

CONFORMATION TERMS - THE HEAD STUDY

by Kathleen Dillon



A good example of the epagneul Breton head in profile. The skull is longer than the muzzle 3:2, top lines of the head and muzzle are parallel. Obvious stop but not too pronounced and not too sloped.

On the right is an example of a good Epagneul Breton head. Ears are set well on the head and not too low. triangular in shape, slightly rounded at the tip, not too short nor too long, partially covered with longer or wavy hair with the extremity being covered by short hair (in other words not long fringing on edges of ears).

Cranial region is slightly rounded seen either from the front or profile. The cheeks are not heavy and the skin fits tightly.

The eyes are slightly oblique with an "intelligent, soft and frank expression". The eyes are dark and in harmony with the nose and coat. (Notice that the lip leather is also dark and in harmony with nose and eyes). Eye expression coupled with an upward movement of the base of the ears gives rise to the true "Brittany expression". Superciliary arches form slightly rounded curve without being too prominent.

The neck, which is medium length and well-muscled sets smoothly into the shoulders in the form of a slightly curved, truncated cone. The neck should never be arched. (The necks on Epagneul Bretons should NOT be shaved.)

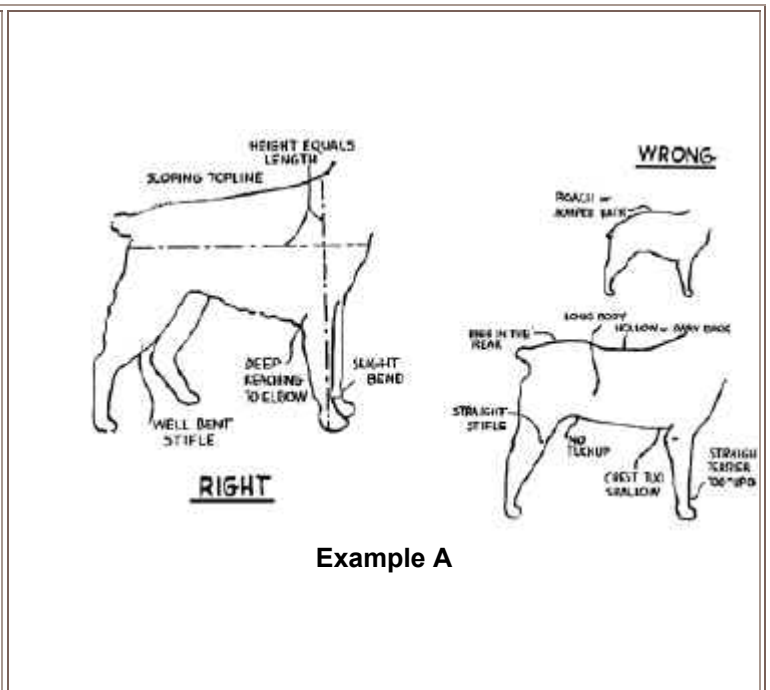


An Explanation of Some Conformation Terms

There are some terms used in standards that not every one is familiar with. It is our hope that this will help with some of that. The drawings on this page are a sampling of some of the overhead examples that we went over during the conformation seminar at the annual meeting.

Example A shows drawings explaining the dog's topline, measurements, etc. You will notice that the horizontal and vertical lines on the full body drawing indicate where measurements should be taken to measure the height (at the withers) and length of the dog. It also shows how the chest should appear: well let down to the elbow level. A Brittany should have a good chest to allow for ample room for lungs and stamina in the field.

The top line should be only slightly sloped as shown in the example. An exaggerated slope is not what you want, but you also don't want what is referred to as "roach" backed or "saddle" backed. The top right drawing in Example A shows what is meant by "roach back". The lower right drawing in Example A shows an example of "saddle or sway back". The drawing on the right in Example A also shows other undesirable traits: You'll notice the difference in the two examples of the chest. The one on the right is not let down far enough and is not tucked up at the back. (Note: there are times when dogs are too 'tucked up' which is also not desirable.) It also shows an example of a straight stifle versus the desired well-bent stifle.

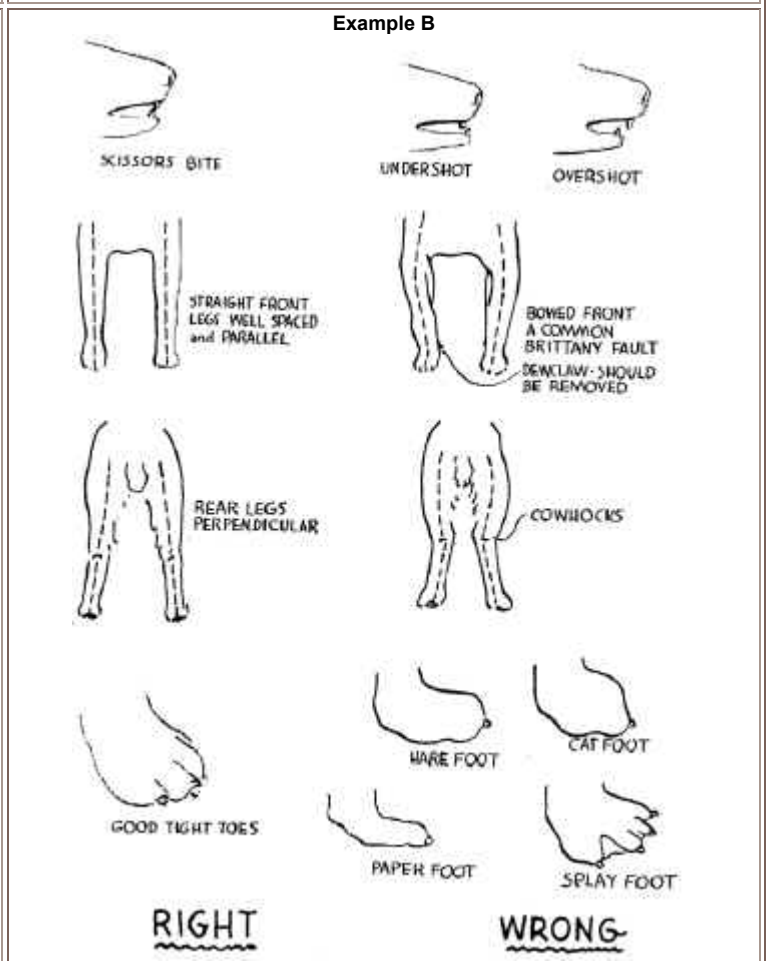


Example A

Example B shows what is meant by the different bite terms used. Scissor bite is the correct bite. Undershot or overshot bites are not only undesirable they are eliminating faults, a dog cannot be confirmed let alone shown with either of those faults.

The next two sets of drawings show the correct front and rear legs (on the left) and examples of incorrect front and rear legs. Notice how the dotted lines are in a straight line in the drawing of correct example and the dotted lines are obviously curved in the drawing of the bowed front. The dotted lines in the drawings of the rear legs are perpendicular in the correct example but not straight up and down, that would not be good for the rear legs. Rear legs that are cow-hocked do not continue on that perpendicular angle, you'll notice at the hock how the dotted lines change angle.

The bottom set of drawings show examples explaining the terms used in conjunction with the feet. The drawing on the left is an example of what is meant by "good, tight toes" and is also an example of how the dog's feet should look when standing. The four drawings to the right of the "tight toes" drawing are examples of incorrect feet: the splay foot means toes spread too far apart (not tight), the cat foot means toes too tight and dog stands too high on the toes. Hare feet and paper feet are both set too low, the dog does not stand up on the toes in the correct manner.



Example B