

1. [Dog breeds - Gameshow quiz \(wordwall.net\)](#)

2. Match the films to the descriptions!

Hatchi: A dog's tale, Marley and Me, Turner & Hooch, Lassie Come Home, Beethoven, 101 Dalmatians, Cujo, The secret life of pets, A dog's purpose, The call of the wild

\_\_\_\_\_ A heroic collie travels across England to reunite with her young owner.

\_\_\_\_\_ A mischievous St. Bernard becomes a beloved member of a family.

\_\_\_\_\_ A couple's tumultuous journey with their lovable but rambunctious Labrador Retriever.

\_\_\_\_\_ A messy but loyal French Mastiff helps a detective solve a murder case.

\_\_\_\_\_ A Dalmatian couple rescues their puppies from the clutches of an evil fur coat designer.

\_\_\_\_\_ A group of pets in New York City have wacky and unpredictable adventures after their owners leave for the day.

\_\_\_\_\_ Based on a true story, a dog waits faithfully for his owner every day at the train station, even after his owner's death.

\_\_\_\_\_ A dog reincarnates into different breeds, seeking a greater purpose in life and forming meaningful relationships with different owners along the way.

\_\_\_\_\_ A domesticated Saint Bernard/Scotch Collie is forced to adapt and survive in the harsh Alaskan wilderness.

\_\_\_\_\_ A friendly St. Bernard is turned into a killer by rabies, terrorizing a small town and trapping a mother and her son in their car.

Can you add more films about dogs?

3. Choose adjectives to the definitions! docile, gentle, confident, courageous, loyal, devoted, sociable, obedient, tenacious, responsive, attentive, dignified, dignified, stubborn, affectionate

\_\_\_\_\_ showing a kind and considerate nature, mild in temperament, not rough or violent.

\_\_\_\_\_ enjoying the company of others, friendly and outgoing, inclined to socialize.

\_\_\_\_\_ having a strong belief in oneself or one's abilities, self-assured, not easily intimidated.

\_\_\_\_\_ possessing or displaying bravery, willingness to face danger, hardship or adversity.

\_\_\_\_\_ faithful and devoted to someone or something, committed to a cause or a person.

\_\_\_\_\_ showing strong attachment, dedication, and commitment to someone or something.

\_\_\_\_\_ willing to comply with orders or instructions, submissive to authority.

\_\_\_\_\_ displaying fondness or love towards others, expressing emotions of care and tenderness.

\_\_\_\_\_ persistent and determined, not easily giving up or letting go of something.

\_\_\_\_\_ reacting or responding quickly and effectively, receptive to change or influence.

\_\_\_\_\_ obstinately refusing to change one's mind or course of action, persistently resistant to persuasion.

\_\_\_\_\_ paying close attention to someone or something, alert and observant.

\_\_\_\_\_ displaying a sense of self-respect and nobility, having a composed and serious manner.

\_\_\_\_\_ easy to manage or control, obedient and submissive.

\_\_\_\_\_ showing careful and persistent effort, hardworking and attentive to detail.

# Are Dog Films Giving Us Unrealistic Expectations Of Our Companions?

Stories about dogs who save the day can cause the demand for specific breeds to increase. However, on-screen portrayals don't always translate to real-world companionship.

The 1961 Disney film *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* is a story of adventure, love, and family loyalty. But the heroes of this story, Pongo and Perdita, are dogs. Pongo and Perdita rescue their family from danger and risk their own lives in the process. They show devotion, intelligence, and determination. In the five years after the film was released, there was an increase in registrations for Dalmatians, presumably as consumers wanted dogs like Pongo and Perdita. But is it reasonable to expect a real dog to be like a Disney character? And how might these expectations harm our companion dogs when they aren't met?

In this study, two researchers analyzed 95 dog characters in 40 U.S. movies between 1930 and 2004. They wanted to understand how the dog characters were portrayed in film and how these portrayals affected American Kennel Club (AKC) registrations for the characters' breeds. They took into account four pre-established "themes" common in dog characters:

- **Dogs as heroes:** These dogs are brave, loyal, and value human life above their own. They often "save the day" and demonstrate popular societal values.
- **Anthropomorphized dogs:** These dogs demonstrate human characteristics. They seem to understand humans completely, and some go as far as speaking, reading, and showing other human skills.
- **Dogs with Western values:** These dogs (especially pedigree breeds) embody traditional Western concepts of Whiteness and heteronormativity. For example, dogs may be portrayed as surrogate children, upholding the nuclear family unit.
- **Dogs as a boundary between society and wilderness:** These dogs are formerly "wild" and taken in by humans only to become more

domesticated. Such portrayals represent the human desire to establish dominance over nature.

After scoring the characters according to these four categories, the researchers looked at changes in AKC breed registrations up to ten years after each film was released.

Importantly, movies with heroic dog characters were followed by significant increases in breed demand for up to five years. This suggests people want their companion animals to be loyal, well-behaved, and ready to protect their family — just like in the movies. On the other hand, movies with anthropomorphized dogs were followed by significant *decreases* in breed demand for up to five years. The researchers were surprised by this finding, but they note that many anthropomorphized characters are geared toward children who don't always make purchasing decisions. Finally, although some of the 40 films showed dogs embodying Western values and representing the boundary between society and wilderness, these themes did not significantly affect AKC breed demand.

There were other interesting findings in the study. For example, 75% of characters portrayed in the films were male, while 24% were female. Female dogs were portrayed more often with Western values. Meanwhile, dog characters in animated films showed higher levels of anthropomorphism.

Different dog breeds go in and out of fashion, and it's no surprise that movies, like other forms of media, have a big impact on these trends. The researchers discussed three concerning effects that film portrayals could have on our relationships with companion dogs.

First, the unrealistic portrayal of dogs could make people unprepared for the realities of animal guardianship. The heroic dogs in movies were obedient, could communicate easily with humans, and showed affection and loyalty to their families. But the movies gave very little attention to how to meet their daily needs, how to train them, or how to look after them generally. If people buy a dog as a companion without understanding what they are getting into, they might not treat the dog properly. Furthermore, while German Shepherds and

Dalmatians are often portrayed as hero dogs, research has found that these breeds are frequently reported as showing “undesirable” behaviors. If people expect their dog to behave like the characters in the movie and they don’t meet those expectations, it may lead to relinquishment.

Second, the authors note that movies often glorify situations that are distressing or dangerous for dogs. Especially when dogs are shown as heroes, there is little consideration given to how such situations can impact their welfare. For example, ‘separation anxiety’ is often depicted as devotion to the dog’s guardian rather than as a very stressful experience for the dog. Movies make these experiences seem admirable without educating guardians of the importance of addressing them.

Finally, if unhealthy or vulnerable dog breeds are portrayed as heroic, then people may seek them out despite the obvious problems associated with breeding and breed-specific illnesses. Such unhealthy breeds often suffer from bone deformities, reduced heart and lung function, and other problems. The movies almost never show these problems, so people miss an opportunity to learn. If dog guardians don’t base their decision on breed health, then their companion animals are more likely to suffer.

Heroic dogs in movies and the changes to breed popularity that happen as a result could be harmful to our companion animals. It’s fun to watch dogs save the day in movies, and it’s difficult to imagine a world where dogs aren’t portrayed on screen. However, animal advocates can educate consumers about the importance of looking beyond the film industry when choosing their companions. How a dog appears in a movie doesn’t tell us anything about the animal’s health, behavior, and needs. Understanding this is an important step to reducing the suffering of companion dogs and strengthening the human-animal bond.

Match the words with the definitions!

companionship

a. a situation in which someone leaves their dog or cat in a shelter because they can no longer take care of it

registrations

b. the act of showing someone or something in a particular way

breed demand

c. the state of being safe and healthy

anthropomorphized

d. the desire or interest in having a particular breed of dog

heteronormativity

e. the quality of being human-like

portray

f. the state of having a particular emotional or social relationship with someone

relinquishment

g. the act of formally recording or entering something, such as a name or information, onto an official list or database

welfare

h. a set of societal norms that dictate what is considered normal or appropriate behavior for heterosexual people and relationships

vulnerabilities

i. weaknesses or flaws that can cause harm or damage

Discussion questions:

How can movies create unrealistic expectations of dogs as companions?

What are some of the potential negative effects of unrealistic expectations of dogs as portrayed in movies?

What can animal advocates do to educate consumers about the realities of dog ownership and the importance of looking beyond the film industry when choosing their companions?

How might the media influence other pet trends beyond dogs, such as cats or birds?