How smart is your dog?

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Full Text:

A book published this month rates 133 dog breeds by intelligence. Dr. Stanley Coren, a professor of psychology at Canada's University of British Columbia, has written The Intelligence of Dogs. He places the Border collie at the top for brains and the Afghan hound at the bottom.

Dr. Coren developed his list with the help of 100 dog-obedience judges. They rated dogs on obedience and working intelligence. For a dog, they assumed, intelligence means being able to carry out commands and to put its training to practical use.

The book has already stirred up controversy. A fellow teacher who owns an Afghan reportedly stopped speaking to Dr. Coren. "I shouldn't be surprised by the reaction, because I know how people feel about their dogs," Dr. Coren says. "I am surprised, however, when people respond as though I've threatened their children."

Here is Dr. Coren's list of the 10 smartest dog breeds in order: Border collie, poodle, German shepherd, golden retriever, Doberman pinscher, Shetland sheepdog, Labrador retriever, papillon, rottweiler, and Australian cattle dog. The 10 dumbest dogs, according to Dr. Coren, are, the bassett hound, mastiff; beagle, Pekingese, bloodhound, borzoi, chow chow, bulldog, borzoi, and Afghan hound.

The highly popular cocker spaniel is 24 on the Coren list, and the dachshund is 89. The bloodhound, despite its remarkable skill in tracking people, ranks near the bottom--128.

Dog owners who don't find their dogs rated highly for intelligence should take heart. Few people love a dog mainly for its intelligence. Many dog owners value loyalty and affection even more.

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