

# CHECKING THE PUG HEAD

## WHAT YOUR HANDS SHOULD DO TO CORRECTLY EXAMINE A PUG'S HEAD

By Donelle Richards



**1.**

Place your fingers behind the ears and your pinkies under the head, and use your thumbs for the examination of the head.



**2.**

Move your thumbs around the head to feel the full, large, round head.



**3.**

Feel for good width of jaw. You can also feel if the jaw is wry. The width of jaw should ideally be near the outside edge of the eye.



**4.**

Put your thumb in from of the mouth to feel the slightly under-shot bite. Be careful to not block the nasal passages.



**5.**

You have now successfully examined the Pug head.

# JUDGING THE PUG

by Charlotte P. Patterson

The Pug is, perhaps, one of the easiest of the Toy breeds to judge. He is one of those "what you see, is what you get" dogs. He is a clown that picks the worst times to embarrass his handler, and he enjoys every minute of it. The words to remember are "round head, square body, and curly tail."

This is a square breed, not literally, of course, but when we look at a Pug from any angle you should get the impression of squareness. From the side, front, and rear, you should see a cobby, well-muscled dog. It is important to remember that the level topline is echoed by the underline; no sloping toplines and no tuck-ups.

I recommend letting the dogs go around first, then your first impression is of them moving naturally and not posed into position by the handler. When the dog is set up on the table, stand back and look from the side to ascertain the correctness of the body shape. When you approach from the

front, look first, and then put both of your hands around the head, using your thumbs to feel skull structure under the folds of skin. This also helps the dog to stand still.

Please keep in mind that he has no muzzle to protect his eyes and does not appreciate the judge who covers his eyes while examining his teeth.

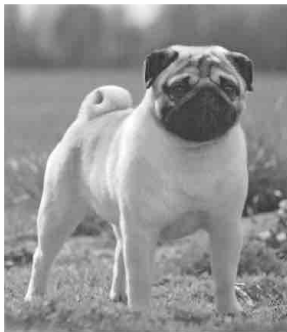
The parent club video shows how to examine the bite with the flat of your thumb to ascertain that he is slightly undershot. The Pug Dog Club of America has repeatedly asked judges not to open Pug's mouths. The head is round, and if you drew a line across the face it should touch the tip of the ears (when alert), bisect the eyes, and touch the top of the nose. Remember that one of the most endearing traits of this breed is his dark, round eyes.

A light-eyed Pug is not desirable and does not have the proper expression for the breed. The head wrinkles around his face, covering his brow and looping over his nose, contribute so much to his characteristic expression. At this point, if judging a black Pug, you must look closely to see those wrinkles, but they are there.

Look at the head from the side. While it is flat, it is not perpendicular because of the slightly undershot bite. Some Pugs have an exaggerated over-the-nose roll. If this is so great as to detract from the flat face, you should consider this in your judgment. The ears are soft, small, dark, and triangular. The two acceptable types are the button (preferred) and the rose. A rose ear on a Pug does not expose the inner burr, such as in the Bulldog, but



Ch. WooWoo Serendipity (Winner of Three BIS) shows proper gait.



*Left: Ch. Ivanvold Diva of Riversong, Winner of 13 All-Breed Best in Shows. Below: 12-Week-Old puppy*



rather appears to have a sloping fold rather than straight across the head as with a button ear. It often makes the head appear smaller. The muzzle is dark and wide with a noticeable chin. Some Pugs do gray on the chin and muzzle, and this is of no importance. Whiskers may or may not be trimmed. The nose, black with open nostrils, is important to this brachycephalic breed. When the mouth is closed, you should not see tongue or teeth. On warm days, do not keep these dogs, particularly blacks, out in the sun at outdoor shows. They overheat quickly with disastrous results. They will also pant heavily.

The front legs are straight and placed well under. The Pug should have a chest. Some older dogs, especially males, may get a build-up of muscle on the outside of the legs, but the inside of the legs should be straight. He must have enough length of neck to support the head and, if the shoulder construction is correct, he will not appear as if his head is sitting right on his shoulder. Also, correct structure will not allow him to have excessive lift of his front legs. Moderate bend of stifle is called for and the often-talked about "Pug roll" comes from his front movement, not his rear, and is not an exaggerated swagger.

He should stand squarely with straight legs, level topline, and a tightly curled, high-set tail. He should gait

the same way—legs moving in parallel planes, firm topline, and the tail not bouncing with each step. This is a companion dog and is not meant to be run around the ring. He should trot by the handler's side, preferably on a loose lead. They double track and should never be moved so fast as to converge to the center line of gravity. The tail must be high-set to continue that appearance of squareness. The Standard talks of a double curl as perfection. Rather than concentrate on the number of curls, you should see high-set, tightly-curved tails. Oftentimes, the tail will curl on the side away from the judge. If so, look at the dog from that side as well. Please do not unroll the tail.

There have been questions over the years about wrinkles down the Pug's back. This issue is not dealt with in the Standard. The key here is to check the topline under those wrinkles to make sure it is level. Otherwise, it is up to you and how you feel about the wrinkles. As they age, they may also develop wrinkles over the shoulders. Coat texture is fine, smooth, short, and glossy. Blacks are black, sometimes with some white on the chest. Oftentimes, you will see some rust in their coats from being out in the sun. The two colors accepted are black and fawn. All others are a disqualification. Fawn can range from a very light, buttery color to a dark

apricot color. The trace is a thin line running from the occiput down the back. You will most often see this in young dogs. A wider black saddle or black hairs in a fawn coat should not be considered a disqualification. However, these can be considered a fault.

If you are one of the judges who tells Juniors to show the bite on their dog, most of them will respond, "In this breed, we check the mouth by running the flat of our thumb over the bite." This is what they are taught to say and do not penalize them for responding in this manner.

Just because this is a Toy breed, don't forgive unsoundness. This is a tough little bundle of muscle and should always move soundly. When you see a Pug stop with all four feet in the right place and tail up—look carefully. When you see a Pug handler down on the floor, setting each foot and holding up the tail—look very carefully.

Many Pugs are owner-handled and, therefore, sometimes you will have to forgive less-than-expert handling. But they know when someone knows how to judge their breed and, believe me, word will spread, either good or bad. Never forgive light eyes, bad bites, wry mouths, unsoundness, low-set tails or a dog that does not appear square. Square body, round head, and curly tail.

It is a fun breed to judge and their antics in the ring will often amuse you. Enjoy! ■

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



*Charlotte P. Patterson bought her first Pug in 1969 and began a love affair with the breed that lasts even today. She has been a breeder, exhibitor, professional handler, and now, a judge. She considers it her great privilege*

*to be involved in the sport of dogs.*