

Dogs Respond Positively to Baby Talk

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. High-pitched /ˌhaɪ ˈpɪtʃt/ (Adjective) - used to describe a sound that is very high.
Example: The high-pitched sound of the whistle hurt my ears.
2. Coo /kuː/ (Verb) - make a soft murmuring sound.
Example: The baby cooed in her sleep.
3. Infant /ˈɪnfənt/ (Noun) - a very young child or baby.
Example: The infant was sleeping soundly in her crib.
4. Sensitive /ˈsensɪtɪv/ (Adjective) - easily hurt or damaged; needing careful treatment.
Example: The skin on my face is very sensitive to sunlight.
5. Domesticated /dəˈmɛstɪkəɪzd/ (Adjective) - (of an animal) tame and kept by humans.
Example: Dogs are one of the most common domesticated animals.
6. Exposed /ɪkˈspəʊzd/ (Adjective) - not protected or covered; visible.
Example: The wires were exposed and posed a safety hazard.
7. Instinctual /ɪnˈstɪŋktʃuəl/ (Adjective) - relating to or prompted by instinct; apparently unconscious or automatic.
Example: The bird's instinctual behavior was to fly south for the winter.



Have you ever observed someone engaging in baby talk with their dog, using a high-pitched voice or affectionate cooing? Surprisingly, recent research suggests that dogs enjoy this form of communication.

Building on previous studies that highlighted the sensitivity of babies to such communication, researchers in Hungary aimed to explore whether dogs respond similarly.

Published in *Communications Biology*, the study involved analyzing the brain activity of dogs exposed to recordings of dog-directed, infant-directed, and adult-directed speech. The recordings, delivered by 12 women and 12 men, revealed that the sound-processing regions of dogs' brains exhibited a stronger response to dog- and infant-directed speech compared to

adult-directed speech. Interestingly, the sensitivity was heightened when the speakers were women.

Anna Gábor, one of the researchers, noted the intriguing aspect of dogs' responses. Unlike human babies, dog babies aren't exposed to a human mother's voice before birth, and their reactions to such speech aren't instinctual. Gábor suggested that this sensitivity in dogs may have developed through domestication, with dogs possibly being more attuned to women speakers due to the frequency of "baby talk" used by women when addressing them. The study's results imply that the way we communicate with dogs holds significance, even if it may seem unconventional!

DISCUSSION

1. Do you think dogs understand what we're saying when we talk to them?
2. What other ways can we communicate with dogs besides speech?
3. Do you think dogs respond differently to different languages?
4. Have you ever seen a dog react to "baby talk"? What did they do?
5. Do you think dogs prefer to be spoken to in a certain tone of voice?
6. What other animals do you think might respond positively to "baby talk"?
7. Do you think dogs can tell the difference between male and female voices?
8. What other things can we do to make our dogs happy?
9. Do you think dogs have their own language?