

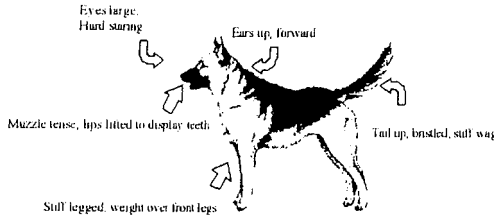


Maricopa County Animal Care & Control

Reading Canine Body Postures

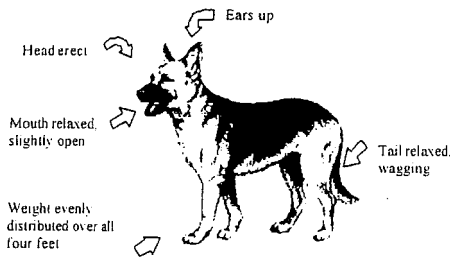


*Describe
defensive &
offensive
body
language*



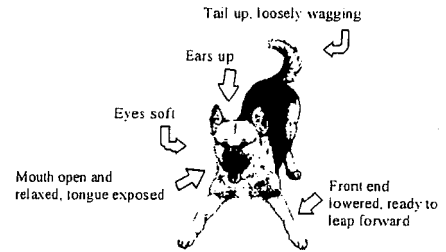
AROUSAL

The dog has been stimulated by something in his environment. When the dog is excited by something pleasurable, the hackles will be down and the tail will be carried a little lower and will loosely wag. The muzzle will be relaxed and the tongue may be seen. This posture may be displayed to subordinates in order to express higher ranking pack position.



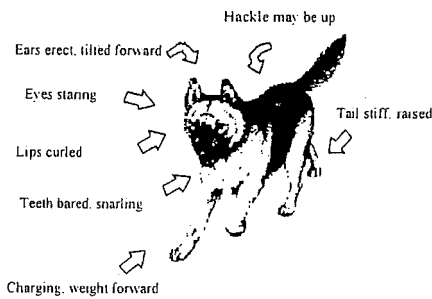
NEUTRAL RELAXED

While dogs cannot speak, they do display their state of mind via their body language. By taking careful note of ear position, pupil dilation, facial tension (particularly around the muzzle and forehead), tail carriage and body weight distribution, an observer can detect whether a dog is relaxed or fearful, or acting in a submissive or dominant manner toward the observer.



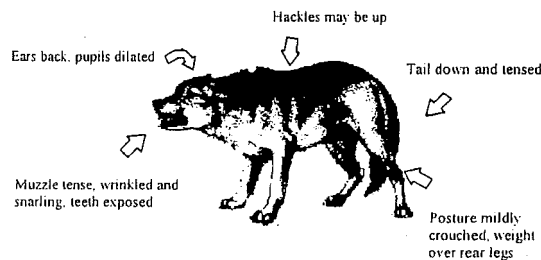
PLAY SOLICITATION

The play bow is a combination of dominant and submissive gestures. It is offered to invite another to play or as part of courtship behavior.



AGGRESSIVE ATTACK

This threatening posture is used to chase another away or, if need be, to attack in order to protect possessions, pack or self.



DEFENSIVE AGGRESSION

When fearful, a dog will give warning signals to indicate he does not wish to be approached. If, unheeded, he will bite to protect himself.

For more information on animal care, behavior or AC&C programs contact (602) 506-PETS or visit pets.maricopa.gov



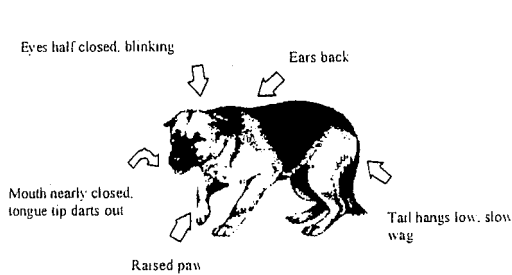


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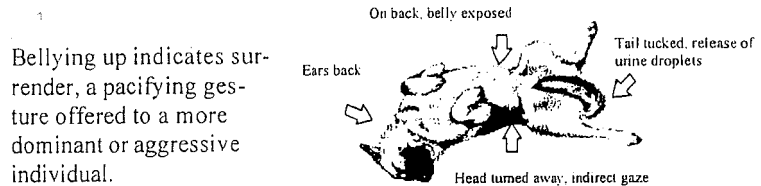
Reading Canine Body Postures Dog To Dog

When dog meets dog, they signal their status in relation to each other. Actions like raising a forepaw, looking away, licking or nudging at the other's muzzle or bowing with the forelegs are submissive gestures. Mounting, raising up stiffly on one's toes, or placing one's head over another's withers (the place where the neck meets the back) indicate the more dominant individual of that interaction.



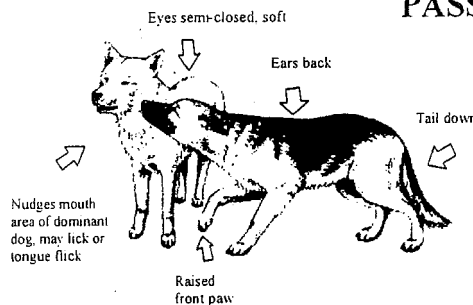
ACTIVE SUBMISSION

This pacifying posture is used when a dog acknowledges another dog or human's higher social ranking, or to inhibit another's aggression.



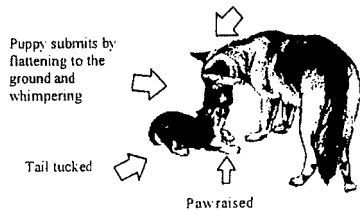
PASSIVE SUBMISSION

A submissive dog may greet a more dominant dog with a muzzle nudge as an appeasement (pacifying) gesture.



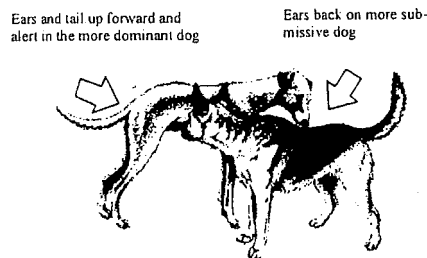
GREETING BEHAVIOR

Mother quickly snarls and places mouth around muzzle or head of puppy



MATERNAL CORRECTION

A mother dog will discipline a pup with a quick muzzle grasp. The pup learns to offer submissive body postures.

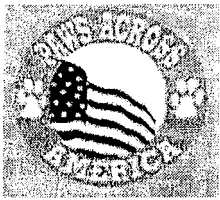


GREETING POSTURE

Dogs sniff each other's genital region when greeting to gather information on sexual status.

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How To Interpret Your Dog's Body Language, Facial Expressions, and Vocalizations

Over the centuries wolves evolved an elaborate system of body language, facial expressions, and vocalizations to communicate with each other. Domestic dogs also use this means of communication, and all of these signals are easily understood by other dogs. If you can learn to interpret how your dog is feeling by observing its posture and expression and listening to it, you'll be well on the way to successful communication with your pet and better equipped to solve any behavior problems that arise.

Following are some major canine attitudes and their typical outward manifestations.

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AGGRESSIVE

- Ears Forward or back, close to head.
- Eyes Narrow or staring challengingly.
- Mouth/ Lips open, drawn back to expose teeth bared in a snarl.
- Teeth Possible jaw snapping.
- Body Tense. Upright. Hackles on neck up. Completely Dominant position.
- Tail Straight out from body. Fluffed up.
- Vocalization Snarl. Growl. Loud bark.



ALERT

- Ears Perked-up. Turning to catch sounds.
- Eyes Open normally or wide.
- Mouth/ Mouth closed or slightly open with teeth covered.
- Teeth
- Body Normal. Possibly standing on tiptoe. Slightly Dominant position.
- Tail Up. Possibly wagging.
- Vocalization None. Low whine or alarm bark.



ANXIOUS



Tail Stiffened and fluffed. Up or straight out from body.
 Vocali- Low, assertive growl or grunt.
 zation

FEARFUL



Ears Laid back flat and low on head.
 Eyes Narrowed, averted. Possibly rolled back in head, whites showing.
 Mouth/Lips drawn back to expose teeth.
 Teeth
 Body Tense. Crouched low in submissive position. Shivering, trembling. Possible secretion from anal scent glands.
 Tail Down between legs.
 Vocali- Low, worried yelp, whine, or
 zation growl.

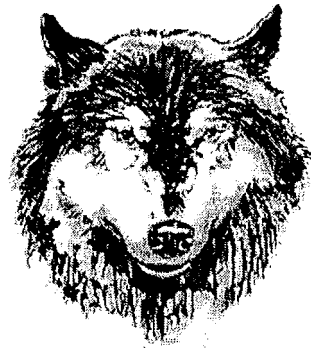
FLIGHT, BEGINNING STAGE



Ears Back.
 Eyes Wide open. Possibly rolled back with whites showing.
 Mouth/ Slightly opened mouth. Possible drooling.
 Teeth
 Body Tense. Shivering. Low, poised to run.
 Tail Low or between legs.
 Vocali- None. Possible yelp or whine.
 zation

FRIENDLY

Ears Perked-up.
 Eyes Wide open. Alert look.
 Mouth/ Relaxed, possibly slightly open, "smiling" mouth.
 Teeth
 Body Normal posture. Still, or



Ears Partially back.
 Eyes Slightly narrowed.
 Mouth/ Mouth closed, or slightly open in a "grin."
 Teeth
 Body Tense. Slightly lowered in a Submissive position.
 Tail Partially lowered.
 Vocali- Low whine or moaning-type zation bark.

CHASE, BEGINNING STAGE



Ears Perked-up, forward-pointing.
 Eyes Wide open. Very alert.
 Mouth/ Mouth slightly open. Excited panting.
 Teeth
 Body Tense. Crouched low in a predatory position. Legs bent, poised to run.
 Tail Extended straight out from body.
 Vocali- None. zation

CURIOUS/EAGER/EXCITED



Ears Perked-up, forward-pointing.
 Eyes Wide open.
 Mouth/ Mouth open, teeth covered. Possible panting.
 Teeth
 Body Normal stance. Possible wiggling, standing on tiptoe, or pacing.
 Tail Up. Wagging.
 Vocali- Excited short barking, zation whining.

DOMINANT

Ears Up straight or forward.
 Eyes Wide open, staring.
 Mouth/ Mouth closed or slightly open.
 Teeth
 Body Very tall posture. Hackles may be up.



possible wiggling of whole rear end.

Tail Up or out from body. Wagging.
Vocali- Whimpering, yapping, or short, zation high bark.

GUARDING



Ears Perked-up. Forward.
Eyes Wide open, alert.
Mouth/ Mouth slightly open, teeth bared. Snapping or gnashing of
Teeth teeth.
Body Tense. Rigid. Hackles up. Standing very tall in an aggressive or dominant stance.
Tail Rigid. Held straight out from body. Sometimes fluffed.
Vocali- Loud alert bark. Growl. Snarl. zation

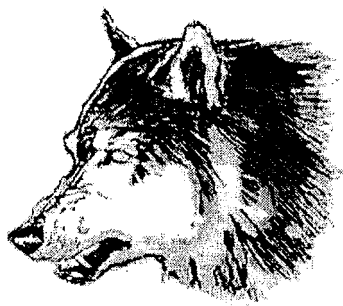
PLAYFUL/HAPPY



Ears Perked-up and forward, or relaxed.
Eyes Wide open. Sparkly/merry-looking.
Mouth/ Mouth relaxed and slightly open, teeth covered. Excited
Teeth panting.
Body Relaxed, or front end lowered, rear end up in the air, wiggling in a play-bow. Excited bouncing and jumping up and down. Circling around and running forward and back in an invitation to play.
Tail Wagging vigorously.
Vocali- Excited barking. Soft play- zation growling.

PREDATORY

Ears Alert. Held forward or



backward to catch sounds.
 Eyes Wide open. Staring, focusing.
 Mouth/ Mouth closed.
 Teeth
 Body Rigid. Low to ground, ready to spring forward. Quietly sniffing the air.
 Tail Straight and low.
 Vocali- None (so the prey won't be zation alerted).

SUBORDINATE (SUBMISSIVE)



Ears Down, flattened against head.
 Eyes Narrowed to slits or wide open, whites showing.
 Mouth/ Lips pulled way back from teeth in a "grin". Nuzzling or
 Teeth licking other animal or person on face.
 Body Lowered to ground, front paw raised. Lying on back, belly up. Possible urine leaking/dribbling. Possible emptying of anal scent glands.
 Tail Down, between legs.
 Vocali- None, or low, worried whining. zation Possible yelping/whimpering in fear.

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