

Scientists Discover Smartest Breed of Dogs

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Breed (Noun) /bri:d/ a particular type of animal or plant
Example: People say that chihuahuas may be small and cute but definitely an intelligent breed.
2. Respond (Verb) /rɪ'spɔ:nd/ to do something as a reaction to someone or something
Example: When someone is talking, it is polite to respond even with just a nod or a smile to show that you understand what they are saying.
3. Gesture (Noun) /'dʒestʃər/ a movement, usually of the hands or head, that expresses an idea or feeling
Example: He was almost in trouble because of the gesture he made that was misunderstood by the locals.
4. Obstacle (Noun) /'ɔ:bstəkəl/ something that blocks or prevents movement or progress
Example: He didn't find the short deadline as an obstacle in accomplishing the project.
5. Cylinder (Noun) /'sɪlɪndər/ a 3D shape with circles at each end and straight sides
Example: The cylinder-shaped test tubes were filled with different colored liquids for the experiment.
6. Control (Verb) /kən'trəʊl/ to decide or determine how something behaves, functions, etc.
Example: We are the ones who are in control of our lives and who shouldn't depend much on luck.



Dogs come in all shapes and sizes, with every breed having its own skills and behaviors. But for those looking for the smartest of man's best friends, a new study may have found the perfect breed.

A team of scientists from the University of Helsinki found that the Belgian shepherd Malinois might be the smartest dog breed. The study tested 1,000 dogs from 13 of the smartest breeds, including border collies, German shepherds and Labrador retrievers. The dogs had to respond to human gestures or move around obstacles to get food. They were also tested on whether they would go to a human for help when trying to get food from a closed box.

Some breeds were better at certain tasks than others. Labrador retrievers were very good at reading human gestures, but not great at going around obstacles. German shepherds, which are often used as working police and military dogs, were among the least likely to try to get human help. Looking at total scores over these three tasks, the Malinois did best. Next were border collies and Hovawarts, a type of German working dog.

However, study co-author Katriina Tiira told The Telegraph that, more than knowing which dog is the smartest, it's useful to find out the different ways each dog breed thinks. Malinois were actually very poor at one other task: going around to the side of a clear cylinder to get food. This may be because they are often used in jobs where they have to respond quickly, which may make them worse at controlling themselves when they see food.

DISCUSSION

1. Do you find it surprising that the Malinois might be the smartest dog breed?
2. Would you rather own a border collie, German shepherd, or Labrador retriever?
3. Have you ever tried to train a dog? What did you teach them to do?
4. Do you know anyone who has a very smart dog?
5. What dog breeds do you imagine are the most difficult to train? Why?