



We continually update our skills and knowledge so that we stay current with the best practices that can help you and your dog.

# cheerfuldogs chronicles

cheerful dogs, happy people

Issue 90

## A World of Dogs: Understanding the Canine Lexicon

Have you ever marvelled at the way your dog seems to understand exactly what you're saying? Or how even if you spell out the word 'w.a.l.k', they know exactly what's up? It turns out the language comprehension of our canine companions goes well beyond basic training cues.

Dogs don't comprehend language in the same way as humans. They may not grasp the nuances of syntax or grammar, but they have an impressive ability to understand words based on associations, intonations, and context. The key to a dog's word comprehension lies in the way we communicate with them. Dogs pick up on visual and auditory cues, associating specific sounds with actions or objects. This is why your dog might get excited when you mention the word "walk" or start tilting their head when you say "treat." The question then arises: How many words can dogs truly understand?



Research suggests that the average dog can comprehend around 165 words, ranging from basic cues to familiar objects, and even some abstract terms.

### Dog quotes

"If you can look at a dog and not feel vicarious excitement and affection, you must be a cat." -Anonymous

cont.

## ... canine lexicon

Of course, there are outliers on both ends of the spectrum - some dogs may grasp a few dozen words, while exceptionally trained dogs can understand a more extensive vocabulary. Chaser, the famous border collie, has the largest vocabulary of any known dog - a staggering 1,022 nouns.

While the exact number of words a dog comprehends can vary, their sensitivity to our communication goes beyond mere vocabulary. In addition to verbal cues, dogs excel at understanding our emotions and tones, using their masterful interpretation of our body language and facial expressions. So, the next time you think your dog understands what you're saying, it's not just in your imagination - they're likely picking up on a combination of verbal and non-verbal cues.

Understanding the depth of your dog's language abilities opens up exciting opportunities for your relationship with them. Whether you're teaching new tricks, expanding their vocabulary, or simply enjoying your life together, your dog's ability to understand you makes them a unique and special companion. Want to return the favour? Learn all you can about their language too! Understanding canine communication, and particularly body language, will let you truly 'speak dog'.



## Tips & Tools: Keeping Your Dog's Coat Seed-free

Grass seeds can be a hazard for your dog - lodging themselves in the skin and even entering your dog's body through their nose, mouth, and ears. Here's how to manage these pesky intruders.

**Regular Grooming:** Brush your dog's coat regularly, especially after walks. Pay close attention to the paws, ears, and armpits, where grass seeds tend to cling.

**Check and Monitor:** After walks in grassy areas, inspect your dog's coat. Look for seeds, burrs, or plant awns that may have attached themselves.

**Trimming Between Toes:** Long hair between your dog's toes is a magnet for grass seeds. Regularly trim this area to minimise the chance of seeds getting lodged.

**Use Protective Gear:** Consider protective gear like doggy boots or coats in areas with tall grasses or seeds.



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