

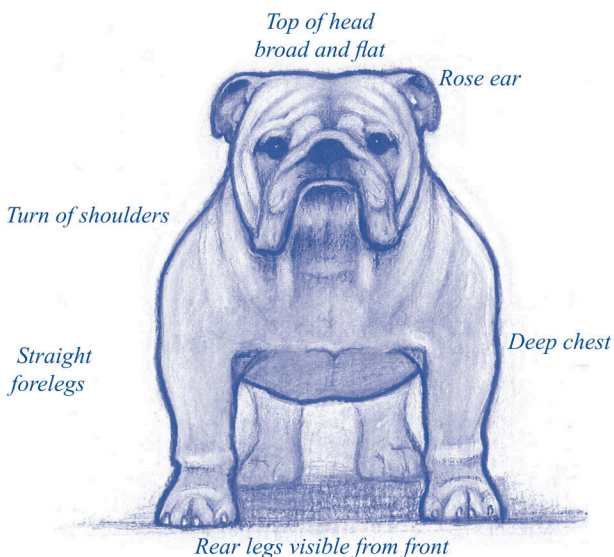


# THE BULLDOG

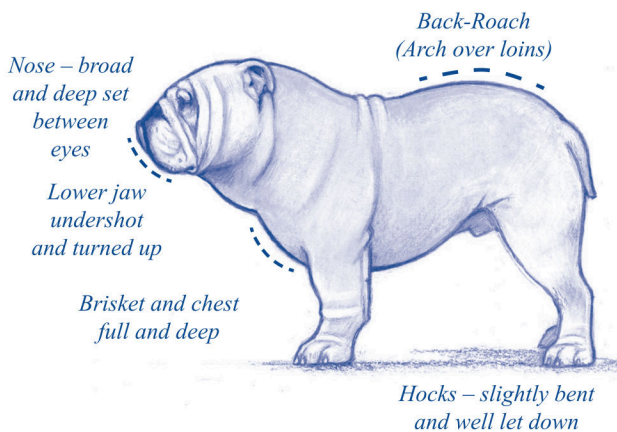


*An Illustrated Guide to the Standard*

## KEY ATTRIBUTES OF BULLDOG CONFORMATION



*Being more narrow in the rear, when the Bulldog is viewed from the front, the rear legs should be visible between the front legs.*



*From the ground to elbow is approximately half the height of the Bulldog at the withers.*

*Proportion and Symmetry – Balance between all parts so that each feature bears good relationship with all other features.*

This Pamphlet is provided by  
**THE BULLDOG CLUB OF AMERICA**  
**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

*Illustrations by Betty Davey*

Revised 2018

## **BULLDOG HISTORY**

Authorities differ completely about the origin of the Bulldog. They even have differing opinions as to the spelling of the name. Be it Bondogge, Boldogge, Bandogge, the final spelling is Bulldog.

Whatever the name or the origin, there is little doubt that centuries ago there was a canine resembling our present day Bulldog. This Bulldog was lighter boned and higher on leg, but with the courage, tenacity, and determination that still exists today. Over the years other breeds have crossed with the Bulldog to give these traits to their breeds, perhaps the best known being the Greyhound.

After bull-baiting, bear-baiting and dog fighting were prohibited in England in 1835, a few dedicated fanciers worked diligently to breed out the aggressive, vicious tendencies and to modify the Bulldog to look more like we see him today, shorter faced and heavier in structure. These breeders made it their job to preserve and protect the Bulldog.

The modern Bulldog is gentle, intelligent, affectionate, strong and determined. The Bulldog was among the first of the breeds to be granted official recognition when the Kennel Club (England) was organized in 1873.

The Bulldog Club of America was formed in 1890 utilizing the English Standard. In 1896 a Standard was adopted by the Bulldog Club of America. It was revised in 1914 to declare the Dudley nose a disqualification. In 1976 the Dudley nose disqualification was redefined as a “brown or liver-colored nose”. The Standard was reformatted in 1990 with no changes in wording. In 2016 the Bulldog Club of America approved, and the American Kennel Club adopted, a revision to the Standard which includes disqualifications for eye color, coat color, markings and patterns as specified.

## **FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION**

The Bulldog, like all breeds bred to perform a specific task, is the result of intense selective breeding necessary to produce the conformational structure essential for the successful performance of its duties, in this case, the heinous “sport” of bull-baiting. Every point of conformation was selectively bred into the Bulldog to prevent it from injury as it went about the business of overcoming a bull.

The Bulldog’s most unique physical characteristic, the undershot jaw, held onto the bull with a vise-like grip. The “well laid back” nose facilitated the dog’s breathing. Forehead and face wrinkles directed the bull’s blood away from the dog’s nose and eyes. The Bulldog’s low-to-the-ground forefront challenged the bull’s frontal attacks while the shortness of hocks provided excellent stamina. The looseness of the skin of the Bulldog’s body often served as a deterrent to penetration of the bull’s horns. The physical structure of the Bulldog allowed him to perform his duties with remarkable efficiency.

Visit the Bulldog Club of America online at

[www.thebca.org](http://www.thebca.org)

for more information on:

- Breeder Referral
- Education
- Upcoming National Shows
- History
- Judge's Education
- Gallery of Past National Winners
- The Bulldog Gait Video
- Membership

# OFFICIAL STANDARD of the BULLDOG



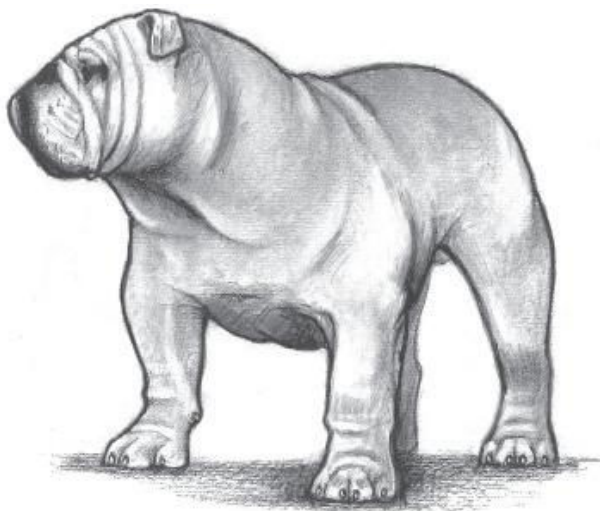
The official Standard, as accepted by the Bulldog Club of America and approved by the American Kennel Club, is typeset in **BOLD TYPE**. The clarifications are set in *ITALIC TYPE*.

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## GENERAL APPEARANCE

The perfect Bulldog must be of medium size and smooth coat; with heavy, thickset, low-swung body, massive short-faced head, wide shoulders and sturdy limbs. The general appearance and attitude should suggest great stability, vigor and strength.



*Sound sturdy limbs and the suggestion of great stability, vigor and strength are as important to the present day's Bulldog as they were to its ancestors.*

The disposition should be equable and kind, resolute and courageous (not vicious or aggressive), and demeanor should be pacific and dignified. These attributes should be countenanced by the expression and behavior.

## SIZE, PROPORTION, SYMMETRY

**SIZE** – The size for mature dogs is about 50 pounds; for mature bitches about 40 pounds.

**PROPORTION** – The circumference of the skull in front of the ears should measure at least the height of the dog at the shoulders.

**SYMMETRY** – 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.

*Proportion and symmetry are of primary importance when evaluating the overall dog and are allotted 5 points in the scale of points.*

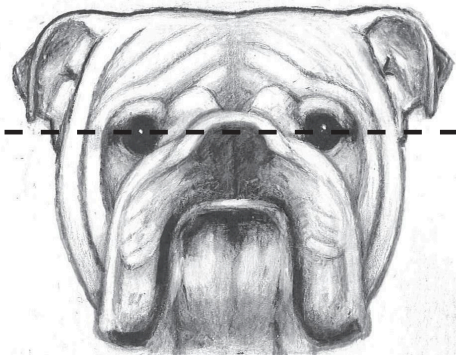
**INFLUENCE OF SEX** – In comparison of specimens of different sex, due allowance should be made in favor of the bitches, which do not bear the characteristics of the breed to the same degree of perfection and grandeur as do the dogs.



*The bitch should have equal qualities, but an allowance shall be made for the femininity that is characteristic of the bitch. This femininity allows for less bone and fewer wrinkles.*

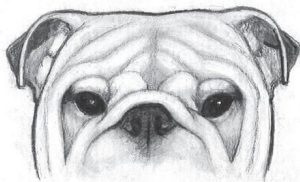
## HEAD

**EYES & EYELIDS** – The 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 color should be very dark. Blue or green eye(s) or parti-colored eye(s) are a disqualification. The lids should cover the white of the eyeball, when the dog is looking directly forward, and the lid should show no “haw.”

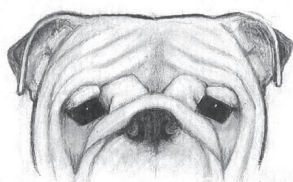


*A Bulldog's eyes should be round, very dark and never blue, green or parti-colored, each of which is a disqualification. An imaginary horizontal line passing through the four corners of the eyes should be at a right angle with the stop and rest just on top of the nose.*

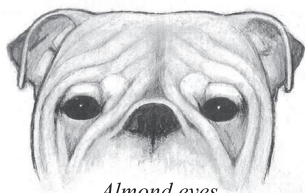
#### **FAULTY EYES**



*Slanted eyes*

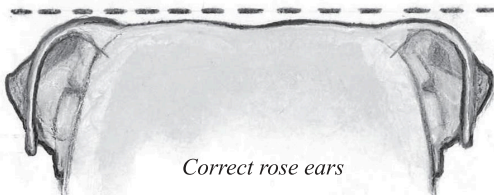


*Droopy eyes*



*Almond eyes*

**EARS** – The 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, outward and backward, 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.)



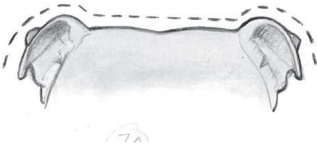
*Correct rose ears*

*When viewed from the front, the top of the ears should be level with the top outline of the skull with the burr partially exposed and the entire front edge of the ear visible. Thick, heavy ears, folded over or button ears and flying ears are undesirable.*



*Rose ear held back*

**EAR FAULTS**



*High set*



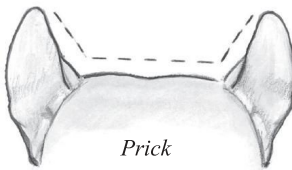
*Fly away*



*Button*



*Tulip or flying*

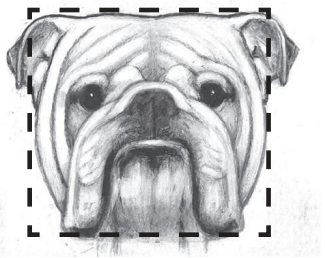


*Prick*

**SKULL** – 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.



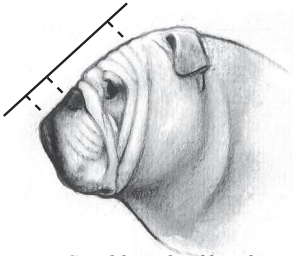
*Broad with good width between the ears*



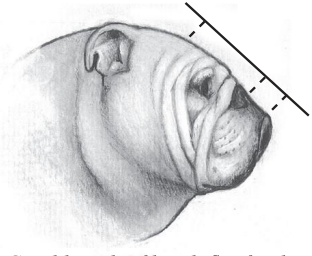
*Square*

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.





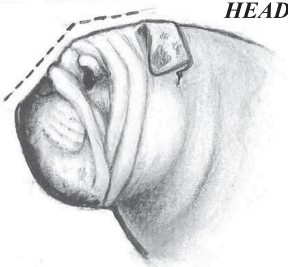
*Good length of head,  
flat forehead, ears alert*



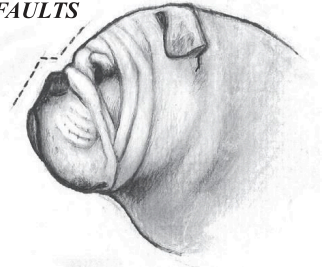
*Good length of head, flat forehead,  
ears rosed back, relaxed*

*When a straight edge is placed against the head in the furrow between the eyes, it should touch the tip of the lower lip, the tip of the nose, and the top of head. This is called the "layback" in Bulldogs and should be about a 42° to 45° angle.*

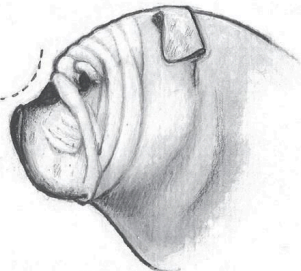
**HEAD FAULTS**



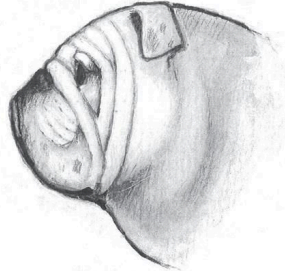
*Incorrect layback (Shelf)*



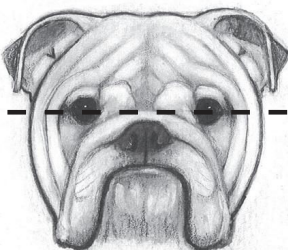
*Nosey*



*Dishfaced*



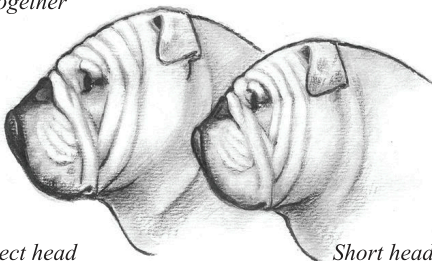
*Short headed  
Lacking thrust of jaw*



*Downfaced – Nose below eyes  
Skull narrow at top – Ears close together*



*Frog faced – Jaw too short,  
or too narrow*

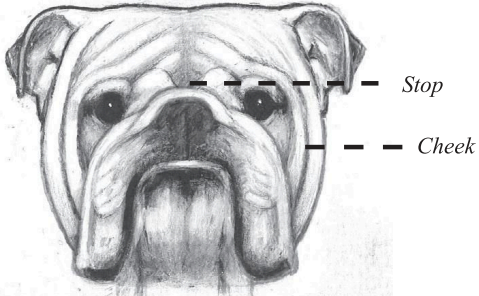


*Correct head*

*Short headed*

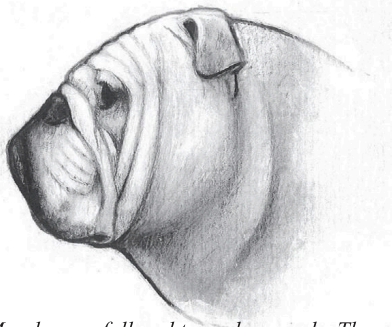
**CHEEKS** – The cheeks should be well rounded, protruding sideways and outward beyond the eyes.

**STOP** – 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.



*The indentation in the skull, called the “furrow,” extends from between the eyes to the top of the head.*

**FACE & 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 upward and very deep from the corner of the eye to the corner of the mouth.



*Muzzle very full and turned upwards. The eyes should be as far from the ears as possible.*

**NOSE** – The nose should be large, broad and black, its tip set back deeply between the eyes. The distance from bottom of stop, between the eyes, to the tip of the 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. Any nose other than black is objectionable and a brown or liver-colored nose shall disqualify.



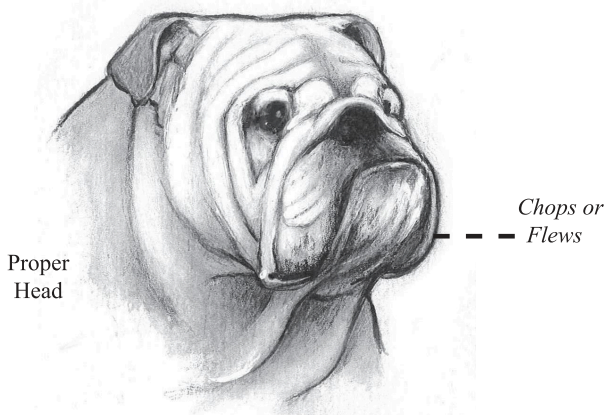
*Correct nose tip set back*



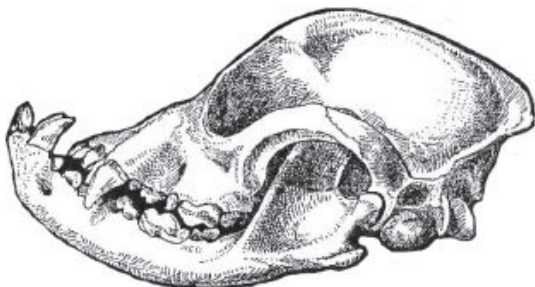
*Incorrect nose perpendicular*

*The front of the nose slants back, closely following contour of the head, and has large, open, black nostrils. Closed nares restrict breathing and are a serious fault. In the scale of points, the nose is allotted 6, more than any other feature.*

**LIPS** – 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.



**BITE-JAWS** – 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 correct jaw, so eagerly sought after in the fancy, has an upward sweep, retains the curve throughout, and resembles a rocking-chair rocker.*



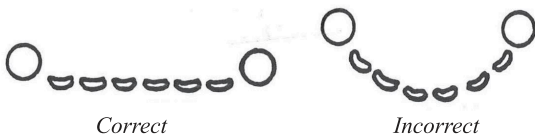
*Correct*



*Incorrect*

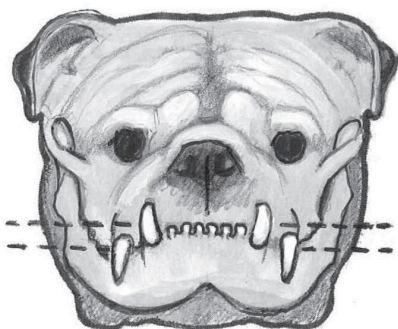
*The lower jaw should project considerably past the upper jaw. When viewed from the front, it should present a squared off and turned up look, creating an inverted U, rather than an inverted V. Correct width, projection and turn-up are all necessary to produce the desired lower jaw that sets the Bulldog apart from other breeds. In the scale of points for the Head, the jaws, along with the skull, ears and wrinkles, are each allotted 5 points. Only the nose is allotted more.*

**TEETH** – The teeth should be large and strong, with the canine teeth or tusks wide apart, and the six small teeth in front, between the canines, in an even, level row.



*Correct*

*Incorrect*

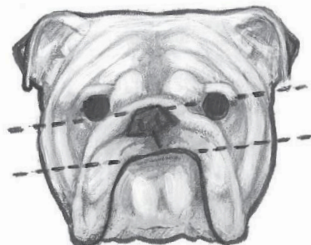


*Cutaway  
(flews missing)  
shows the  
correct level  
and parallel teeth.*

*The bottom teeth should be well in front of the top teeth and parallel. The undershot jaw is a unique and important characteristic of the Bulldog.*



*Wry jaw  
Neither level nor parallel*

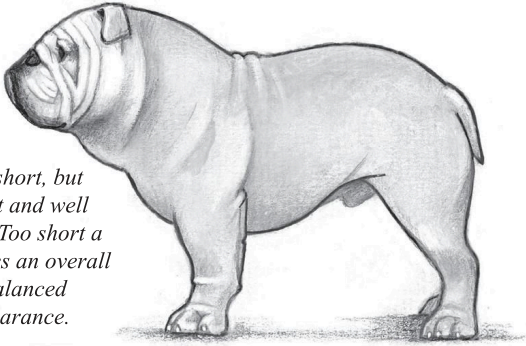


*Wry face, nose and jaw  
out of alignment, offset*

## NECK, TOPLINE, BODY

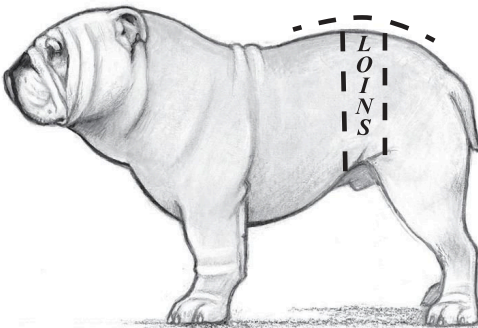
**NECK** – The neck should be short, very thick, deep and strong and well arched at the back.

*Neck short, but evident and well arched. Too short a neck gives an overall unbalanced appearance.*



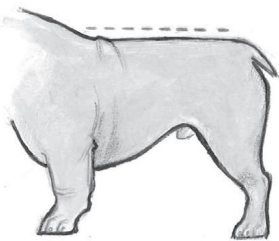
**TOPLINE** – There should be a slight fall in the back, close behind the shoulders (its lowest part), whence the spine should rise to the loins (the top of which should be higher than the top of the shoulders), thence, curving again more suddenly to the tail, forming an arch (a very distinctive feature of the breed), termed “roach back” or, more correctly, “wheel-back.”

### PROPER TOPLINE

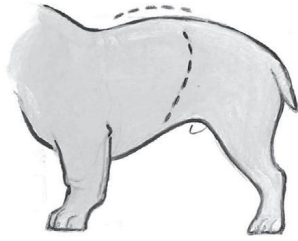


*Following a slight dip behind the shoulders, the highest point of the correct roach is over the loins, past the last rib.*

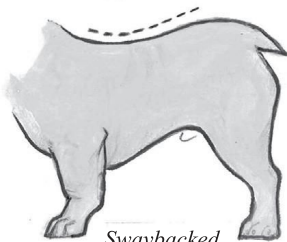
### FAULTY TOPLINES



*Straight backed*



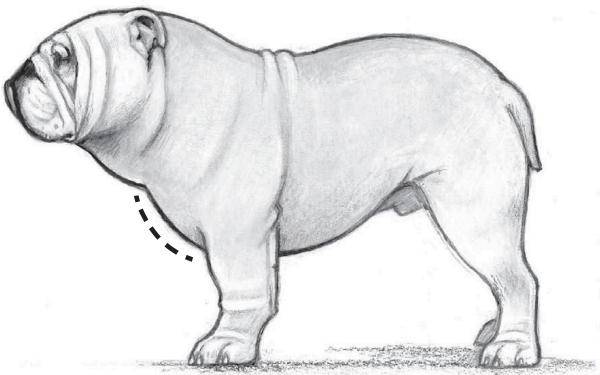
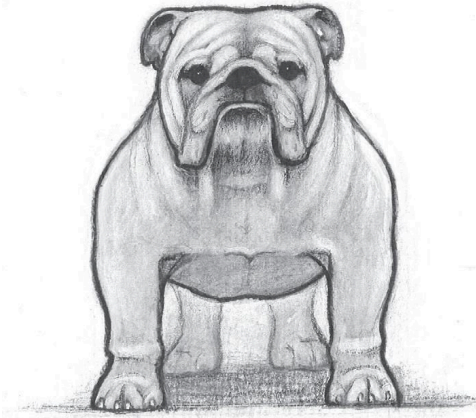
*Camel backed*



*Swaybacked*

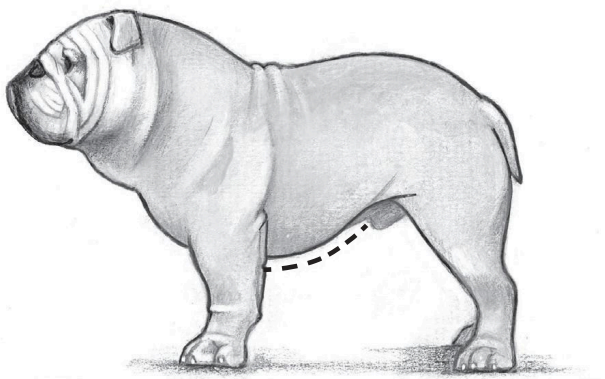
**BODY** – The brisket and body should be very capacious, with full sides, well-rounded ribs and very deep from the shoulders down to its lowest part, where it joins the chest. It should be well let down between the shoulders and forelegs, giving the dog a broad, low, short-legged appearance.

**CHEST** – The chest should be very broad, deep and full.



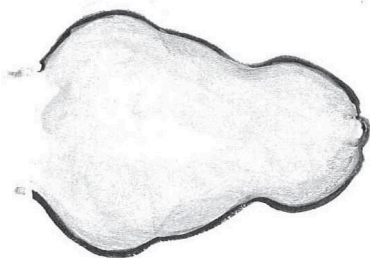
*Brisket well let down between forelegs. Fullness of the brisket can be observed in front of the forelegs from the side view and is an indication of correct placement of shoulders. Ears are rosed back in a relaxed position.*

**UNDERLINE** – The body should be well ribbed up behind with the belly tucked up and not rotund.



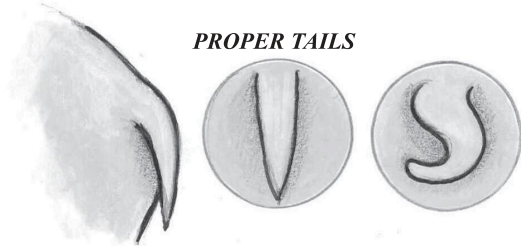
*Well tucked up behind the ribs. Ears are alert.*

**BACK & LOIN** – The back should be short and strong, very broad at the shoulders and comparatively narrow at the loins.



*Wide shoulders, barrel ribs and a narrow loin area give the Bulldog a “pear shape” when viewed from the top. A back of correct length creates a balanced appearance.*

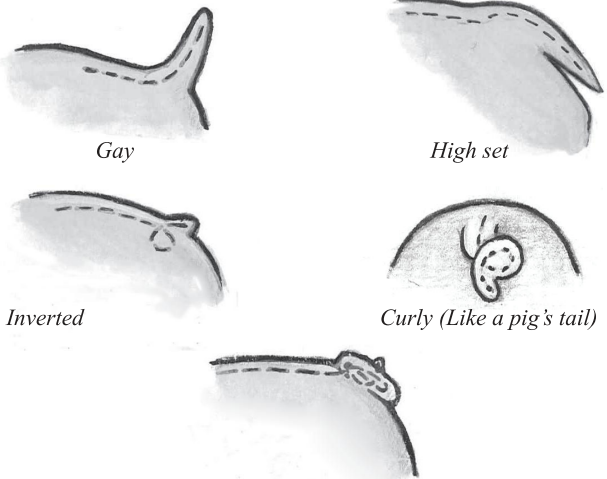
**TAIL** – The tail may be either straight or “screwed” (but never curved or curly), and in any case must be short, hung low, with decided downward carriage, thick root and fine tip. If straight, the tail should be cylindrical and of uniform taper. If “screwed”, the bends or kinks should be well defined,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



**PROPER TAILS**

*Two types of tail are desired in the Standard, each is short, hung low, heading downward with thick root and fine tip.*

**FAULTY TAILS**

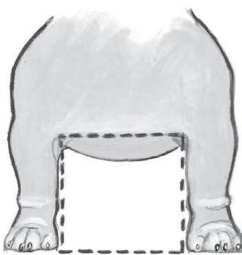


*If screwed, no part of the tail should be above the base or root.*

## FOREQUARTERS

**SHOULDERS** – The shoulders should be muscular, very heavy, widespread and slanting outward, giving stability and great power.

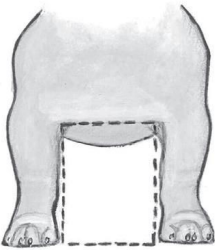
**FORELEGS** – The forelegs should be short, very stout, straight and muscular, set wide apart, with well developed calves, presenting a bowed outline, but the bones of the legs should not be curved or bandy, nor the feet brought too close together.



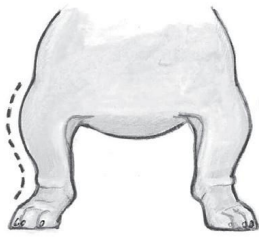
*Correct turn of shoulder with proper front legs will show straight perpendicular inner forelegs. In the scale of points under Body, the shoulders and back are each allotted the most points at 5.*



**FAULTY FRONTS**



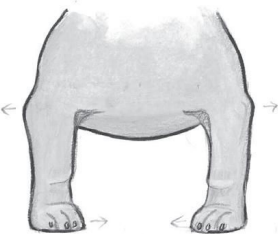
*Narrow front with shoulders too tight to the body and forelegs too close*



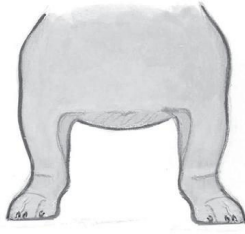
*Chippendale or Fiddle-Front, bones are curved*

**ELBOWS** – The elbows should be low and stand well out and loose from the body.

**FAULTY ELBOWS**



*Overly loose elbows, feet may turn inwards*



*Tight elbows*

“Loose from the body” does NOT mean overly loose elbows. It means they should not be directed toward the ribs (tight elbows). Neither should they be directed excessively outward away from the ribs (overly loose elbows).

**FRONT FEET** – The feet should be moderate in size, compact and firmly set. Toes compact, well split up, with high knuckles and very short stubby nails. The front feet may be straight or slightly out-turned.

**PROPER FOOT**



*High knuckles and toes compact*



**FAULTY FEET**



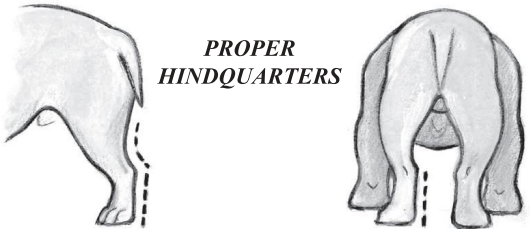
*Splayed*



*Weak pastern*

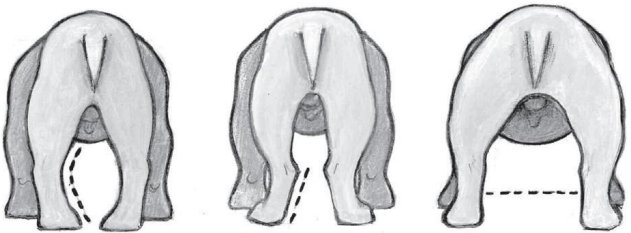
## HINDQUARTERS

**LEGS** – 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 the 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.



*PROPER  
HINDQUARTERS*

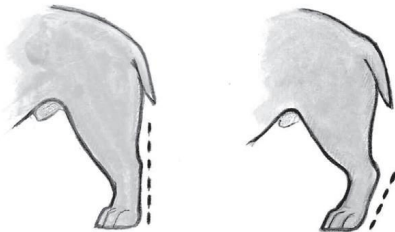
### *FAULTY HINDQUARTERS*



*Pigeon toed*

*Cow hocked*

*Too wide*



*Straight hock*

*Crooked hock*

**HIND FEET** – The feet should be moderate in size, compact and firmly set. Toes compact, well split up, with high knuckles and short stubby nails. The hind feet should be pointed well outward.

## COAT & SKIN

**COAT** – The coat should be straight, short, flat, close, of fine texture, smooth and glossy (no fringe, feather or curl).

**SKIN** – The skin should be soft and loose, especially at the head, neck and shoulders.

**WRINKLES & DEWLAP** – The head and face should be covered with heavy wrinkles, and at the throat, from jaw to chest, there should be two loose pendulous folds, forming the dewlap.



*History tells us the head wrinkles, along with the furrow and the stop, served at one time to divert blood from the eyes and nose. The wrinkle(s) over the nose can vary from a complete wrinkle to a split wrinkle. The nose wrinkle should not extend beyond the tip of the nose, obscure the vision in any way, or be too large or out of proportion.*

## COLOR OF COAT

The color of coat should be uniform, pure of its kind and brilliant. Colors are red, white, fawn, fallow, or any combination of the foregoing. Patterns and markings may include brindle, piebald, ticking, black masks, black tipping, and a minimal amount of solid black in piebalds. All other colors or markings are a disqualification. The merle pattern is a disqualification.

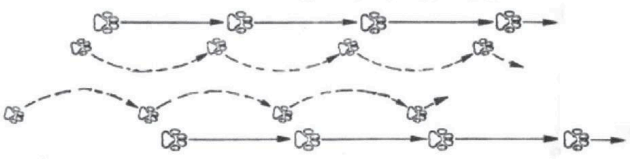
*The standard does not list any specific disqualifying colors or markings in the Bulldog. Instead, it indicates that any coat color other than red, white, fawn, fallow or any combination of these colors is a disqualification and any marking other than those listed as acceptable is also a disqualification. Brindle, piebald or ticking patterns are acceptable but the merle pattern is a disqualification.*

*Fawn coat colors can appear in many different shades, and all fawns are acceptable. The standard allows black masks, black tipping and a “minimal amount of solid black” in piebalds, but does not specify a limit on the number or size of solid black patches. Solid black means black without a trace of brindle.*

*Bulldogs with disqualifying fault colors are increasingly common today, although rarely exhibited. It is imperative that the Bulldog fancy be able to recognize the colors and markings which are acceptable and those that are not.*

## 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.



*The proper Bulldog, with short wide set front legs and longer narrow set rear legs, has a peculiar gait that results in a side to side motion or “roll.” The Bulldog gaits with his front legs going straight forward from his wide shoulders. The rear legs swing in and out and should hit the ground closer together than the front legs. The longer rear legs, hind feet turned out, create the shuffle of the bulldog. The roll can be observed by following the “sidewise” motion of the skin over the loin and the “sidewise” movement at the base of the tail.*

*\*A Bulldog gait video, showing the peculiarities of gait, is available from the BCA Education Committee.*

## TEMPERAMENT

The disposition should be equable and kind, resolute and courageous (not vicious or aggressive) and demeanor should be pacific and dignified. These attributes should be countenanced by the expression and behavior.



*The Bulldog is a friendly, outgoing, companionable breed with an expression of kindness and dignity.*

## Scale of points

### General Properties

Proportion & Symmetry .....	5
Attitude .....	3
Expression .....	2
Gait .....	3
Size .....	3
Coat .....	2
Color of Coat .....	4

**22**

### Head

Skull .....	5
Cheeks .....	2
Stop .....	4
Eyes & Eyelids .....	3
Ears .....	5
Wrinkle .....	5
Nose .....	6
Chops .....	2
Jaws .....	5
Teeth .....	2

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### Body, Legs, etc.

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

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### Total

**100**

**Disqualification** - Blue or Green eye(s) or parti-colored eye(s).  
Brown or liver-colored nose. Colors or markings not defined in the  
Standard. The merle pattern.

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**The American Kennel Club, Inc.**



Dr. Edward M. Vardon was a well established bulldogger of the 1950's. He owned the top bulldog which was also the top Non Sporting dog for several years.

## **DR. EDWARD M. VARDON'S GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**ANGULATION** – The angles formed by meeting of the bones, mainly, the shoulder, upper arm, stifle, and hock.

**BALANCED** – A consistent whole, symmetrical; correctly proportioned head to body, height to length, etc.

**BARREL** – Rounded rib section.

**BONE** – The relative size (girth) of a dog's leg bones—substance.

**BRINDLE** – A dog with an acceptable body colors usually with a superimposed pattern of black stripes.

**BRISKET** – The forepart of the body below the chest, between the forelegs.

**BURR** – The inside of the ear.

**BUTTERFLY NOSE** – A parti-colored nose, i.e. dark, spotted with flesh color.

**CHEST** – Forepart of the body between the shoulder blades and above the brisket.

**CHOPS** – Jowls or pendulous flesh of the lips and jaw.

**COBBY** – Short bodied; compact.

**COW HOCKED** – When the hocks turn toward each other.

**CUSHION** – Fullness or thickness of the upper lips.

**DOWN-FACED** – Lacks turn-up.

**DOWN IN PASTER** – When weak or faulty pastern joints, tendons or muscles cause pronounced angulation at the pastern and let the foot down.

**DUDLEY NOSE** – Liver color or brown nose. Disqualification.

**ENTROPIAN** – Inversion of the edge of the eyelid.

**FLEWS** – Upper lips pendulous, particularly at their inner corners.

**FOREFACE** – The front part of the head, before the eyes...muzzle.

**FRONT** – The forepart of the body as viewed head on; i.e. forelegs, chest, brisket and shoulder line.

**FURROW** – A slight indentation or median line down the center of the skull to the stop.

**LAYBACK** – Receding nose accompanied by an undershot jaw.

**LIGHT EYES** – Lighter than medium brown in bulldogs.

**MUZZLE** – The head in front of the eyes-nasal bone, nostrils and jaw...foreface.

**OCCIPUT** – Upper, back point of skull.

**ROACH BACK** – A convex curvature of the back beginning back of the shoulders and rising to the loins, then down to the tail.

**ROSE EAR** – A small drop ear which folds over and back so as to reveal the burr.

**SCREW TAIL** – A naturally short tail twisted in more or less spiral formation.

**STIFLE** – The joint of the hind leg between the thigh and the second thigh; the dog's knee.

**STOP** – The step up from nose to skull.

**STRAIGHT HOCKED** – Lacking appreciable angulation at the hock joints, straight behind.

**SWAYBACK** – Concave curvature of the back line between the withers and the hipbones.

**TURNUP** – An uptilted foreface.

**TYPE** – The characteristic qualities distinguishing a breed; the embodiment of a standards essentials.

**UNDERSHOT** – The front teeth (incisors) of the lower jaw overlapping or projecting beyond the front teeth of the upper jaw when the mouth is closed.

**WHEEL BACK** – The back line arched markedly over the loin; roached.

**WRINKLE** – Loose, folding skin on forehead and foreface.

**WRY FACE OR JAW** – Out of alignment; twisted. Upper and lower jaws not parallel.