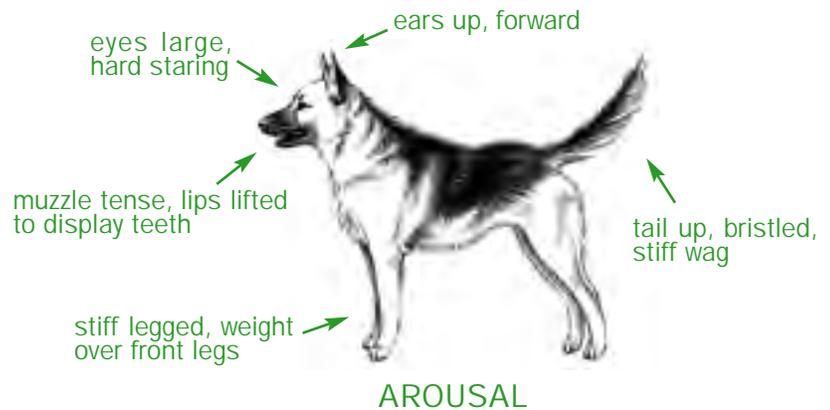
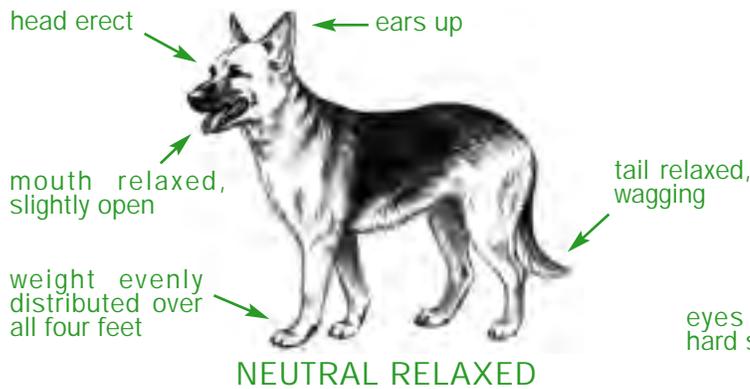




Reading Canine Body Postures

While dogs cannot speak, they do display their state of mind via their body language. By taking careful note of ear position, pupil dilation, facial tension (particularly around the muzzle and forehead), tail carriage and body weight distribution, an observer can detect whether a dog is relaxed or fearful, or acting in a submissive or dominant manner toward the observer.



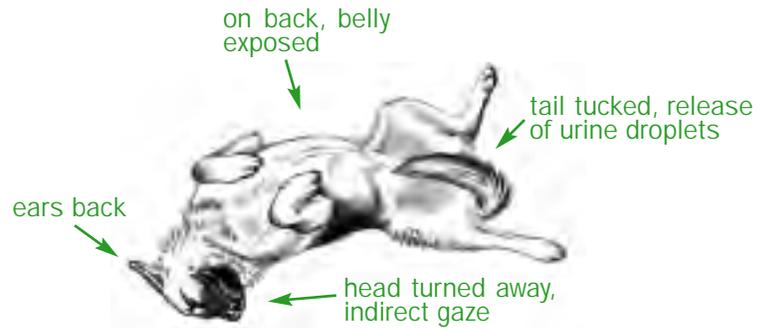
This threatening posture is used to chase another away or, if need be, to attack in order to protect possessions, pack or self.

The dog has been stimulated by something in his environment. When the dog is excited by something pleasurable, the hackles will be down and the tail will be carried a little lower and will loosely wag. The muzzle will be relaxed and the tongue may be seen. This posture may be displayed to subordinates in order to express higher ranking pack position.



ACTIVE SUBMISSION

This pacifying posture is used when a dog acknowledges another dog or human's higher social ranking, or to inhibit another's aggression.



PASSIVE SUBMISSION

Bellying up indicates surrender, a pacifying gesture offered to a more dominant or aggressive individual.



DEFENSIVE AGGRESSION

When fearful, a dog will give warning signals to indicate he does not wish to be approached. If, unheeded, he will bite to protect himself.

Dog-to-Dog Communication



When dog meets dog, they signal their status in relation to each other. Actions like raising a forepaw, looking away, licking or nudging at the other's muzzle or bowing with the forelegs are submissive gestures. Mounting, raising up stiffly on one's toes, or placing one's head over another's withers (the place where the neck meets the back) indicate the more dominate individual of that interaction.

mother quickly snarls and places mouth around muzzle or head of puppy

puppy submits by flattening to the ground and whimpering

tail tucked

paw raised

MATERNAL CORRECTION

A mother dog will discipline a pup with a quick muzzle grasp. The pup learns to offer submissive body postures.



tail up, loosely wagging

ears up

eyes soft

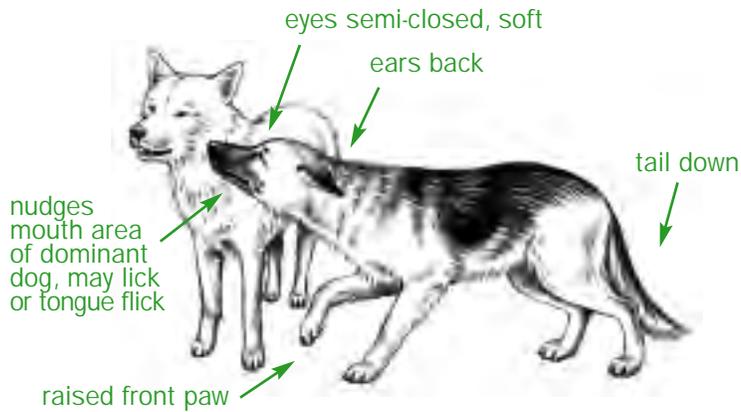
mouth open and relaxed, tongue exposed

front end lowered, ready to leap forward



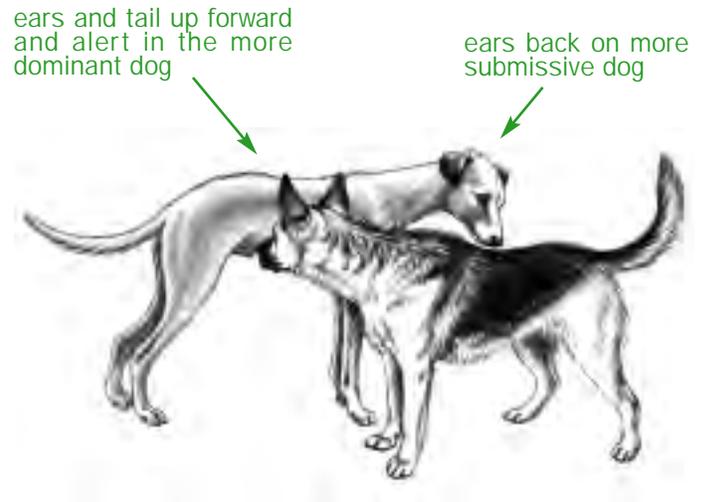
PLAY SOLICITATION

The play bow is a combination of dominant and submissive gestures. It is offered to invite another to play or as part of courtship behavior.



GREETING BEHAVIOR

A submissive dog may greet a more dominant dog with a muzzle nudge as an appeasement (pacifying) gesture.



GREETING POSTURE

Dogs sniff each other's genital region when greeting to gather information on sexual status.