



THE BULLDOG CLUB OF AMERICA FOUNDED 1890

An Illustrated Guide to the Standard

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.

There are even those who dispute why he is called Bulldog. Is it the shape of the head or is it because of his use in the barbaric sports of bull-baiting, bear baiting and dog fighting?

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.

The first Bulldog Standard in England was drafted in 1864 and adopted in 1875. 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.

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.

The Bulldog's most unique physical characteristic, the undershot jaw, held a lockjaw on the bull's flesh, while the "well laid back" nose facilitated the dog's breathing while retaining its grip. Forehead and face wrinkles directed the bull's blood away from the nose and eyes of its adversary. 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. He may very well be the most extreme example of genetic manipulation in the entire canine world.

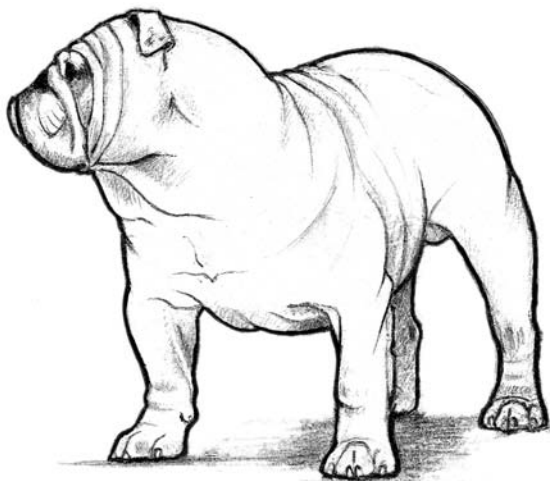
OFFICIAL STANDARD of the BULLDOG



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

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.

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.

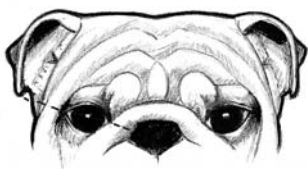
HEAD

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. The lids should cover the white of the eyeball, when the dog is looking directly forward, and the lid should show no “haw”.



The eyes should be round and dark. An imaginary horizontal line passing through the four corners of the eyes should be at a right angle with the stop and just rest 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, top of ears should be level with top outline of the skull with the burr partially exposed and the entire front edge of the ear visible.



Rose Ear Held Back

EAR FAULTS



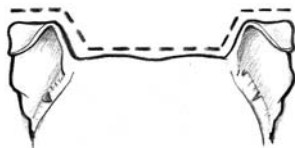
High Set



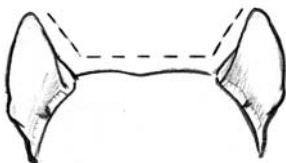
Fly Away



Button



Tulip



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.



Very High from Corner of Lower Jaw to Apex



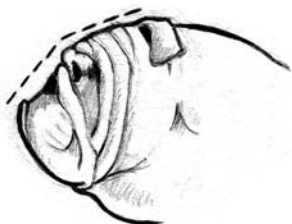
Broad and Square

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.

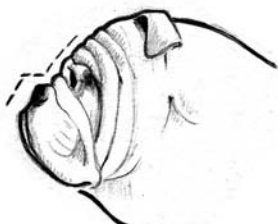


When a straight edge is placed against the head in the furrow between the eyes, it should touch the tip of the lower lip, tip of nose, and top of head. This is called the "layback" in Bulldogs and should be about a 45° angle.

HEAD FAULTS



Incorrect Layback



Nosey



Dishfaced



*Short Headed-
Lacking Thrust of Jaw*



*Downfaced-Nose Below Eyes
Ears Too Close - Narrow Skull*

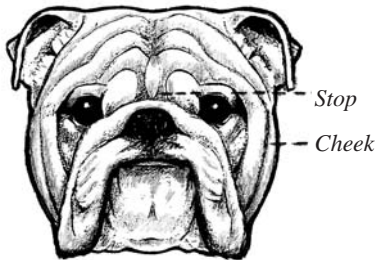


*Frog faced - Jaw Too Short,
or Too Narrow*

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.

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.

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

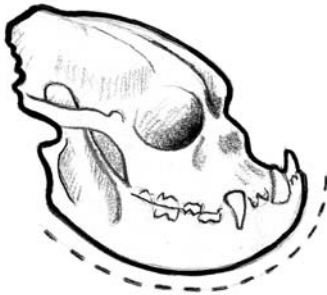
Front of nose slants back closely following contour of head, not perpendicular, with large, black, wide nostrils. In the scale of points, the nose has 6, more than any other feature.

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.



Proper Head

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, with the upward thrust, retaining the curve throughout.



Correct



Incorrect

The jaw should come out far enough to present an inverted U, rather than be covered by the flews and look like an inverted V. A wide jaw with good distance between the canine teeth adds to the desired inverted U appearance of the jaw that sets the Bulldog apart from other breeds.

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

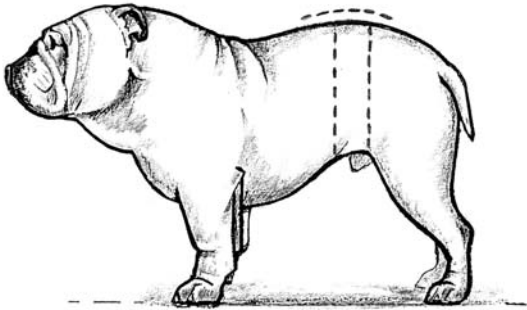
NECK – The neck should be short, very thick, deep and strong and well arched at the back.

Neck short, but EVIDENT & WELL ARCHED. Too short a neck gives an overall unbalanced appearance.



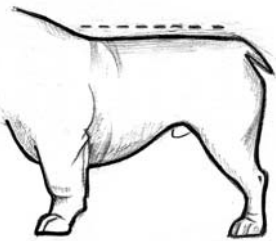
TOPLINE – There should be a slight fall in the back, close behind the shoulders (its lowest part), whence the spine should rise to the loins (the top of which should be higher than the top of the shoulders), thence, curving again more suddenly to the tail, forming an arch (a very distinctive feature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

PROPER TOPLINE

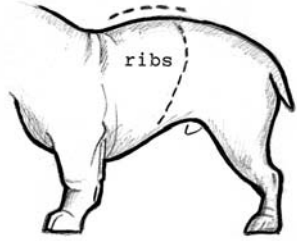


A correct roach arches over the loins.

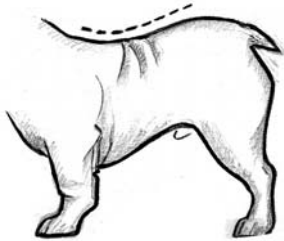
FAULTY TOPLINES



Straight backed



Camel backed

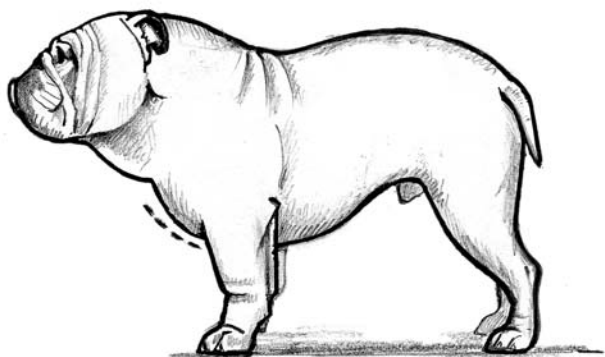


Swaybacked

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.



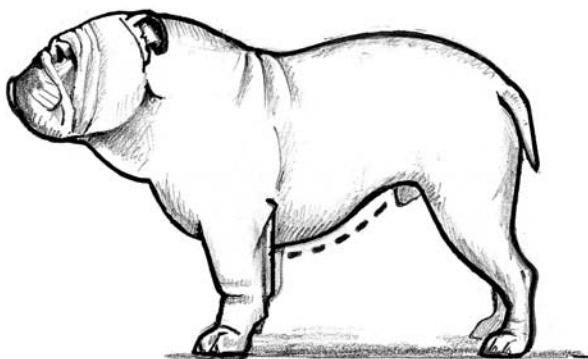
Brisket well let down between forelegs.



Fullness of the brisket can be observed in front of the forelegs from side view and is an indication of correct placement of shoulders.

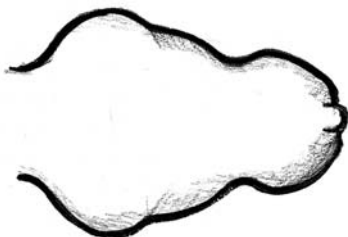
CHEST – The chest should be very broad, deep and full.

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



Well tucked up behind the ribs.

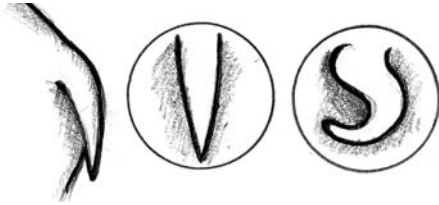
BACK & LOIN – The back should be short and strong, very broad at the shoulders and comparatively narrow at the loins.



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 and facilitates correct Bulldog movement.

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 of 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



Gay

High Set



Inverted

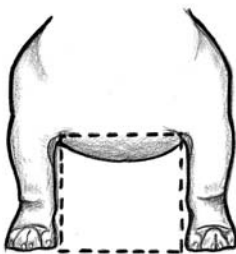


Bun-Gay

FOREQUARTERS

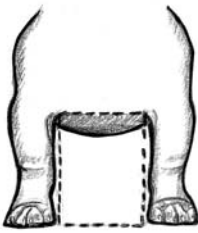
SHOULDERS – The shoulders should be muscular, very heavy, widespread and slanting outward, giving stability and great power.

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.

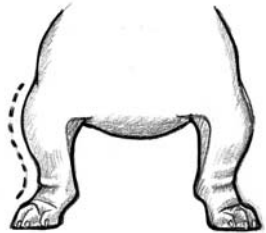


Correct turn of shoulder with proper front legs will show straight perpendicular inner forelegs. A correct front will form a near square from the top of the legs, across and down

FAULTY FRONTS



Narrow Front

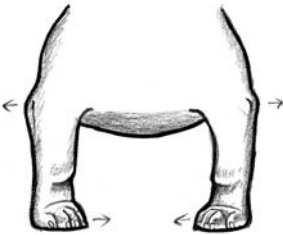


*Chippendale or Fiddle-Front.
Bowed Front Legs*

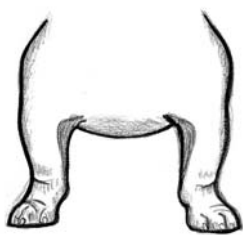
*A vertical rectangle between the front legs indicates a front too narrow.
A horizontal rectangle could be legs too short or loose shoulders.*

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

FAULTY ELBOWS



*Overly Loose Elbows,
Feet Tend to 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 outward away from the ribs (overly loose elbows). Overly loose elbows is a VERY serious structural fault.

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



In a correct foot, the two middle nails are very close together.

FAULTY FEET



Splayed



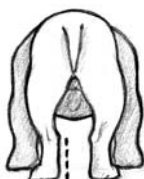
Weak Pastern

HINDQUARTERS

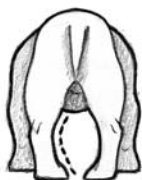
LEGS – The hind legs should be strong and muscular and longer than the forelegs, so as to elevate the loins above the shoulders. Hocks should be slightly bent and well let down, so as to give length and strength from the loins to hock. The lower leg should be short, straight and strong, with the stifles 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*



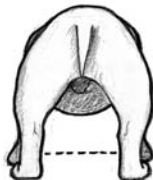
FAULTY HINDQUARTERS



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.



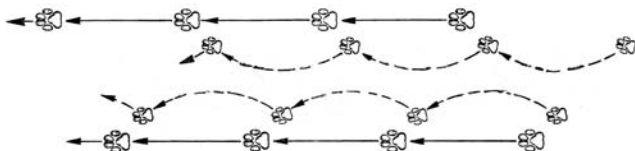
Heavy wrinkles are deemed to mean “many” wrinkles, not ropey wrinkles. The wrinkle(s) over the nose should be of moderate size, neither extending beyond tip of nose, obscuring the vision in any way, nor being too large and out of proportion.

COLOR OF COAT

The color of coat should be uniform, pure of its kind and brilliant. The various colors found in the breed are to be preferred in the following order: (1) red brindle, (2) all other brindles, (3) solid white, (4) solid red, fawn or fallow, (5) piebald, (6) inferior qualities of all the foregoing. Note: A perfect piebald is preferable to a muddy brindle or defective solid color. Solid black is very undesirable, but not so objectionable if occurring to a moderate degree in piebald patches. The brindles to be perfect should have a fine, even and equal distribution of the composite colors. In brindles and solid colors a small white patch on the chest is not considered detrimental. In piebalds the color patches should be well defined, of pure color and symmetrically distributed.

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.



A friendly outgoing companionable breed with an expression of intelligence, 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

39

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

39

Total

100

Disqualification - Brown or liver colored nose

Approved July 20, 1976

Reformatted November 28, 1990

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DR. 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 PASTERN – 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.

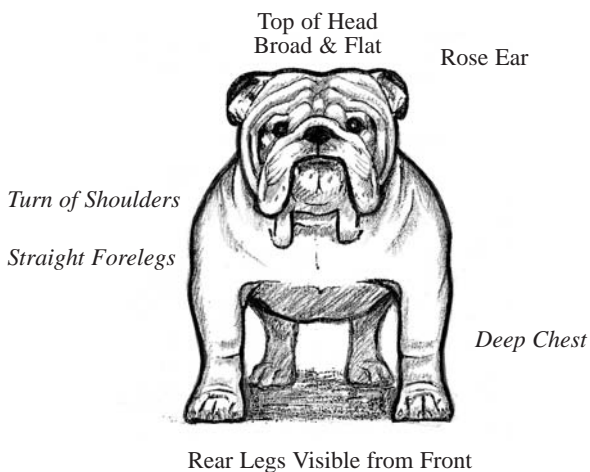
UNDERSHOT – The front teeth (incisors) of the lower jaw overlapping or projecting beyond the front teeth of the upper jaw when the mouth is closed.

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

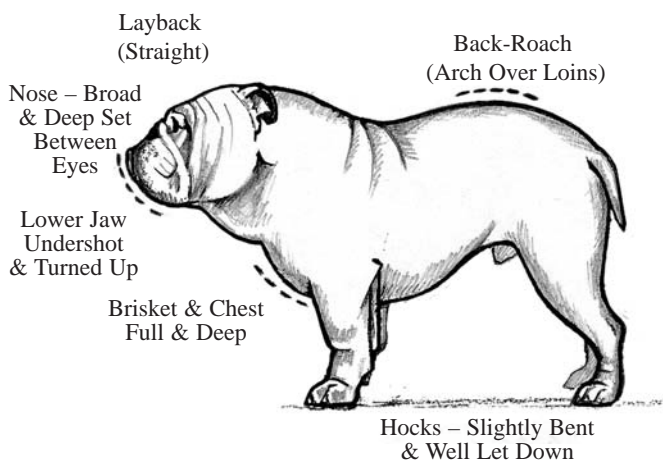
WRINKLE – Loose, folding skin on forehead and foreface.

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

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

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