



WHAT IS A BORDER COLLIE? IS IT THE RIGHT DOG FOR ME?

A Border Collie is the ultimate working sheepdog, developed to move hundreds and even thousands of sheep across the hills and dales of Great Britain, with minimal guidance from his handler. Invaluable companions to the solitary shepherds, these devoted workaholics were designed solely to perform this difficult and endless task with only a "that'll do" as a reward. This trait continues to drive the breed today, thanks to the efforts of shepherds and fanciers who strive to preserve the working instinct in this ancient breed.

Want to know more about the history and development of the Border Collie? Visit [The Border Collie Museum](#).



... Is Socially Autistic

Brilliant, but unable to handle every day social environments, unlike the majority of today's dog breeds the **Border Collie was not developed with pet temperament in mind. The primary motivation for breeding a Border Collie is working ability; which derives from a high predator drive** – uniformity of physical type, size, colour and pet temperament are all secondary considerations. Because of this, the Border Collie does **not** typically have a necessarily desirable personality for most pet home environments.

New owners enamored with the reputed intelligence of the breed are often disappointed to discover that their dog is not the outgoing, perpetually happy, even-tempered Labrador of their childhood. It is not uncommon for Border Collies to be abnormally shy or reserved with strangers, or to develop obsessive and even aggressive tendencies. Excessive socialization in puppies sometimes helps, but not always. **The Border Collie was not developed to be a family house pet.**



... "Type A" Personalities

Given their penchant for controlling livestock, many a Border Collie has been dubbed "The Enforcer" or "The Fun Police" by its owner. A Border Collie is bound to take charge of a situation if given the slightest opportunity to do so. He cannot stand disorder or chaos - after all, this is a dog that can intimidate an entire herd of sheep for hours at a time. He will round up the other dogs at the park, or disdainfully reject their playful advances altogether. He'll prefer a regimented game of fetch. He'll often become frustrated with the activity of the

family children and endeavor to put an end to it - this is when most incidents involving children and Border Collie bites occur. **Without a strong leader and firm ground rules, a Border Collie may feel compelled to "take over"** and this is how most undesirable behaviors develop than can lead to the creation of a very mal-adjusted, problem dog.



... If It's Not A Border Collie, It's Just A Dog

With their undeniable intelligence and exceptional problem solving skills, Border Collies are often considered by serious fanciers to be a step or two beyond the average family dog. Sensitive and bright, these dogs have often given their owner the feeling that they can read their mind. They can understand phrases, spell words, respond to the subtlest of cues and anticipate your next move - an uneasy feeling for most people. Imagine having an exceptionally intelligent human child, and the effort you would have to make in order to mentally and emotionally satisfy that child. Consider a Border Collie to be the canine equivalent of a child genius - fascinating, but exhausting, and requiring a great deal of responsibility on your part. Are you up to it? **Staying even one step ahead of a Border Collie can be a full time job.** Most people are ill prepared for a dog that is this challenging.

Want to know more about what it's like to live with a border collie? Try the [Border Collie FAQ](#).



So Who Should Own a Border Collie?

Serious stock people: flock owners and cattle ranchers, committed to having a trained working partner - and dedicated hobby herders - are ideal companions for the Border Collie. Most fanciers agree that whenever possible, the dogs should be given the opportunity to do the work for which they were designed - and what they truly love - to do. If you're thinking about a Border Collie, take the time to watch a Herding Trial and ask yourself (honestly now) if you feel you can provide your dog with the same physical and emotional stimulation that these working marvels get from their duties....

Dog sports enthusiasts tend to be fans of the Border Collie and can provide a good *substitute for herding* by participating in competitive dog sports activities. Channeling a Border Collie's natural athleticism and his need to use his brain in activities such as [Agility](#) and [Flyball](#) is a great way to use his speed and competitive spirit to everyone's advantage. Always versatile, a well socialized Border Collie can excel at [Search and Rescue](#), serve as an [Assistance Dog](#), and be trained in Tracking and Competitive Obedience (*note: Border Collies are not recognized by the Canadian Kennel Club and are therefore ineligible to*

*participate in CKC sanctioned competitions. In Canada, purebred Border Collies are registered with **CBCA**: the Canadian Border Collie Association Registry.)*

If an owner is creative and willing to make the effort to provide the dog with both mentally and physically challenging activities, a Border Collie can be the best companion on earth.



... Border Collies

They stare at you, follow you from room to room, thrust soggy tennis balls in your sleeping face, demand attention, listen to your telephone conversations, wake you up for predawn runs, drive your cats crazy, refuse to play by themselves, snub the neighborhood dogs. They are pushy, fussy, weird, obsessive and downright strange.

So why do we love Border Collies?

Because we have immense respect for them, and for those who, for more than 200 years, have bred them to excel in their work of controlling and moving livestock in partnership with their human handler. Intelligent, busy, challenging and full of joy, we respect them as companions, as partners and most of all, as individuals who seem to unconsciously know that “they were put on this earth to do a job...” We wouldn't have it any other way! There is no good reason to try and turn the Border Collie into something it's not. Breeding them as pets and thus selecting for traits so as to minimize their working drive, does the breed a huge disservice - to them and to us. There are literally dozens of other breeds that exist to satisfy the typical family setting. If this describes you, do yourself and the Border Collie a favor - choose a breed more appropriate for you.

Still think a border collie is the dog for you? Have you considered adopting a Border Collie in need of an active family home through a Border Collie Rescue association? The above information was adapted from the **INDEPENDENT BORDER COLLIE RESCUE ORGANIZATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**. For further information about available dogs and adoption, go to their site at the following address: <http://www.bcbordercollies.com>

Otherwise, plan to contact a reputable breeder and be prepared for them to rigorously screen you as a candidate for one of their dogs ...

Don't think a border collie is what you're looking for? Visit brindleweb.com to find a rescue dog perfect for your lifestyle, or seek other responsible breeders of companion dogs.