, but retains little of the temperament except for the energy. Setters are also hunting dogs, often with a more sensitive or nervous disposition.

Breeds include: German Shorthair, Weimaraner, Wirehaired and English Pointers, the Irish, English and Gordon setters.

Typical behavioural profile: *both types are energetic, often nervous, though most have sweet temperaments. Good with children, though not in the obedience ring.*

Typical problems: *running away, disobedience, destructiveness, separation anxiety*

**Fighting Dogs**

While the tendency to fight has been bred out of many of these dogs, it remains in others — either accidentally or purposefully. Much of their aggression comes from their prey-drive, so it is not driven by emotion. Thus fighting dogs appear to enjoy the fight. Most are very stubborn and independent. They are usually extremely bonded and affectionate with their owners, and can make great dogs for children.

Breeds include: Chinese Sharpei, Pit Bull terrier, English Bull terrier, Staffordshire Bull terrier and Japanese Akita

Typical behavioural profile: *lively, affectionate, predatory, very focused*

Typical problems: *untrustworthy with other dogs or other animals unless very well socialised, occasionally aggressive towards humans if not trained from a young age. The bull breeds are very bouncy and hyperactive, challenging to train, tend to deal with things in an over the top way.*

**Scent Hounds**

Scent hounds are masters at sniffing and smelling, in a species with an absolutely amazing ability to smell. Most scent hounds have long ears - in bloodhounds and bassets, so long that the ears sometimes scrape the ground and stir up even more scents.

Breeds include: Beagle, Basset, Otter, Coon, Bloodhound

Typical behavioural profile: *sweet tempered and tolerant, excellent for families, rarely bite.*

Typical problems: *wanderlust, occasional aggression, indifference to training*

**Sight Hounds**

Sight hound are typically long and lean, sometimes virtually disappearing when looked down upon from above. They have keen vision, and can run miles without tiring. Most were or are used to course prey — including everything from rabbits to deer to wolves.

Breeds include: Afghan, Saluki, Ibizan, Pharaoh, Greyhound, Whippet, Italian Greyhound, Lurchers.

Typical behavioural profile: *reserved, sometimes shy, aloof, gentle, quiet when they’re not running after something.*

Typical problems: *predatory to small animals, many are not interested in obedience w*ork, *so have earned the reputation of being stubborn and stupid, which they are not.*

**Northern Breeds**

These dogs are beautiful, and often look like wolves. A working malamute can pull up to a ton for a short distance, while huskies specialize in long treks. Samoyeds are all round sled dogs. American Eskimos are bred down sled dogs (as are Pomeranians). They have a thick double coat which sheds dirt.

Breeds include: Alaskan Malamute, Siberian Husky, Samoyed, American Eskimo, Norwegian Elkhound, Finnish Spitz

Typical behavioural profile: *many are very independent, and have a tendency to roam if not adequately fenced. High predatory drive, so problematic with small animals. Often quite tolerant of pain (like that delivered by a small child). Need high amounts of exercise and mental stimulation.*

Typical problems: *wandering, killing small animals, difficult to obedience train, dominance and possession aggression.*

**Terriers**

Small to medium sized dogs (one large - the Airedale), bred to chase after and kill vermin or to be the participants in dog fighting or bull baiting. Very hardy, as a rule, many with harsh, wiry coats that need little conditioning. Virtually all hail from various parts of the British Islands.

Breeds include: Airedale, Australian, Bedlington, Border, Boston, Bull, Cairn, Dandie

Dinmont, Irish, Kerry blue, Lakeland, Manchester, Norfolk, Norwich, Scottish, Sealyham, Silky, Skye, Smooth fox, Soft-coated Wheaten, Tibetan, Welsh, West Highland white, Yorkshire, Fell/Patterdale and Jack Russell. I do include miniature schnauzers and dachshunds in this group because they share the disposition.

Typical behavioural profile: *scrappy, energetic, independent, often predatory, hardy and fun describes most terriers. They can be quite dominant, and are often poor pets for kids because of their low bite inhibition and low tolerance.*

Typical problems: *snappy, handling/grooming can be difficult, possessive, independent, dog-aggressive, dominant-aggressive, the smaller ones have trouble with house training. Reactive to anything that moves. Likes to chase.*

**Toys**

Most of these little guys take on the breed characteristics of their larger cousins, with a few twists. Because they’re so tiny, they can often be quite snappy, no matter what breed they were bred down from, and they develop their own specific behaviour problems — especially a dislike of being put on the ground!

Breeds include: Affenpinscher, Brussels griffon, Chihuahua, English toy spaniel, Italian Greyhound, Japanese Chin, Maltese, Toy Manchester terrier, Miniature Pinscher, Papillion, Pekinese, Pomeranian, Toy Poodle, Pug, Shih Tzu, Silky and Yorkshire terriers.

They require immense amounts of socialisation to prevent them becoming scared, anxious and snappy with people and other dogs.

Typical behavioural profile: *type specific, except that they tend to be vocal.*

Typical problems: *snappy, vocal, shy, separation anxiety, aggression.*