

Looking at The American Staffordshire Terrier



A Breed Study

by

The Staffordshire Terrier Club of America, Inc.

Origins of the American Staffordshire Terrier

The ancient ancestors of the Am Staff are the mastiff type dogs who appear in many breed histories. Although much of this information is lost in antiquity, we know from early art of the large, heavy-headed strong dogs who were used throughout history for their strength and guarding abilities. This early group of dogs has left genetic material for all the bulldog breeds and mastiff type dogs of today.

In earlier days in England, mastiff types were bred down to smaller size and some became bulldogs (actually bulldogs were named because they were used to hold on to bulls or cattle / oxen). Originally the dogs were butchers dogs or farmers dogs who helped move the cattle around and held them still for their owners. They kept them still literally by holding on to them - usually by the nose. It became a customary entertainment in England to watch as the butcher's dog caught the bull and held it while it was killed by the butcher. For some reason the common folk began to think that meat that had been harried by the dog before dying was tastier than meat that had died peacefully. There was for a time an English law enacted that the butcher MUST bait the bull with a dog before butchering it! The entertainment value was so great, that the Queen reportedly even forbid other butchers from killing their stock on the same day her royal butchers did, so that the commoners would watch her dogs work.

Eventually this sport gave way to some other type of meat tenderizer and the dogs were used on other "game". One of these uses was rat killing. The English seem to have had lots of rats and folks amused themselves by watching dogs put into "pits" (arenas) with hundreds of rats. Of course betting was done on how many could be dispatched how fast. This called for a smaller, faster dog so some of the now extinct English terriers were crossed with the bulldog. These were probably Black and Tan terriers (similar to today's Manchester) and the old White terrier. Rats were too easy, so these sporting souls were always thinking up new challenges for their dogs. These early bulldogs and now bull-and-terriers were used to fight bears, stags, badgers and each other. Dogs were more easily come by than bears, which were probably getting kind of scarce in England, and dogs were probably easier to keep for a commoner than expensive cattle.

The bull-and-terriers evolved into three of our modern breeds: the Staffordshire Bull Terrier, the Bull Terrier, and the American Staffordshire Terrier.

The early bull-and-terriers came to America with immigrants from England and Ireland. Here some grew bigger and taller in response to their duties in a new and wilder country. Some stayed in cities and were kept by the same type of "sporting" owner as in England and Ireland. These were fought against each other around the pubs of New York, Chicago, and Boston (and other cities of course). A product of some of these dogs is the very American breed of Boston Bulldog, or Boston Terrier as it is now known. These used to be 35-40 lb dogs, and except for the shorter bulldog face and screw tail were very similar to the early Am Staff (or Pit Bull, Bulldog, American Bulldog, Bull and Terrier, Yankee Terrier, some of the names these dogs were known under then.)

The larger bull-and-terrier was still a farm dog and stockman's dog. He followed the wagons west with the settlers and helped work stock and guarded the homestead. He was a general purpose homestead dog, much as the dog described in the book and movie, *Old Yeller*. He ran with the hounds on hunting expeditions, exactly as depicted in the old movie, *The Yearling*, and although not as fleet or strong of nose as the hounds, he was still the "catch" dog who dispatched the animal when it turned at bay.

By the late 1800's a fighting dog registry was started in America to keep track of the prized pedigrees and publish the rules for dog fighting organizations in this country. The United Kennel Club registered the dogs as American Pit Bull Terriers. Sometimes this was written as American (Pit) Bull, or American Bull Terrier. Mostly they were known as Bulldogs, or Pit Bulls.

Although it is this dog fighting background that is mostly remembered, only a relatively small number of the dogs were fought. Most of them went on being fanner's and general purpose countrymen's dogs, and still worked stock, penning and guarding and helping, just as they had done in their earliest days.

In the early 1930's a group of fanciers petitioned the American Kennel Club to accept their dogs into the registry. These dogs were already registered with the United Kennel Club, but their owners had no interest in dog fighting. They wanted to promote their breed as family dogs and show dogs. They formed a national breed club and wrote a standard for the breed. Much agonizing was done over the proper name for the breed, as the American Kennel Club was not inclined to register them with the same name as the United Kennel Club did. Finally they were accepted with the name of Staffordshire Terrier in 1936. This was just a year after the English bull-and-terriers under the name of Staffordshire Bull Terriers were recognized with the Kennel Club of England. The standards of both the English and American breeds were written similarly, and even contained some identical phrases. The authors of both kept in touch with each other, working toward their common goal of acceptance by their kennel clubs. At that time, the dogs described were more similar in size and structure than the breeds appear today.

In the early 1970's the name of Staffordshire Terrier was changed to American Staffordshire Terrier when the American Kennel Club recognized the Staffordshire Bull Terrier breed.

Even as late as the 1960's, the AKC Stud Books were opened to permit United Kennel Club registered American Pit Bull Terriers to compete in AKC shows as American Staffordshire Terriers. Some exceptional dogs were brought into the AKC registry at that time, some even winning the STCA National Specialty and an all-breed Best in Show. Their influence is still strong in some breeder's lines today.

The American Staffordshire Terrier has an amazing identity problem. The same dog can still be registered with the United Kennel Club (which is no longer a fighting dog registry, but an all breed registry similar to the American Kennel Club), and/or with the American Dog Breeder's Association, as an American Pit Bull Terrier and if its parents were registered with the AKC, it can also be registered by the AKC under the name of American Staffordshire Terrier.

Some of the breeders of both American Staffordshire Terriers and American Pit Bull Terriers will tell you that they are not the same breed and that "that other registry group" is ruining the breed. However, the only real difference between these dogs is their name and registry, and the individual breeder's selections and goals. There was no other breed of dog added to the bloodlines to create American Staffordshire Terriers.

This breed, under several of its names, along with the Staffordshire Bull Terrier has been under attack by anti-dog groups and has been wrongly maligned by the media. The generic name of "pit bull" has now become a term to denote a dog used for fighting, no matter what its genetic background, much like saying "bird dog" or "guard dog". Most of the dogs now called that, we would all call mixed breeds. However, there is still a BREED of dog called American Pit Bull Terrier, and many of them trace their pedigrees back to the 1800's. Many of them are still exactly where they have always been, working at their jobs and being faithful companions.

The Official Standard of the American Staffordshire Terrier

General Impression: The American Staffordshire Terrier should give the impression of great strength for his size, a well put-together dog, muscular, but agile and graceful, keenly alive to his surroundings. He should be stocky, not long-legged or racy in outline. His courage is proverbial.

Head: Medium length, deep through, broad skull, very pronounced cheek muscles, distinct stop; and ears are set high. **Ears** - Cropped or uncropped, the latter preferred. Uncropped ears should be short and held half prick or rose. Full drop to be penalized. **Eyes** - Dark and round, low down in skull and set far apart. No pink eyelids. **Muzzle** - Medium length, rounded on upper side to fall away abruptly below eyes. Jaws well defined. Underjaw to be strong and have biting power. Lips close and even, no looseness. Upper teeth to meet tightly outside lower teeth in front. Nose definitely black.

Neck: Heavy, slightly arched, tapering from shoulders to back of skull. No looseness of skin. Medium length.

Shoulders - Strong and muscular with blades wide and sloping.

Back - Fairly short. Slight sloping from withers to rump with gentle short slope at rump to base of tail. Loins slightly tucked.

Body: Well-sprung ribs, deep in rear. All ribs close together. Forelegs set rather wide apart to permit chest development. Chest deep and broad.

Tail: Short in comparison to size, low set, tapering to a fine point; not curled or held over back. Not docked.

Legs - the front legs should be straight, large or round bones, pastern upright. No resemblance of bend in front. Hindquarters well muscled, let down at hocks turning neither in nor out. Feet of moderate size, well-arched and compact. Gait must be springy but without roll or pace.

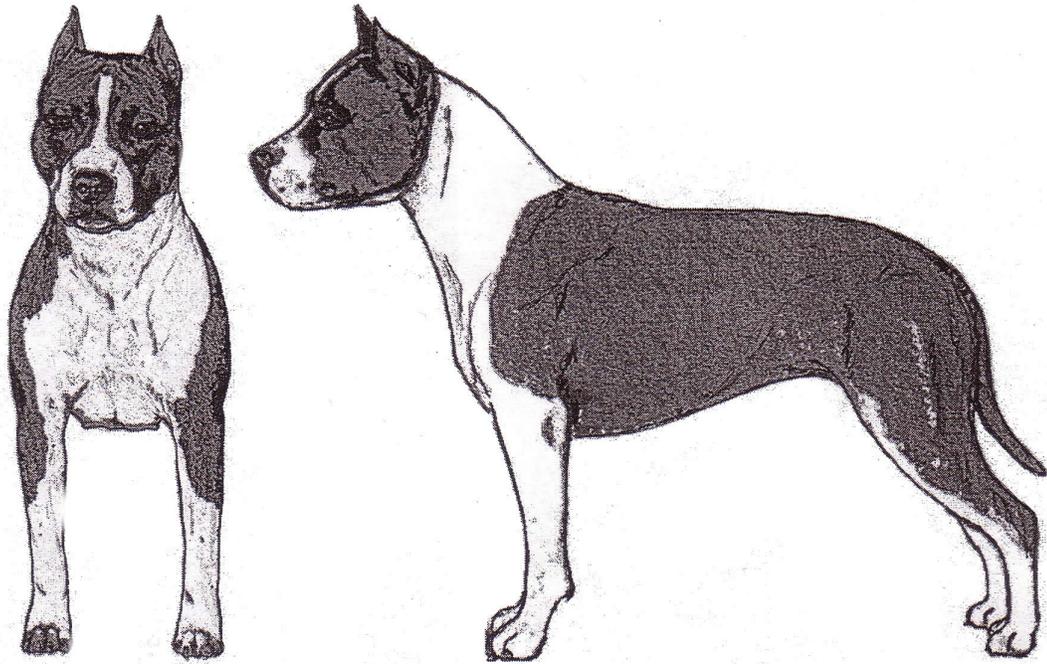
Coat: Short, close, stiff to the touch and glossy.

Color - Any color, solid, parti, or patched is permissible, but all white, more than 80 per cent white, black and tan and liver not to be encouraged.

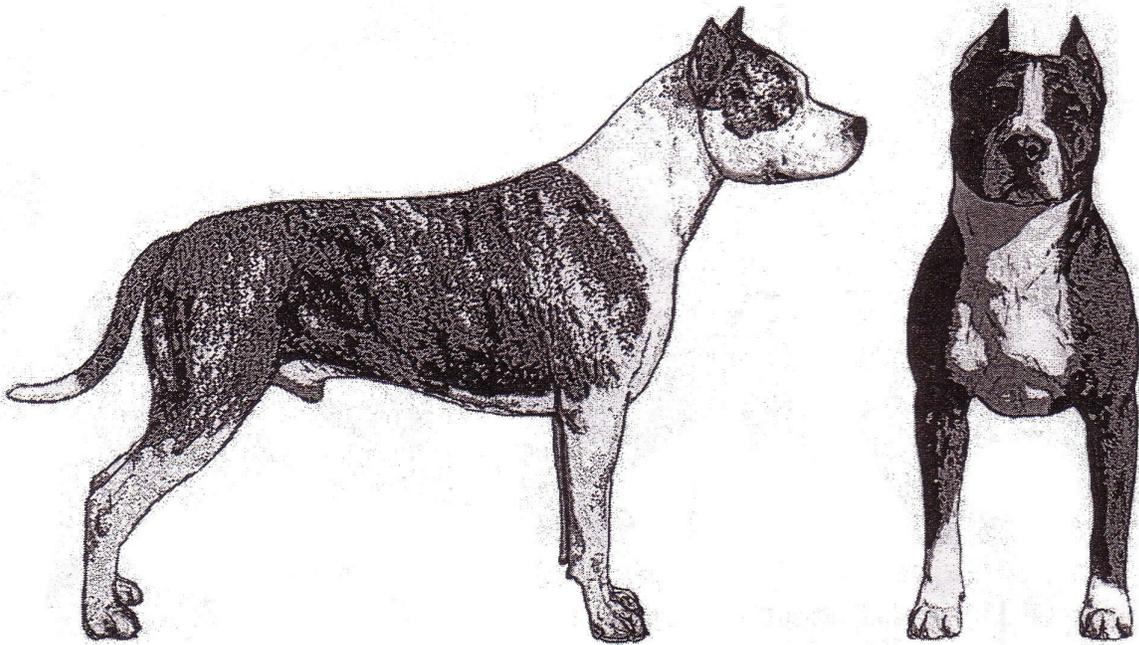
Size: Height and weight should be in proportion. A height of about 18 to 19 inches at the shoulders for the male and 17 to 18 inches for the female is to be considered preferable.

Faults: Faults to be penalized are Dudley nose, light or pink eyes, tail too long or badly carried, under-shot or overshot mouths.

Adopted and approved June 10, 1936



American Staffordshire Terriers of Today
These are idealized drawings done from photographs of real dogs



Discussion:

General Impression: *The American Staffordshire Terrier should give the impression of great strength for his size, a well put-together dog, muscular, but agile and graceful, keenly alive to his surroundings. He should be stocky, not long-legged or racy in outline. His courage is proverbial.*

Temperament: The first and most important impression should be the dog's temperament. No matter what the dog looks like, it cannot be a proper Am Staff without the proper temperament. The official standard is spare and is often faulted for not giving enough information to the student of the breed. However, the words used are beautifully descriptive of the breed's temperament.

"Keenly alive to his surroundings " describes a lively intelligent disposition that watches what is going on around him and misses nothing. Further, he not only watches, but interacts - he is quite aware of and very responsive to his surroundings. He is ready for whatever comes his way - in all the best sense of this term.

"His courage is proverbial". Proverbial, according to Webster's dictionary is defined as follows: The embodiment or representation of some quality. The byword for it. A commonplace truth. A common reference for some quality. This is perfectly apt to describe the correct temperament of this breed. They are nothing if not courageous. This courage is inherent in their history. These dogs have faced death in all its forms, and have long ago had fear bred down. They should appear supremely confident in all situations. No excuses can be made for a specimen that lacks this quality. Courage has no similarity to aggressiveness, which often masks insecurity. The ideal Am Staff should not display aggression toward other animals or humans. They should only appear confident and interested, prepared to deal with and take part in whatever situation develops. Many legends have grown surrounding this breed's courage.

The ideal specimen must always display courage and confidence to a marked degree. Absolutely no consideration should be given to an exhibit that lacks this quality.

Although not specifically addressed by the standard, this breed has been long domesticated, and as a fanner's and family dog, and even with the early fighting background, should absolutely never appear aggressive toward humans. They are not a guarding breed by nature, and trust most people to be their friends, confident in these relationships. They develop strong bonds with humans and are eager to please them - thanks to their working background. They are not a solitary dog, preferring the company of humans. They are not subservient or fawning, but confident and friendly in dealings with humans.

The ideal specimen must always appear confident and friendly with humans. Absolutely no consideration should be given to an exhibit that appears aggressive, threatening, or shy toward humans. These are completely incorrect for the breed and are inexcusable.

Physical impression: *"should give the impression of great strength for his size "* This is a medium sized dog, not a large one, but should be possessed of great strength- FOR HIS SIZE. This does not mean that he should be large - or heavy, just that his strength should be great for the size he is.

He is *"a well put-together dog, muscular, but agile and graceful"* The proper specimen will appear balanced in all ways, showing muscular development, but not at the expense of agility. He must appear graceful as well as agile. This is totally descriptive of a "normally" built dog, without excess or exaggeration in any way. He is a balance of power and agility. He must display both. Any specimen which is exaggerated to appear so muscular as to no longer display agility and grace is no longer balanced. This balance extends to the ratio of his bone size and general body weight. He must never be exaggerated. The balance of power and agility must always be kept in mind.

"He should be stocky, not long-legged or racy in outline." This references the leg length of the dog in relation to his body type. He is not a racing dog with long legs and a light body, but due to his strength of body, he is a stocky one. He should be stocky, that is, solid and sturdy, but must have enough leg to still maintain the required agility and grace. He is not ever a short legged dog.

As an analogy, This dog is a (tri-athlete) (or decathlete) rather than a (body-builder) or (power weight lifter). He must still retain the ability to perform a variety of physical challenges, rather than just show raw strength. This breed's history created an animal with a balance of power, agility, total courage, and the intelligence to use it. The balance of power and agility inherent in the breed must be always kept in mind.

Physical Condition:

Am Staffs should be shown in top physical condition. This means well developed and well defined musculature. Their coat should reflect good health; appearing glossy, abundant and in good condition. This dog should be a consummate athlete. Grossly under or overweight dogs do not create the proper picture of the breed. Fat particularly does not improve the dog's outline. There is a tendency to mistake fat for more desirable lean muscling on show dogs. A dog without proper muscular definition will not create the desired balance of strength and agility However, the dog with the most muscle mass should not be considered to be the best dog. This is not a breed of extremes. The balance between raw strength and agility and grace must always be kept foremost in mind. Good condition or lack of it will also be reflected in the animal's gait and general demeanor.

Physical Characteristics:

Head: *Medium length, deep through, broad skull, very pronounced cheek muscles, distinct stop; and ears are set high.*

Ears - *Cropped or uncropped, the latter preferred. Uncropped ears should be short and held half prick or rose. Full drop to be penalized.*

Eyes - *Dark and round, low down in skull and set far apart. No pink eyelids.*

Muzzle - *Medium length, rounded on upper side to fall away abruptly below eyes. Jaws well defined. Underjaw to be strong and have biting power. Lips close and even, no looseness. Upper teeth to meet tightly outside lower teeth in front. Nose definitely black.*



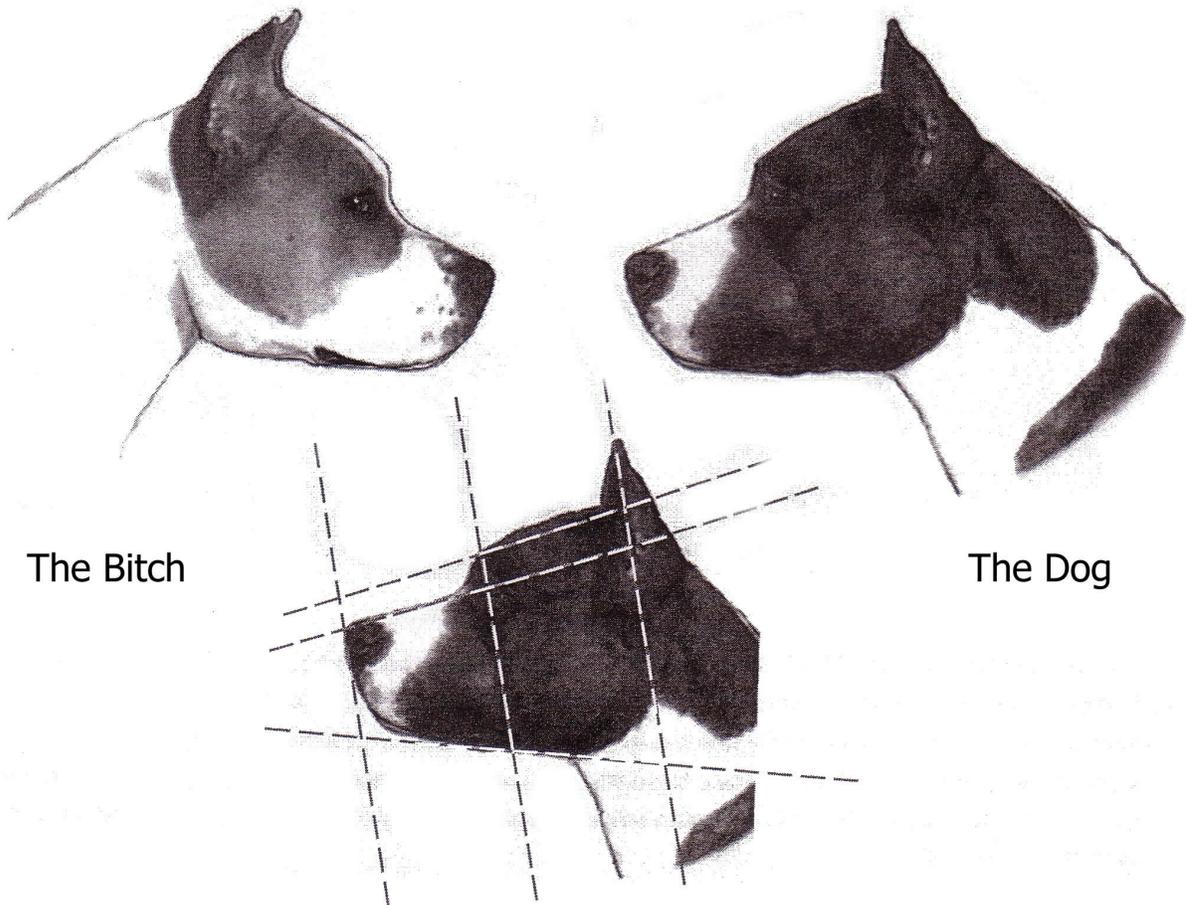
The angle of light over this bitch's face shows off very clearly the beautiful bony structure of the American Staffordshire Terrier head - The prominent ridge below the eye, the bulging cheek muscle, the abrupt fall of muzzle below the eye. Note the tight skin over the bones of the face, with the exception of the quizzical wrinkles on the forehead. She has nice close fitting lips and a muzzle that is only slightly light in lower jaw. Her eyes are quite dark, even in very direct sunlight, pigment is very dark, eyes are well shaped and set correctly in the skull.

"Head: *Medium length, deep through, broad skull, very pronounced cheek muscles, distinct stop;* " The head should appear to be the correct size for the dog's body. It is not overly large, nor is it small. It is of medium length - balanced with the dog's medium sized body. The muzzle should appear to be about one half the total length of the head. The head is deep through, from the top down to the jaws. This depth is not achieved by a bulging forehead, but by deep strong jaws. The dog's mandible should be well developed far back to the skull. His skull is broad across, with a well defined stop and distinct eyebrows. The head should not be exaggerated however.

The description of medium length must be maintained. If the skull is too broad, the head will appear short in length, which is incorrect. The head is deep through, for strength, but the depth should extend to the lower jaw, not be achieved by an over deep stop with no lower jaw strength.

The cheek muscles are very pronounced. The planes of the forehead and muzzle should be parallel when viewed from the side. There should be no tendency for a down face, dish face, or frog face. In males, the muscle padding on the top skull may make the plane rise slightly, (in bitches to a lesser degree) but it still should not differ greatly from the plane of the muzzle.

The shape of the top skull should show the underlying bone structure, not be so overly padded with flesh or muscle as to totally mask it, and appear lumpy. The most prominent muscle development of the head should be the cheeks, which should be pronounced. The head should appear clean, with no loose skin. A slight quizzical wrinkling of the forehead when the ears are lifted should be the only wrinkles found anywhere on the head.



" Ears - ears are set high. Cropped or uncropped, the latter preferred. Uncropped ears should be short and held half prick or rose. Full drop to be penalized." Ears are set high on the skull and are relatively short. The standard plainly says cropped or uncropped and the latter preferred. Uncropped ears of good size and set should be given more consideration than cropped ears. The proper carriage is half prick or rose, with no preference mentioned. Full drop is to be penalized, but fully erect ears although possible, are not mentioned to be penalized. Full drop, or hound ears are not the same as low set ears and would seldom be seen. Cropped ears should be of medium length and should still display where they are set on the head, preferably high. Poorly cropped ears are a cosmetic fault only, and have nothing to do with the construction of the dog. However they are shaped when cropped, uncropped is always preferred, as clearly stated by the standard - and consideration should given for them.

Natural ears - Half-prick
Good small ears, set high
on head.



Natural ears - Rose
Good small ears, set
nicely on head.



Cut ears - Nice cut, set well on head.
However, the standard says that
natural ears are preferred.



"Eyes - Dark and round, low down in skull and set far apart. No pink eyelids." Dark eyes are essential to the proper expression. Light eyes are mentioned under "faults". Eye color should be brown, and as dark a shade as possible. The eyes are normal dog eyes, appearing fairly round, but not totally. They are not thin almond or triangular in appearance, but are set low down in the skull and deep. They should never protrude or bulge. They are of medium size - neither too small (piggy) nor over large. The expression is very direct, looking keen, confident, intelligent, courageous, never fearful or evasive. *"No pink eyelids"* refers to the inner part of the eyelid. Although the author of the standard was not perfectly clear in this regard, he stated later that he meant tight eye rims, without pink mucous membrane showing. We feel this to be a valid interpretation of this point. No haws showing or loose rims. If you choose to also consider this to mean fully pigmented eye rims rather than pink ones, please treat pink eye rims as a cosmetic fault.

***Muzzle** - "Medium length, rounded on upper side to fall away abruptly below eyes. Jaws well defined. Underjaw to be strong and have biting power. Lips close and even, no looseness."* The proper muzzle is of medium length, neither short nor long, but approximately one half the length of the head. It is rounded and fairly broad on the top, falling away abruptly below the eyes. It should be heavy enough to provide good attachment for the upper jaw teeth, but not filled like a fox terrier or bull terrier. It is narrower than the back skull and cheeks, and wedges toward the nose, but the wedge is truncated, and the end of the muzzle is still blunt. Jaws well defined, not hidden by padding flesh. A strong and deep underjaw, with a strong visible chin. The lips are close and even, with no looseness or thick padding. The muzzle is without extra flesh and definitely not wrinkled.

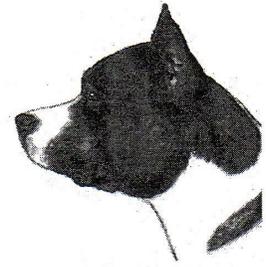
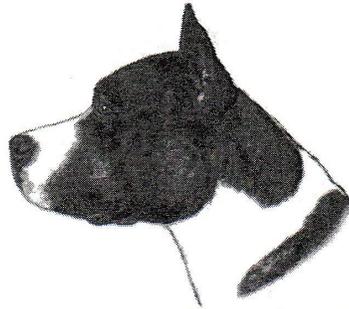
***Dentition** - " Upper teeth to meet tightly outside lower teeth in front."* The full compliment of canine teeth, well developed, and large should be engaged in a well-fitting scissors bite. As this was a breed developed to use its mouth in its work, missing teeth should be considered a fault, although not listed in the brief listing of faults in the standard. The more teeth missing, the greater the fault. Undershot or overshot mouths are both specifically listed as faults. When checking teeth for fit, the proper interleaving of the side teeth should also be considered, not just the small incisors across the front.

"Nose definitely black." Before AKC registration there were registered American Pit Bull Terriers with red noses. These dogs came from different root stock and had a different appearance - including liver coloration. The intention here was to prevent them from entering the AKC breeding pool of American Staffordshire Terriers. The nose should be black - not red or pink. We now know that it is genetically impossible for a blue dog to have a black nose. Yet there were blue Am Staffs then, as now, and they were shown and finished championships. The nose should appear darkest charcoal on dogs with blue dilute coloration. Forgiveness can be made for dark charcoal on this color, but the darker the better. The nose should still appear as black to the observer. A Dudley nose (flesh colored) is listed as a fault. For dogs without dilute coloration, the nose to be correct must appear as written - definitely black.

Stop too deep
Backskull too short
Lowset ears

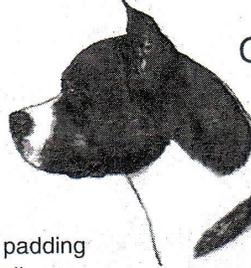


Good Moderate Dog Head

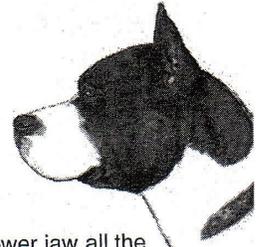


No lower jaw
weak, pointy muzzle

Too much padding
on backskull
muzzle short, but strong

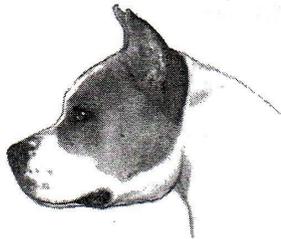
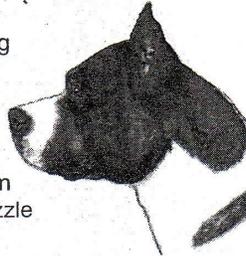


Muzzle too shallow
weak lower jaw

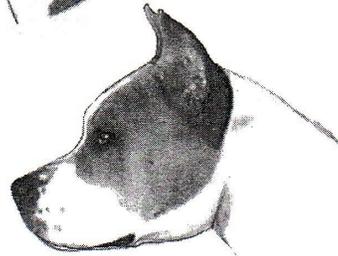


Lippy, lacking lower jaw all the way back, forehead high, but back of jaw very shallow

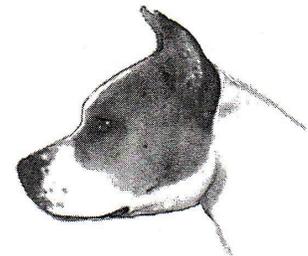
Too much angle on
topskull short muzzle



Bully head

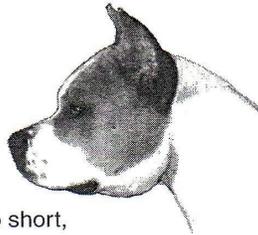


Good Moderate Bitch Head

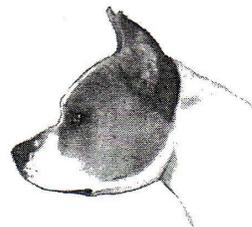


Terrier head

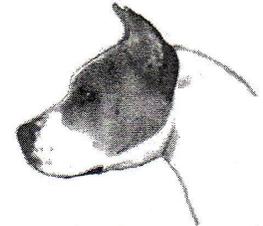
Muzzle too short,
forehead too steep,
too deep through backskull,
not enough lower jaw



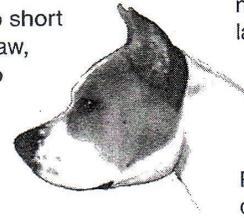
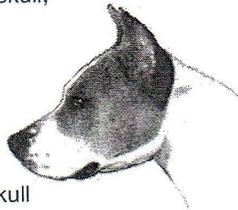
Weak, pointed, too short
muzzle, no lower jaw,
forehead too steep



Good strong muzzle,
no depth of backskull,
lacking cheek



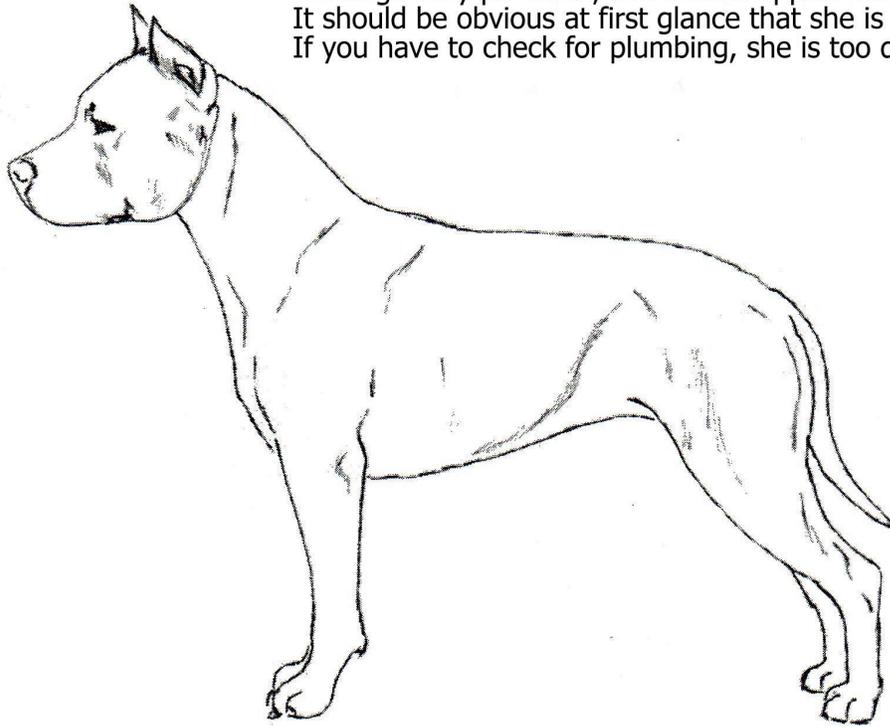
No lower jaw
muzzle too pointy
not enough stop
lacking depth of backskull



Pointy muzzle, lippy,
doggy head

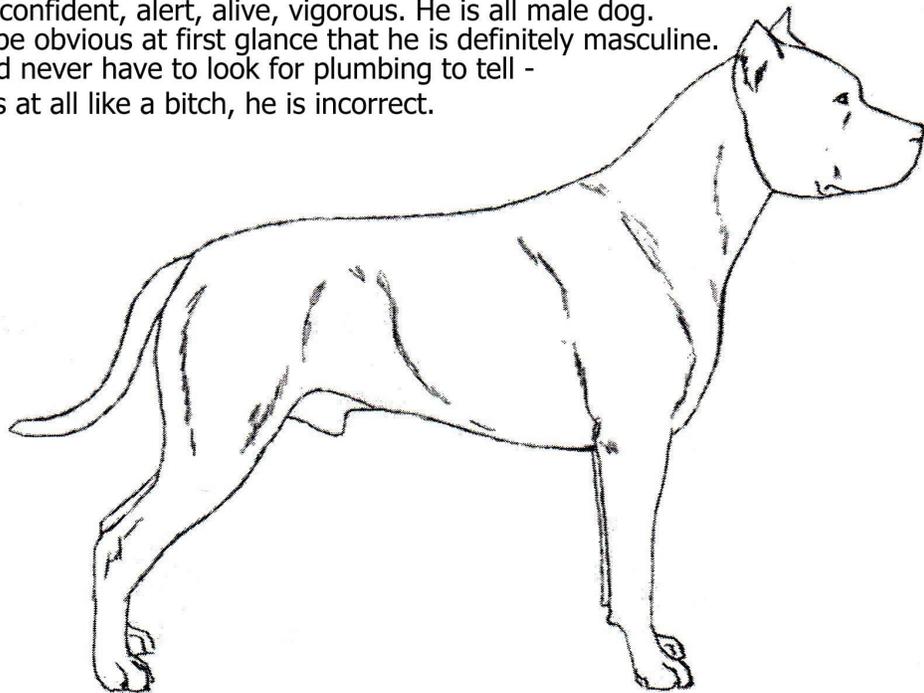
The Bitch

Although very powerful, she should appear totally feminine.
It should be obvious at first glance that she is a bitch.
If you have to check for plumbing, she is too doggy.



The Dog

Powerful, confident, alert, alive, vigorous. He is all male dog.
It should be obvious at first glance that he is definitely masculine.
You should never have to look for plumbing to tell -
If he looks at all like a bitch, he is incorrect.



***Neck:** Heavy, slightly arched, tapering from shoulders to back of skull. No looseness of skin. Medium length.*

The neck should be heavy, slightly arched at the crest, tapering from heaviest at shoulders to lighter at back of skull. No looseness of skin at the throat. Again, a medium length is called for. A short neck will spoil the proportions of an otherwise good dog. (An overly long neck, or a long, thin neck would also be wrong, but are seldom seen)

***Shoulders** - Strong and muscular with blades wide and sloping.*

Strong and muscular shoulders that show good width and slope indicate a dog with moderate to good angulation, rather than a steep terrier front assembly. The upper arm should have good length, so that the legs do not appear put on too far forward on the body. Although muscular, the shoulders should not appear loaded or lumpy, and should be approximately as wide as the rear when viewed from above. The dog's neck should be set high on fairly well angulated shoulders, to permit an alert head carriage, not stuck on the front of overly straight shoulders.

***Back** - Fairly short. Slight sloping from withers to rump with gentle short slope at rump to base of tail. Loins slightly tucked.*

This is not a square dog. This is not a short backed dog. The standard says fairly short back - which indicates a moderately short back. The topline is not level, rather it slopes slightly from the withers to the rump (croup) and then shows a "gentle short slope from the rump to the base of tail." This is also not a steep croup - but a gentle short slope. The loins are slightly tucked.

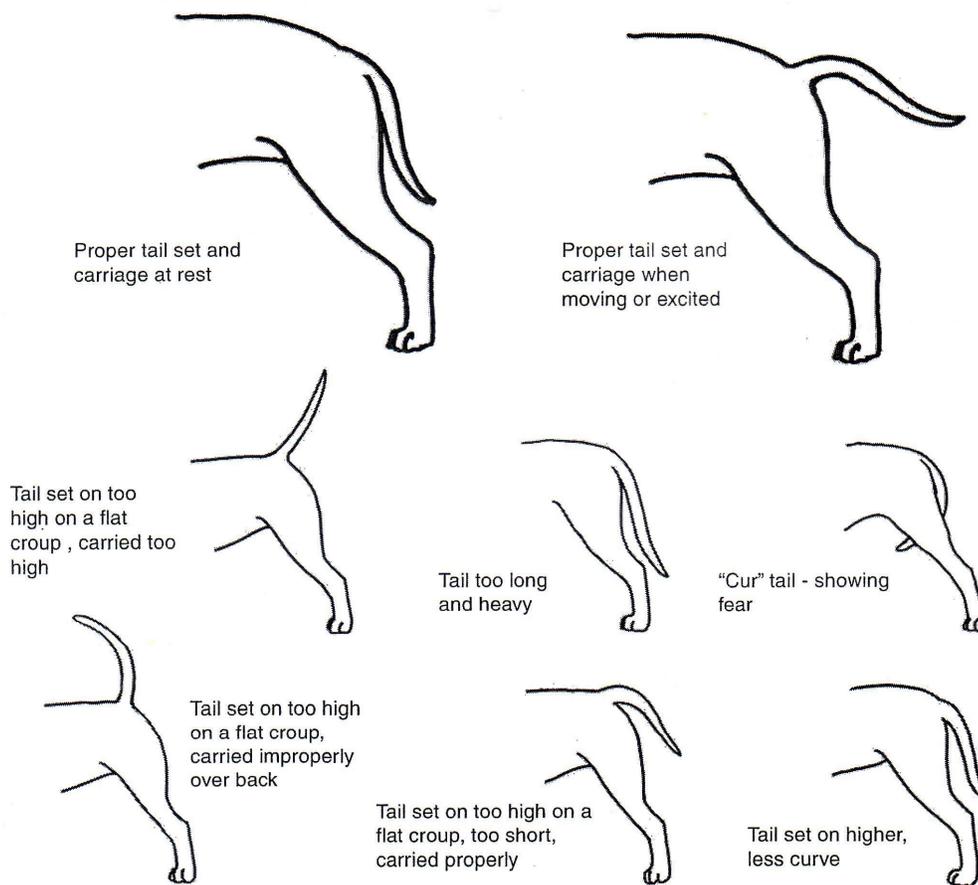
***Body:** Well—sprung ribs, deep in rear. All ribs close together.*

The dog should show well-sprung ribs, that continue back to the loins without tightening up. Viewed from above, the ribs, loins, and hips should show an "hourglass" shape, with a definite narrowing at the loins and more width at the ribs and hips. The ribs are not barrel shaped, nor are they slab-sided. Viewed from the front, the ribs should describe an oval with the longest distance from top to bottom, not from side to side. The lower line of the dog's body should show good depth, with the brisket dropping approximately to the elbows or slightly below. The deep in rear ribs should continue back from the brisket to form a good cage for the heart and lungs.

***Forelegs** set rather wide apart to permit chest development. Chest deep and broad.*

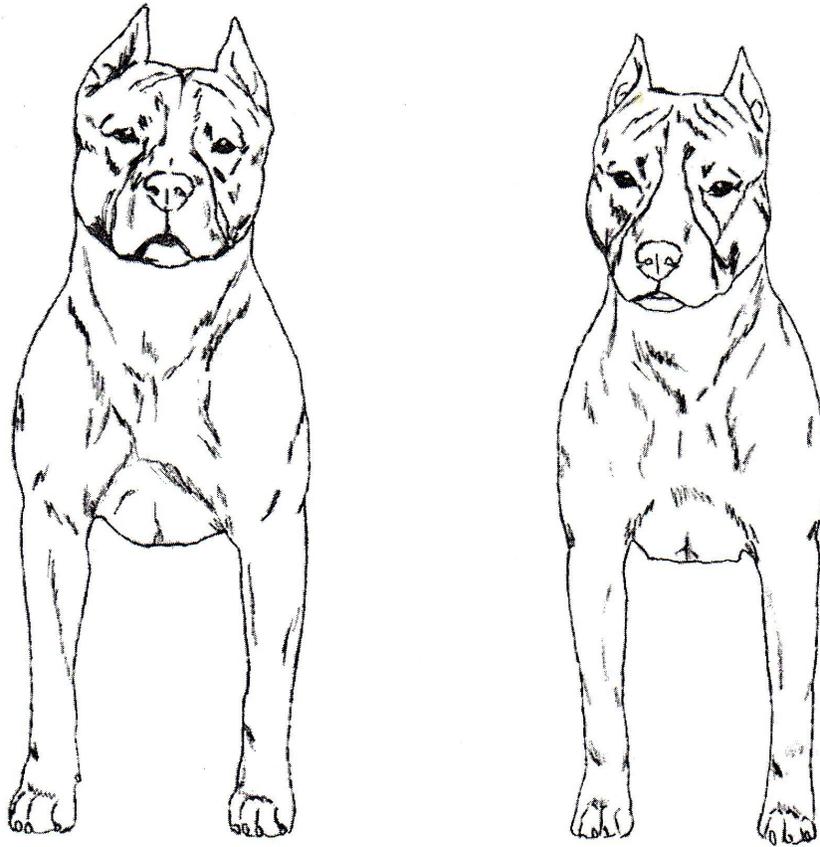
The standard calls for the forelegs to be set "rather" wide apart, rather, according to the dictionary, means "to a certain extent, somewhat, to a degree". The legs therefore should be moderately wide apart, not as wide as possible. As a rule of thumb, the shoulders and forelegs should be about the same width as the rear, when viewed from above. The dog should never look larger in the front than in the rear, but both ends should be in balance. The width of the chest has a direct bearing on the total agility and ease of movement of the dog. There should be good chest development, with strong muscle attachment, but not overdone for the sake of being the "widest". The area of the chest between the forelegs should be rounded with muscle below the sternum. No hollow, concave or shallow look, the muscles of the lower chest should round and flow smoothly into the brisket. The sternum should not appear prominent or bony.

Tail carriage and set



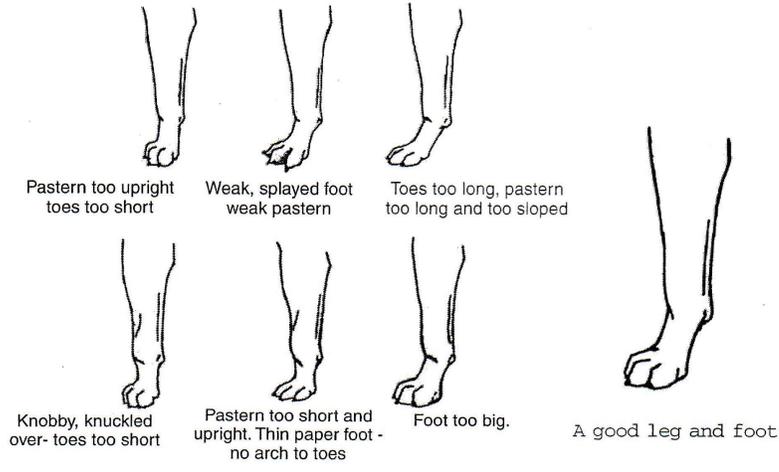
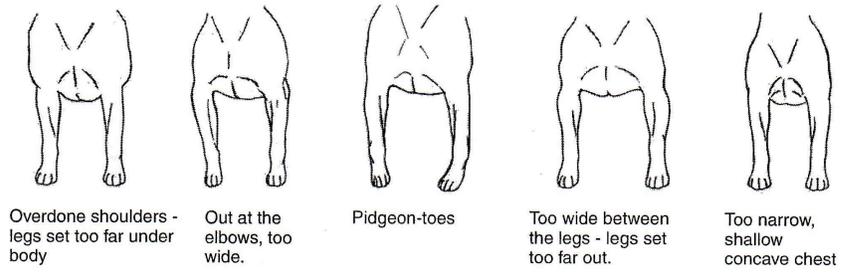
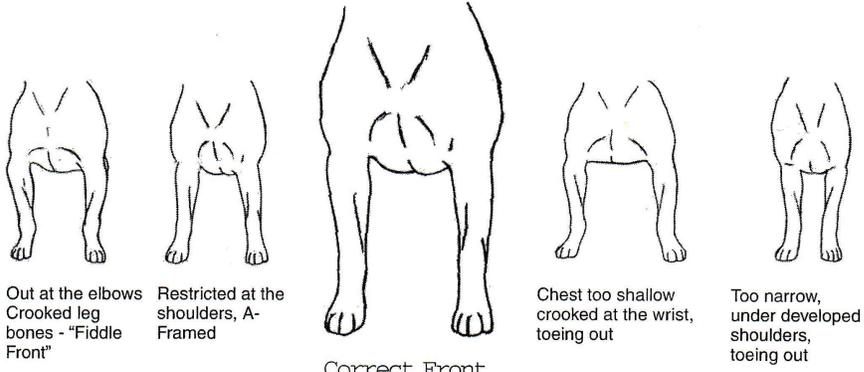
Tail: Short in comparison to size, low set, tapering to a fine point; not curled or held over back. Not docked.

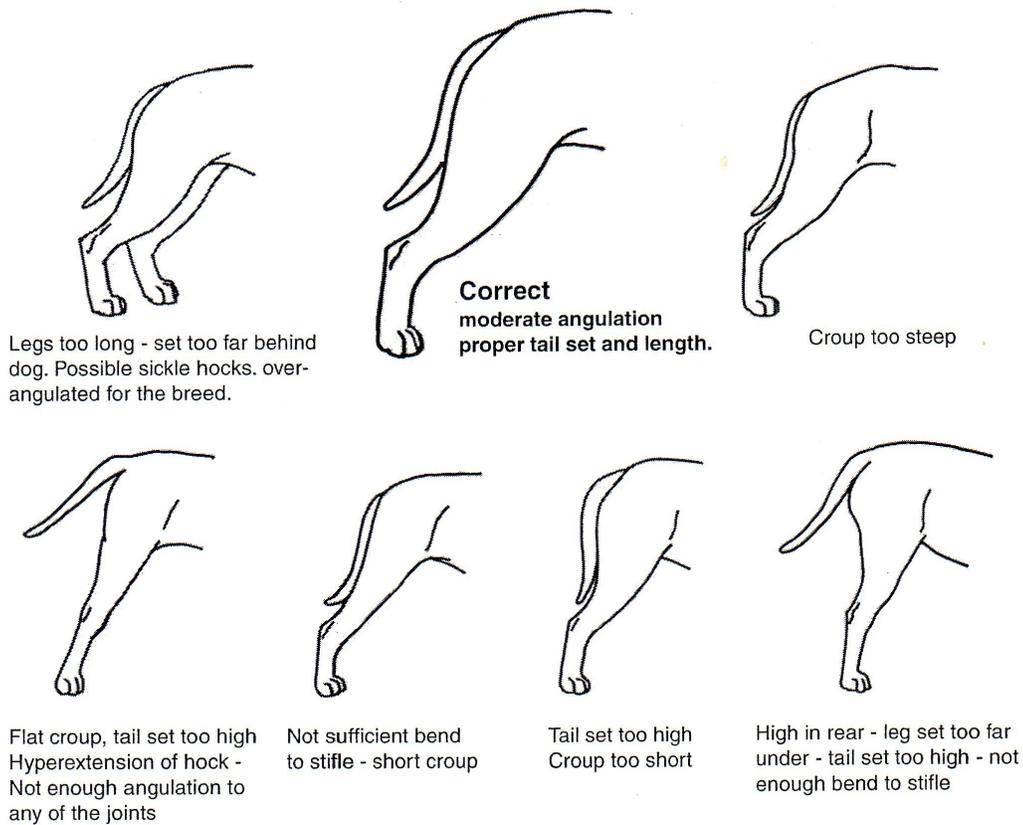
The tail is set low on the rump after a "gentle short slope" as described above under "Back". It should not reach past the hocks, and may be somewhat shorter. It is traditionally described as an old-fashioned pump handle in carriage. It should not be curled or held over the back. The pump handle is gently "S" curved. A slightly straighter tail, held in the correct low position should not be faulted. Many dogs carry their tails higher when excited, but the tail should be low set, and not be held above the level of the back, "*tail too long or badly carried*", is listed under Faults. A too long tail is one extending past the hock, and a badly carried tail would be one either curled or held over the back, as described in the standard. A tail held between the dog's hind legs should be considered a sign of improper temperament. The ideal specimen must always display courage and confidence to a marked degree. Absolutely no consideration should be given to an exhibit that lacks this quality.



Legs: *The front legs should be straight, large or round bones, pastern upright. No resemblance of bend in front.*

The front legs should be straight, falling from elbows set close to the ribs. The bones should be of good size, never appearing spindly. Again, as to size, a balance must be met to provide for agility. The legs should not appear overly heavy boned, either. The pastern is upright and strong. This does not necessarily mean a terrier front. There can and should be a slight slope to the pastern, but it is basically upright in appearance. No weakness to the pasterns. The reference to no bend in front is made to specifically forbid a fiddle or bulldog front, where the legs are actually crooked and toe out at the end of curved pasterns. There should be no appearance of looseness or crookedness in the elbows or pasterns. The feet point forward, not in or out.



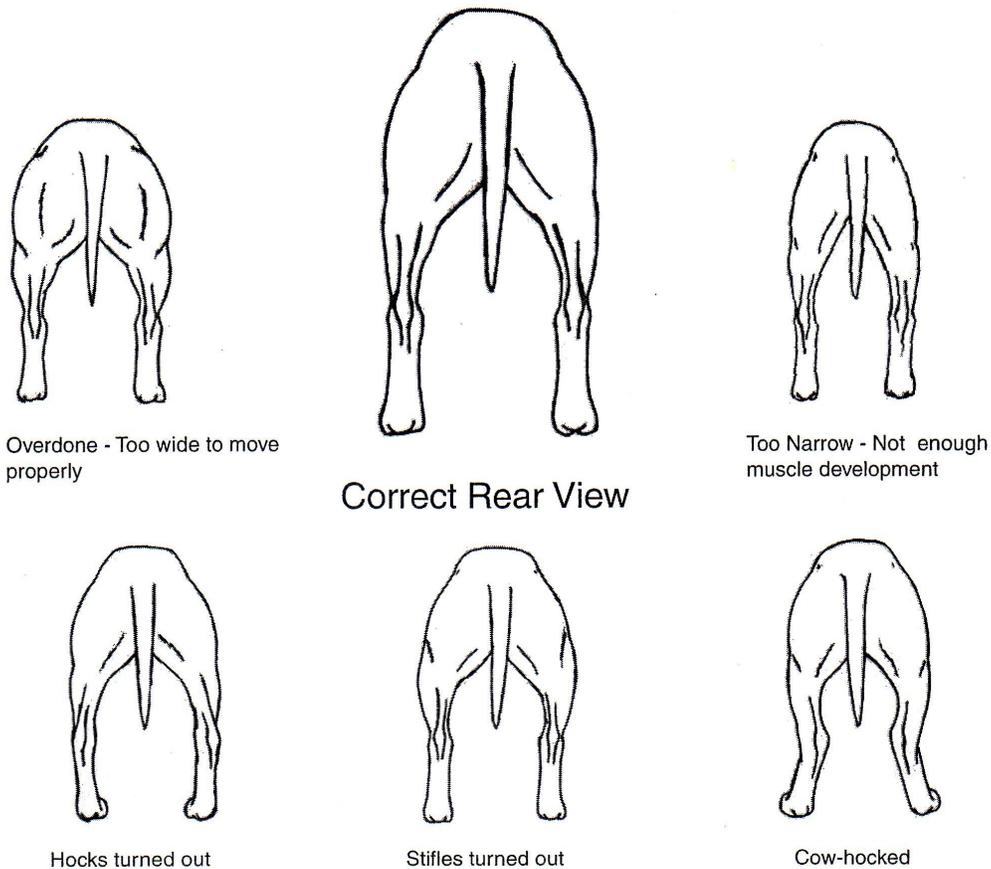


Hindquarters well muscled, let down at hocks turning neither in nor out.

The hindquarters show well developed muscles at the buttocks, and upper and lower thigh. The upper thigh particularly, should be well developed on the inside, between the legs. The hocks are well let down, and parallel to each other, turning neither in nor out. There should be no suggestion of cow-hocks, bow-legs or stifles turning out. The stifle should show good angulations, and be set low. The stifle and hock should both have good bend, but the bones of the lower thigh are not particularly long. The hind legs, when hocks are perpendicular to the ground, should not be set very far behind the dog's buttocks and should appear of moderate length. The angulations of the shoulders and hips should be in balance.

Feet of moderate size, well-arched and compact.

Feet that appear too large, too small, or too flat probably are. As a good rule of thumb, the feet should not be particularly larger or smaller than the dog's leg bones. No splayed toes.



Gait must be springy but without roll or pace.

This is the only reference to movement that the standard makes, and has become an area that is poorly understood. However, since this is a rather "normally" structured moderate dog, it should show "normal" dog movement. In other words, the dog should move like an athlete. At slower speeds his footfalls will tend to be farther apart, and as speed increases, his feet will tend to converge toward a centerline under his body. This is the only way the dog could move as the standard describes, without rolling his body. He should trot, not pace. He should show moderately good reach, and his rear legs should drive him powerfully. His well-arched feet, moderate angulation, powerful muscles, and generally good physical condition should provide him with a springy gait. All normal dog movement criteria should apply. He should not paddle, toe out, cross, weave, etc. The front and hind feet should strike approximately the same distance apart, leaving tracks in two lines, rather than 3 or 4. The reference to springy gait denotes not only athleticism, but a state of mind. The dog should appear light on its feet, and ready for whatever happens. It should never plod, or move in a listless or dull way.

Coat: Short, close, stiff to the touch and glossy. Color - Any color, solid, parti, or patched is permissible, but all white, more than 80 per cent white, black and tan and liver not to be encouraged.

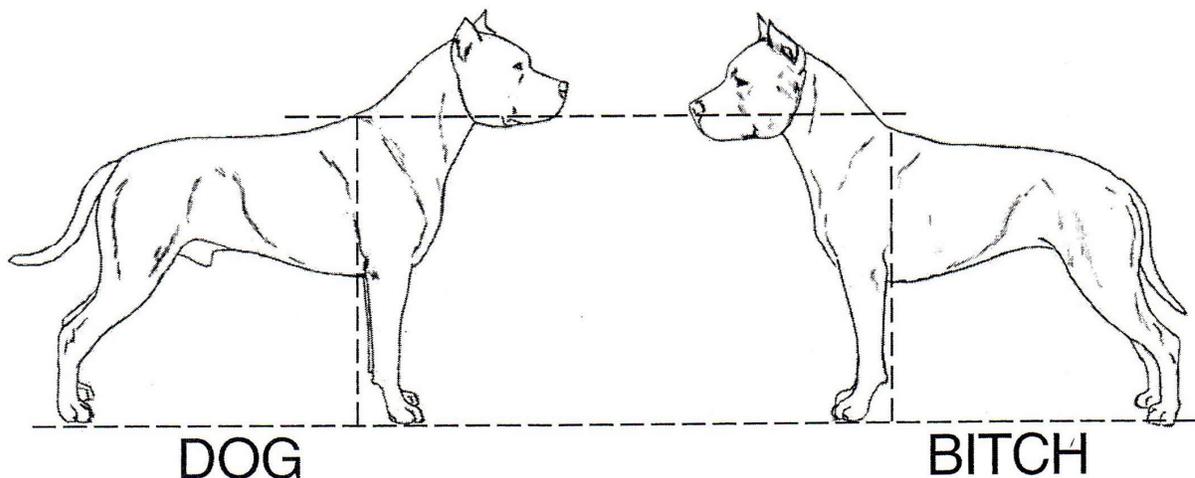
Color is another area that confuses some who read this standard. The standard clearly states: *Any color, solid, parti, or patched is permissible*, This is a breed that comes in a great variety of colors and markings. All are clearly permissible - period. In the original draft of the standard, this section read simply that sentence. However, when returned approved by the AKC, the rest of the above had been added. At the time, the club chose to accept the version that AKC approved. As a historical note, the author of the standard thought that the "all white, more than 80 per cent white not to be encouraged" was added at the request of the Bull Terrier Club of America, which was worried that there would be recognition problems between the two breeds. The "black and tan and liver not be encouraged" is worded exactly like the original English version of the Staffordshire Bull Terrier standard that was written about the same time in England. Whatever the reason for the last part, this is a breed that does come in all colors, and all are acceptable. No color appears in the list of faults. The wording of "not to be encouraged" is not very strong and color should not be detrimental to an otherwise good specimen. At the most, it is only a cosmetic consideration, and has very little to do with the conformation or temperament of the dog in question - both of which are much more important.

Size: Height and weight should be in proportion. A height of about 18 to 19 inches at the shoulders for the male and 17 to 18 inches for the female is to be considered preferable.

The historical dog the standard was written to describe averaged approximately 18 to 19 inches and 48 - 60 lbs., with bitches 17 to 18 inches, and 42 - 55 lbs. This is approximately the proportions that should be considered preferable. There will always be some variation in sizes and weights, but many of today's dogs are indeed larger than intended by the original standard. Unfortunately, the weight and bone size has increased even faster than the height, resulting in specimens that have a completely skewed weight to height ratio. This increase in size is encouraged by judges who wrongly reward dogs based on larger size/greater weight equating better specimen. This is not the proper way to judge this breed.

All other considerations being equal, the moderate sized dog should be preferred, and the sizes given above should be considered preferable as stated in the standard.

The dog of moderate size is a balance between power and agility. To increase the weight decreases agility to the detriment of this balance.

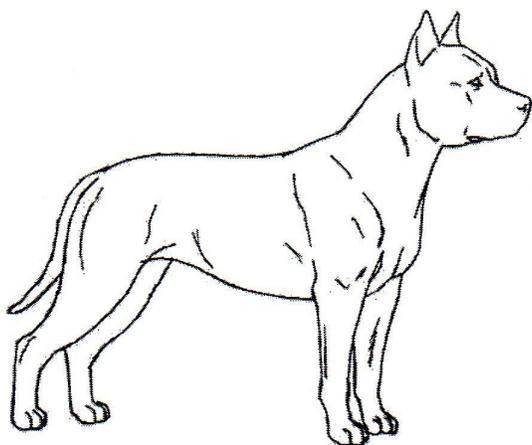
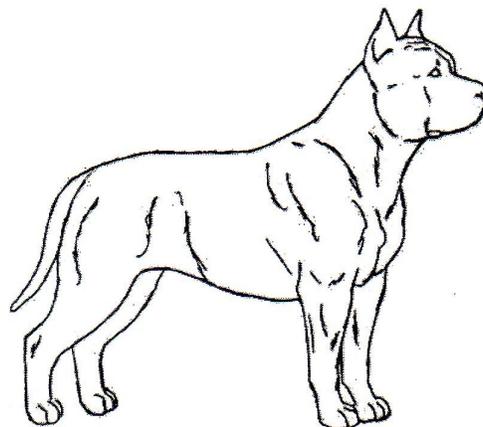


The American Staffordshire Terrier is a blending of bull and terrier - There are three basic body types you will be presented with in the ring. Good sound representatives of the breed can be found in all three types. It is the job of the judge to select the best dog that represents the breed, without encouraging extreme individuals. If all things were otherwise equal, the moderate type would always be preferred - as it represents the perfect balance of bull and terrier without exaggeration.

Bully Type

Characterized by heavier bone and more mass, This type falls more toward the bulldog ancestry, somewhat shorter on leg and heavier moving, they also have more tendency toward looser, thicker skin.

Although pictured as a bitch, both dogs and bitches can be of this type. The same rules of general soundness apply - This type should not be preferred over the others as it can be quickly exaggerated, losing the athleticism and grace of the terrier influence.

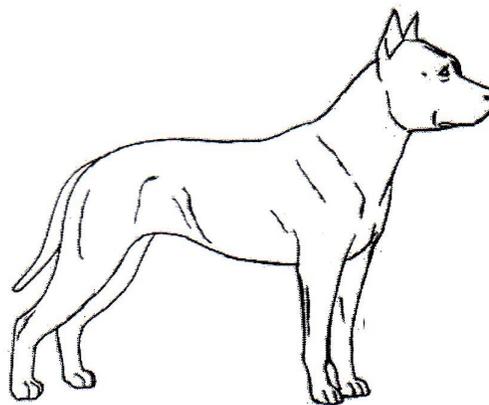


Moderate Type

The perfect blending of the bull and terrier background - with the strength and musculature of the bulldog, and the grace and agility of the terrier. If any type should be preferred, this would be the one.

Terrier Type

Showing a strong relationship to the terrier in the background, this body type is quick, agile, tight, sometimes leggier, lighter boned, carrying less muscle mass. This type is often very stylish and elegant. This type should not be preferred over the others, as it can be quickly exaggerated, losing the muscle mass that is desirable in the breed.



***Faults:** Faults to be penalized are Dudley nose, light or pink eyes, tail too long or badly carried, undershot or overshot mouths.*

A Dudley nose is an unpigmented flesh colored nose. Light eyes are eyes other than dark brown. Pink eyes would be like an albino (not generally seen). Tail length reaching below the hocks would be too long. Badly carried would be a tail carried too high above the level of the back, curved over the back, curled, or carried tucked under the belly. Undershot or overshot mouths - upper teeth not meeting closely in front of lower teeth.

Any deviation from the standard should be considered faulty. The degree of fault would depend upon the degree of deviation. Although not specifically mentioned as a fault by the standard, an improper temperament is the most undesirable quality possible, and should never be rewarded. The ideal specimen must always display courage and confidence to a marked degree. Absolutely no consideration should be given to an exhibit that lacks this quality. No consideration should be given to an exhibit that appears aggressive, threatening, or shy toward humans. These are completely incorrect for the breed and are inexcusable.

In addition, a dog whose physical characteristics or lack of soundness make him unsuitable according to the general description should not be considered for placement. In general, proper temperament is the most important quality, followed by proper physical structure, and the soundness that must accompany it.

Such faults as light eyes, long tail, improper nose color, less favored coat color are considered rather cosmetic in nature, and do not interfere with the animal's suitability for work. Although these qualities are the only ones listed under faults, they should not carry as much weight as the proper temperament and structure for the breed - essential qualities that are well described in the standard.