

The **dog** (*Canis familiaris* or *Canis lupus familiaris*) is a **domesticated** descendant of the **gray wolf**. Also called the **domestic dog**, it was **selectively bred** from an **extinct** population of wolves during the **Late Pleistocene** by **hunter-gatherers**. The dog was the first **species** to be domesticated by **humans**, over 14,000 years ago and before the **development of agriculture**. Experts estimate that due to their long association with humans, dogs have gained the ability to thrive on a **starch-rich** diet that would be inadequate for other **canids**.

Dogs have been bred for desired behaviors, sensory capabilities, and physical attributes. **Dog breeds** vary widely in shape, size, and color. They have the same number of bones (with the exception of the tail), powerful jaws that house around 42 teeth, and well-developed **senses of smell**, hearing, and sight. Compared to humans, dogs have an inferior **visual acuity**, a superior sense of smell, and a relatively large **olfactory cortex**. They perform many roles for humans, such as **hunting**, **herding**, **pulling loads**, **protection**, **companionship**, **therapy**, **aiding disabled people**, and **assisting police** and the **military**.

