

## BREED STANDARD ANALYSIS

As a dog groomer, it can be helpful to read a dog breed's breed standard from the American Kennel Club before grooming a dog. You can also go over the dog as you are reading the standard to help you determine if there is anything not quite right about the dog that you can hide by grooming the dog well and using hair to disguise a fault. One example of this is if you have a curly coated dog that is towed out. You can groom the dog so the toes appear to face forward. Another benefit to going over both the breed standard and the dog you are working on is you may notice something that isn't correct structurally, being aware of this can help you keep the dog more comfortable while you are grooming it making the process far more pleasant for both you and the dog.

I've chosen the Basset Hound breed standard for this exercise because they have short hair and many unique characteristics to examine. It is easier to learn about reading and interpreting the breed standard of a short hair dog because there isn't a lot of coat in the way.

### BASSET HOUND

1. Many breed standards explain why a breed is built a certain way to do a certain job. For the Basset hound it is explained that the "characteristics which equip it admirably to follow a trail over and through difficult terrain."
2. The term "heavier in bone" is used to describe the dog as being big boned.
3. The preferred temperament is often expressed in a breed standard. For the Basset Hound it is noted that "the temperament is mild, never sharp or timid."
4. We see that specific measurements are given for the Basset Hound's head size. "Its length from occiput to muzzle is greater than the width at the brow." This means that the Basset Hound's head is longer than it is wide.
5. The Basset Hound breed standard explains that the dog's skull is domed, and the occiput is very noticeable.
6. We again have a specific head measurement. For the Basset Hound the nose to the stop, the area between the eyes, and the stop to the occiput, should be the same.
7. It is explained that the line of the muzzle and top skull are parallel planes. This means when looking at the side of the dog's head, the muzzle and the top skull should be parallel. FIGURE 1
8. The breed standard indicates that the skin over the head of the Basset Hound should be loose and that tight skin is considered a fault.
9. The Basset Hound's muzzle is described as heavy and free from snippiness. This means that it should not be too small or pointed.
10. Pigment is referred to in many breed standards. For the Basset Hound it is noted that the nose is supposed to be darkly pigmented with the black color being preferred although a deep liver colored nose is allowed if it conforms to the color of the dog's head, but this liver color is not desirable.
11. When a breed standard indicates a trait is allowed, but not desirable, it means that a dog being shown will not be disqualified.
12. The bite is described as scissor or an even bite and that an overshot or undershot bite is a serious fault.
13. Lips are described as darkly pigmented, pendulous, with loose hanging flews and a very pronounced dewlap. This means the Basset Hound's lips are somewhat large, loose, perhaps even flappy.
14. Here the eyes of the Basset Hound are described as soft, sad, and slightly sunken. The haw (third eyelid,) is visible and the color of the eyes should be dark brown. The standard does allow for lighter colored eyes, but mentions it is not a desirable trait. It also mentions that protruding eyes are a fault. All these notes about the eyes of a Basset Hound are in the breed standard this way because of the job a Basset Hound is bred to do. They are designed to run through brush and bramble. Their eyes should be slightly sunk in and not protruding to protect the eyes as the dog is doing its job.
15. The ears of the Basset Hound are described as extremely long and low set. This means that the ears are attached to the head below the eye level of the dog. Here we also have another measurement, the ear of the Basset hound when brought forward to the nose, should be long enough to fold over the end of the nose. Also, a high set ear is described as a fault.
16. Here we have the description of the chest of the Basset Hound, they have a large, full chest and when looking at the dog from the side you will see the chest goes out in front of the front legs of the dog.
17. The breed standard gives us another measurement. The distance from the Basset Hound's lowest point of the chest to the ground is not to be more than one-third the total height at the withers of the adult Basset Hound. FIGURE 2
18. At this point the breed standard lists some serious faults: steepness in shoulder, fiddle front, and elbows that are out. Steepness in shoulder refers to a shoulder that is not laid far enough back, it is too far forward on the dog making it "steep." A fiddle front refers to a bone structure that makes the front assembly of the dog look like a fiddle