

YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

From *Dogs in Canada*, May 1990

THE PEKINGESE

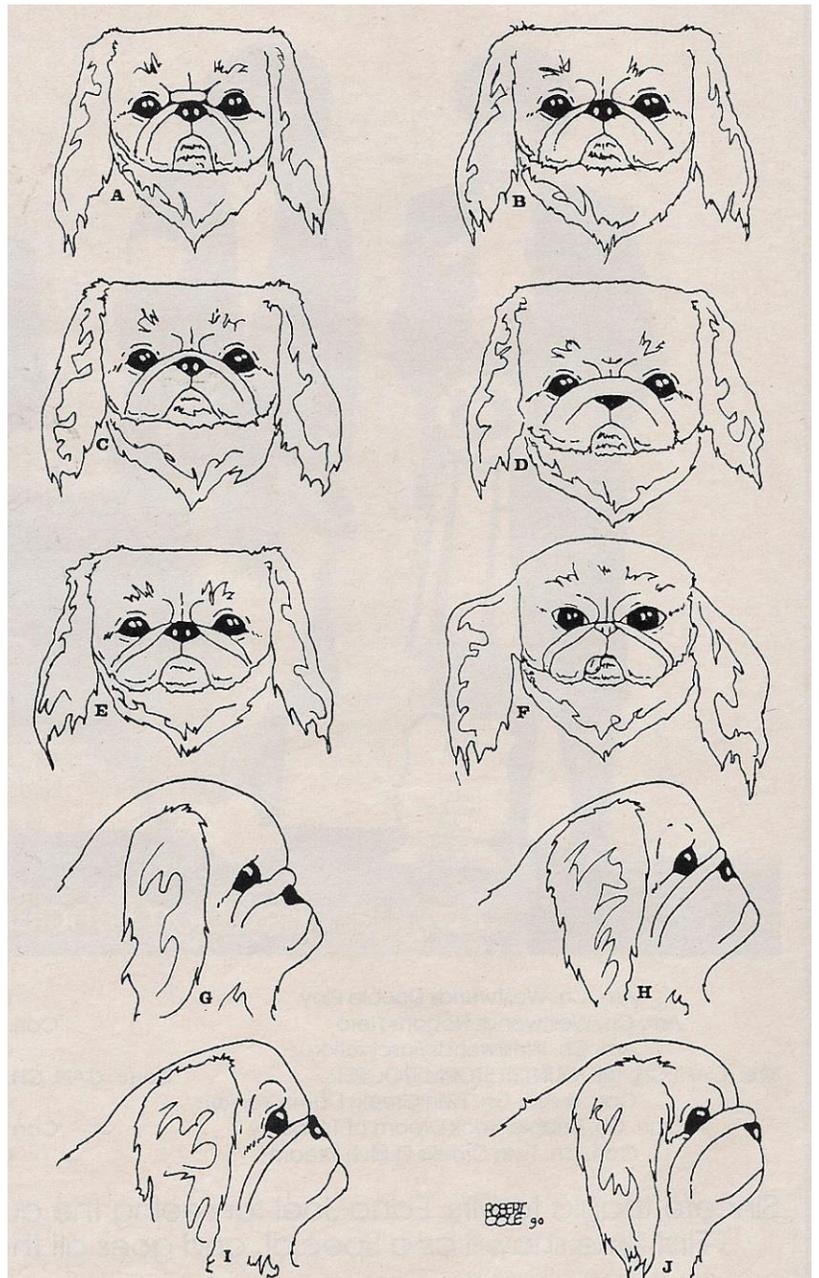
Like most unorthodox breeds, but especially the Pekingese, it is difficult to present the whole dog in a single illustrated article. Having a choice of head or body, I have reluctantly limited study to the 40 points out of a possible 100 allotted to the Peke's unique head.

Which two of these six face-on views represent typical for the male Peke, and which one of the remaining four represents typical for the female? This is an important sex consideration that is sometimes neglected. What is the major difference between the face-on views of your two equally-best males? What are the major sex differences, face-on, between the typical bitch head and the similar best dog head?

HEAD A

This less-than-typical skull is correctly flat, nose is short, broad and black, nostrils are large and open, lips and eye rims are black but lack of full head width is a serious departure from type. This example's muzzle is ideally as broad as his skull, but in ratio to height, his skull is not as broad as it should be (at least $\frac{1}{5}$ th broader than deep).

He possesses what is termed an 'over-wrinkle'. Over-wrinkle is simply a loose forehead fold of skin above the stop. As this rare extra wrinkle is above the stop and does not weigh down on the nose, there is no objection attached to it; in fact, some breeders view it as a minor point of perfection.



HEAD B

This example's large head is proportionally wider than deep in a correct ratio of five to four; it is referred to as an 'envelope head'. The wide skull is flat between ears set level with the top of the head, forming a neat rectangle. The large, clear, round, dark and lustrous eyes are set wide apart and face forward.

His correct muzzle is short and broad, the broken wrinkle giving the appearance of breadth and substance. His strong, broad chin and wide muzzle produce the desired level lips. His broken-over-nose wrinkle is considered ideal in John A. Vlasto's *Popular Pekingese*, Arco Publishers, N.Y., N.Y., 1962, a book I recommend as required reading for everyone serious about judging this unique breed. Having reported and illustrated Vlasto's ideal, I may now say that a good (not heavy or thick) unbroken wrinkle is, in my opinion, equally correct.

HEAD C

His widely-spaced dark eyes are placed frontally without any white showing. A horizontal line drawn across the top of the nose would correctly divide this typical head in two equal parts. The heart-shaped ears are set level with top of skull and carried close to head. The expression is quaint and rather grotesque.

Correct shortness of nose is linked with shortness of face, the nose and face being turned up, giving rise to a deep stop. This upturning produces excess skin, forming a distinctive wrinkle which does not cover nor fill the stop to the extent that it pushed the nose down. The major difference between this typical head and equally typical head B is that the wrinkle over the nose is not broken.

HEAD D

What should be a rectangle is, instead, a square. This head is not balanced. Width is present but the skull is too high, the height causing imbalance. Imbalance has been increased by my giving this head a heavy unbroken sausage roll. This undesirable (see Head J) heavy roll pushed the nose leather down, adding to muzzle breadth, but making perfect nose placement impossible. Notice the top of the pushed-down nose is on level with the bottom, rather than the middle of the eye.

HEAD E

The sex differences between this typical bitch head and the best two dog heads are slight. This bitch's body is larger than either of the two dogs but her skull is the same size; this is the norm for this breed. This typical bitch's muzzle is less thick and has considerably less cheek development – like you find between male and female cats. However, doggy Peke bitches do not always lack this degree of cheek and muzzle development and, unfortunately, too often unfeminine heads win.

HEAD F

This head illustrates a number of faults, some current, some seldom seen in the show ring today. The skull is domed, the ears are set on too low, the muzzle is narrow, the foreface lacks depth, the flesh-coloured nose (a disqualification) is small and the nostrils are pinched. The protruding tongue, indicating a possible wry mouth, is faulty.

His eyes are faulty in two ways; the whites of the eyes show, and the eyes position toward the sides of a narrow head. That the eyes (similar to the Japanese Chin) show a good deal of white with a rather small iris (and, in Pekes usually with a slight cast) is a very ugly, not uncommon defect. Equally disturbing to expression are eyes that do not face full front, positioning, instead, like the eyes of a rabbit, more at the sides of the face.

HEAD G

On occasion, a nose is found to set too far into the face. The nose leather is 'pushed in' with an unbroken wrinkle projecting beyond it. This dished face (with domed skull) is a serious departure from type; it's known in the breed as a 'monkey-face'. When this departure occurs, there is a strong possibility of wrinkle spilling over the nose and pinching the nostrils.

HEAD H

This typical face in profile is correctly flat; that is to say, this dog's brow, chin and nose leather all lie in one plane. The nose and face, being turned up, give rise to a deep stop. This upturning produces excess skin, which forms a distinctive wrinkle across the muzzle. This wrinkle should never be so large and heavy that it pushed the nose down or scars the eye.

HEAD I

This equally typical profile is similar to Head H except that, as with Head B, the wrinkle does not carry unbroken across the muzzle. Forehead, nose, upper lip and chin are on the same plane.

This dog's correct firm underjaw is an important Peke characteristic. A slightly undershot bit, producing desired level lips and a firm underjaw, is not specified in the AKC (or any) Peke standard.

HEAD J

I have included this inferior head to illustrate in profile the effect on the muzzle and nose of a very heavy, sausage-type, unbroken roll. This over-nose type of wrinkle passes across the nose, its heavy weight forcing the nose down and away from the face.

The heavy weight of the sausage wrinkle has also been known to spill over the nose in an unattractive manner, partially closing or covering nostrils. This thick wrinkle has also, by its close proximity to the eyeball, been responsible for eye blemishes.

MASK

"Black masks and spectacles around the eyes with lines to ears are desirable." A future CKC standard revision may expand, as I have done in this article, to specifically include black pigment on lips and eye rims. I have refrained from drawing masks in order that features can be more easily seen.

DECISION

Head B, Head C and bitch Head E are typical. It was necessary because of diverse opinion confusion and preference to illustrate broken and unbroken wrinkle without prejudice. Considering all other head features, as long as wrinkle is not heavy, the issue of broken or unbroken does not seem that important. Any failing between the aforementioned three, in head profile or body, should influence more than a wrinkle preference. I prefer Head A over Head D.

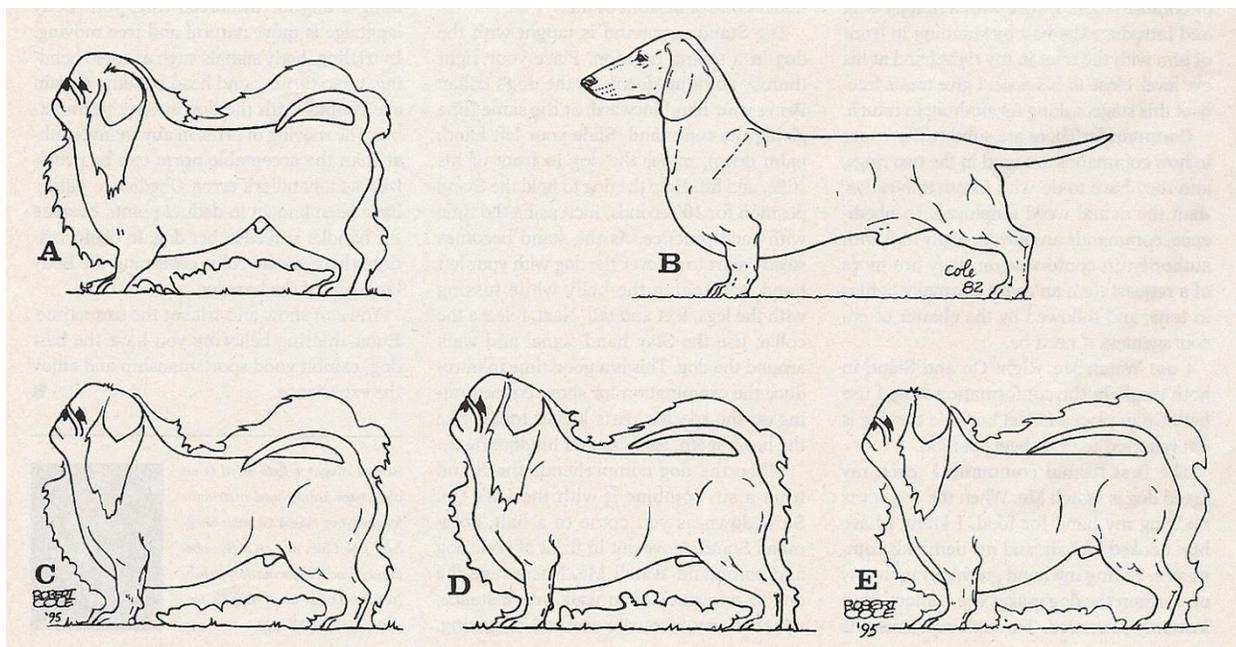
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Now for something completely different. Pretend you are part of a breed-education committee that has been charged with the task of publishing a series of Pekingese outlines stacked in profile and face-on. You have an artist – me. I have drawn a progression of body outlines in profile, silhouetted under the profuse coat, for you to choose from, and provided two face-on illustrations. Select the one profile and one face-on drawing you believe are most correct.



BRITISH STANDARD AND AMERICAN PROPOSAL

A number of the changes proposed by the Pekingese Club of America have been in effect in the British standard since 1986. The proposed American revision provides a more detailed working and serves here as a basis for illustrating an interpretation of correct structure under the profuse coat. Where the 1995 proposal conflicts with the 1986 British standard (Canada currently uses the 1956 American standard), I shall give you the option of deciding for yourself which description is correct.

PROPORTIONS

Your Committee is in agreement as to the correct head in profile and face-on, and aside from semantics there is no conflict between the wording in the proposed American and the British standards with respect to the head.

Your committee, however, is not in unanimous agreement with the American proposal that the “length of the body from the front of the breast bone in a straight line to the buttocks, is slightly greater than height at the withers” because John A. Vlasto’s ‘model-body’ drawing (Dog A), which has represented correct for decades, is 40 per cent, or two-fifths, longer in body than height.

DOG A

Dog A is a fair facsimile from Vlasto’s classic *The Popular Pekingese* (New York: Arco, 1961). Vlasto recommended a length-to-height ratio of 5 to 3 (40% longer in body). Many Peke specialists agree with Vlasto’s 5-to-3 ratio while at the same time calling for a short body. Be that as it may, Vlasto’s drawing conveys the essence of Pekingese. Later artists Prudence Walker and Marg and Peggy Davidson followed his lead and we will do the same, but first I would ask you to study the drawing of Dog B.

DOG B

This is the Standard Smooth Dachshund in profile I produced for the AKC 35-mm slide package a number of years ago. The absence of a profuse coat made determining correct proportions much easier. Using this smooth-coated breed as an example, there are nine features I ask you to note in regard to how you are going to depict the correct Pekingese – ie. neck, forechest, foreleg, topline, croup, tail set-on, tuck-up, last rib and hind leg. Your Peke-in-profile depiction should close the length, shape and position of all nine features.

DOG C

The updated version is based on Vlasto's mode. The topline is now the proposed "level"; the tail set-on is depicted as proposed. "The base of the tail is set high"; the last rib is now indicated; the sloped upper arm has been added; and the "short, thick and heavy-boned" forearm now provides vertical support with the elbow positioned above the brisket. The neck continues to be (unanimously) very short and thick; the croup (no mention) is slightly sloped; and the tail curls over to either side, as described in the British standard.

DOG D

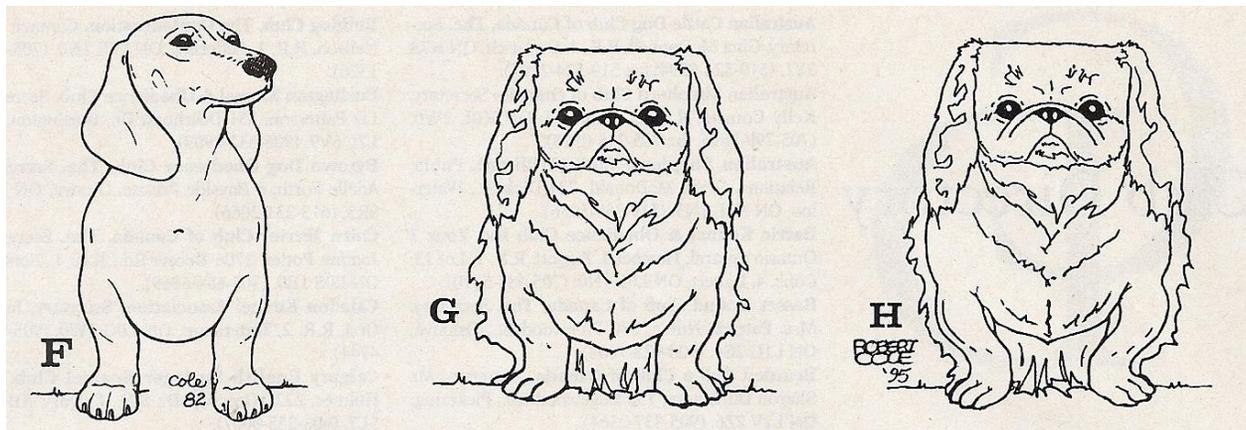
The tail of Dog D conforms to the proposal: "The base of the tail is set high; the remainder is carried well over the center of the back. Long, profuse straight feathering may fall to either side" (I think this British/American tail carriage difference will create a tempest in a teacup). The front feet are large, flat and slightly turned out, and the slightly sloped front pasterns are strong, the dog standing on his feet rather than on his wrists. The hind legs are lighter than the front legs.

To conform to the norm for most breeds, I have given Dog D more forechest in order to position the elbow more rearward and place the foreleg support more under the shoulder blade. The result is a more balanced front that conflicts with the proposed wording "little or no protruding chest bone."

The traditional sloped—angle depiction of the rear pastern has been positioned vertically; like that of the Dachshund. Pekes that stand slightly but firmly sickle-hocked (but produce good rearward extension at the trot) no longer give me cause for concern, and will not until Peke specialists come forth and decree this unorthodox static hindquarter support a fault.

DOG E

This drawing conforms to the British wording (less compromised "slightly curved over back to either side" tail) and to the proposed American wording. But as your breed committee was of the split opinion from the start that a 5-3 body length to height was too long for both the British standard ("body short") and the proposed American standard (length "slightly greater" than height), I reduced length to a 4.5-to-3 ratio.



WRAP-AROUND FRONT

It was mentioned that Dog C's elbow is set above the brisket (like Dachshund Dog B). This high position departs from the level-with-brisket elbow position of normal dogs. The Pekingese is one of a half-dozen breeds with forelegs that wrap around the body. How much the foreleg wraps around the Peke's body is a clouded issue.

DOG F

This face-on Standard Smooth Dachshund is the correct Dachshund (Dog B) in profile, turned so we can examine his classic wrap-around front. The whole of his forearm wraps closely around the ribcage. Viewed

face-on, the only straight part of the foreleg is between the wrist and the paw, whereas the foreleg of normal breeds is straight from elbow to paw.

DOG G

This Peke's front is similar to that of the dachshund, the "elbow always close to the body" as required by the proposed American standard, and "firm at the shoulder" as required by the British. Like the Dachshund, this Peke's ribcage fits closely against the inside length of forearm from elbow to wrist. The proposed wording advises only that "the pear-shaped (from above) and compact body is heavy in front with well sprung ribs slung between the forelegs"; it doesn't say that the broad (barrel?) chest rests on the forearm down to the wrist, nor does the British standard.

DOG H

This Peke is similar to the first face-on example, right down to the close-to-body elbows. Then the front changes. Instead of the whole of the forearm in contact with the ribcage, only the portion near the elbow fits closely; the lower portion stands away from the body. This drawing is similar to Vlasto's "correct front and forelegs" on pages 36 and 37 of his 1961 edition.

OPINION

I agree with the proposed wording that the neck is short and thick; that the broad chest should have little or no protruding chest bone; that the topline is level; that the elbows are always close to body; that the short, thick forearm is slightly bowed between elbow and wrist; and that the large, flat feet turn slightly out in front and (in Canada only) in rear. However, there are a number of parts hidden under the profuse coat that do not receive mention in any Peke standard, parts that are of structural importance to judges more familiar with other breeds.

I am of the opinion that, in addition to the present official wording, the standards should add that the upper arm (the humerus) angles back from point of shoulder down to elbow (a part of the foreleg often neglected); that the broad, pear-shaped body is also barrel shaped; that there is a slight forward slope to the short front pasterns; and that, standing, the heavy front of a *mature* specimen rests on the forearms. As to whether the tail curves slightly back to either side or is carried well over centre of the back is of little structural importance, as long as it is set on high.