

If These 10 Breeds Are so Smart, Why Are They Such a Handful to Take Care Of?

Sure you want a smart dog, but just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, intelligence can also be. What makes a dog smart can be open to interpretation. And some of the so-called smartest dogs come with this caveat you may not have considered.

Reviewed by Dr. Becker

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Most humans believe obedience is a characteristic of intelligent dogs
- Some breeds, however, are quite smart but more independent and less eager to please humans
- The Border Collie consistently ranks as the brightest dog breed in the world; others in the top 10 include the Poodle, Golden and Labrador Retrievers and the little Papillon
- Very smart dogs aren't necessarily easier to manage than other breeds, and typically need an above average amount of physical and mental stimulation to help them stay balanced

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Dogs are considered a highly intelligent species in the same league with other Einsteins of the animal kingdom such as chimpanzees, elephants and dolphins. And of course all of us who share our lives with one or more dogs know this to be true!

In fact, most dog parents are sure their furry family member is not only smart, but smarter than most. This is in part because what makes a dog smart is subject to interpretation.

For example, most people, whether they realize it or not, equate obedience with intelligence. Very agreeable dogs are considered smart by most human standards. However, there are some people who believe a dog with a mind of her own is more intelligent.

Dog breeds that have evolved to be more independent and less eager to please are certainly not dumb, but they do often require more time and patience when it comes to learning and following commands. Generally speaking, humans assign canine smarts to dogs that:

- Are fast learners and consistently obey commands
- Dependably perform well at a specific sport, task or job
- Are willing and able to learn human-type stuff

Based on these criteria, the Border Collie is a very smart breed. In fact, Chaser, a Border Collie who is able to identify over 1,000 objects and distinguish between nouns and verbs, is considered to be one of the brightest dogs in the world.

10 Brightest Breeds

According to psychology professor and neuropsychological researcher Stanley Coren, Ph.D., author of the best-selling book "The Intelligence of Dogs," the 10 brightest breeds are:

1. Border Collie
2. Poodle
3. German Shepherd
4. Golden Retriever
5. Doberman Pinscher
6. Shetland Sheepdog
7. Labrador Retriever
8. **Papillon**
9. Rottweiler
10. Australian Cattle Dog

In Coren's experience, dogs of these breeds can often learn new commands in under five repetitions, and obey on the first command at least 95% of the time.

1. Pembroke Welsh Corgi
2. Miniature Schnauzer
3. English Springer Spaniel
4. Belgian Shepherd Dog (Tervuren)
5. (Tie) Schipperke and Belgian Sheepdog
6. (Tie) Collie and Keeshond
7. German Shorthaired Pointer
8. (Tie) Flat-Coated Retriever, English Cocker Spaniel and Standard Schnauzer
9. Brittany Spaniel
10. Cocker Spaniel

Are Intelligent Dogs Easy to Take Care Of?

Many people assume breeds known for their intelligence are easier to care for than other dogs, however, it's important to realize that smart dogs often present their own challenges.

Highly intelligent dogs typically don't do well without plenty of physical and mental stimulation. In most cases, this means an absolute minimum of one hour of intense activity every single day.

Having canine smarts doesn't mean your dog understands when he's left alone all day with nothing to do. Or when you're too tired to take him out for some exercise.

If your bright, healthy and active dog is under-exercised and bored silly by 10:00 a.m. and you won't be home till evening, don't expect him to think things through and decide to wait quietly by the door for your return. Chances are there will be things out of place by the time you get home.

Hopefully nothing will be destroyed, but it might. Just as parents must keep active, inquisitive kids challenged and busy to avoid problems stemming from boredom and too much unsupervised time on their hands, guardians of smart dogs must do the same.

If you're usually away from home for eight or 10 hours on workdays, it's a very good idea to have someone — a family member, friend, neighbor or professional dog walker — stop by to take your dog for a walk around the block once or twice while you're gone. Another option is to take him to doggy daycare a few times a week.

Sources and References

[She Knows January 10, 2018](#)

[Wikipedia](#)
