

THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210223-self-awareness.html>

Have you ever wondered what animals think about? A team of scientists explored this question by investigating whether dogs have self-awareness. Researchers from a university in Hungary set out to determine whether canines have a sense of self and of body awareness. Researcher Peter Pongracz explained why his team conducted the study. He said: "Self-awareness is a rather poorly investigated area of dog cognition." He added: "Body awareness is a mental capacity to organize someone's action by taking in consideration their own body exists." His test put dogs in situations that would make them aware of their body position. The study is published in the journal "Scientific Reports".

The scientists conducted tests on 54 dogs. The dogs had to respond to commands from their owners. Researchers attached a toy to a mat and asked the dog to give the toy to its owner. The dog had to understand it would be unable to take the toy to its owner unless it got off the mat first. Many of the dogs understood the issue and got off the mat to complete the task. The researchers said this showed a sense of body awareness. They wrote that body awareness is, "the ability to hold information about one's own body in mind, as an explicit object, in relation to other objects in the world". They said this is "one of the fundamental building blocks of self-representation" and that the dogs in the tests exhibited this.

Sources: <https://www.inverse.com/science/dog-body-awareness-study>
<https://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/are-dogs-self-aware-scientists-say-there-s-a-good-chance-1.5317364>
<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/lifestyle/do-dogs-have-self-awareness/>

WARM-UPS

1. SELF-AWARENESS: Students walk around the class and talk to other students about self-awareness. Change partners often and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

wondered / scientists / question / dogs / self-awareness / body / cognition / journal / tests / commands / owners / mat / information / object / building blocks / mind

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. DOG RESEARCH: Students A **strongly** believe research into dog self-awareness is important; Students B **strongly** believe it isn't. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

4. ANIMALS: What do you think these animals think about? What special skills do they have? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	Thoughts	Skills
Dogs		
Ants		
Dolphins		
Rabbits		
Snakes		
Eagles		

5. THINK: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "think". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. PETS: Rank these with your partner. Put the best pets at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Dog
- Goldfish
- Rabbit
- Tarantula
- Cat
- Parrot
- Horse
- Tortoise

VOCABULARY MATCHING

Paragraph 1

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1. wondered | a. Inquired into or discussed a subject or issue in detail. |
| 2. explored | b. Find out exactly, usually as a result of research or calculation. |
| 3. canine | c. Live: be on Earth. |
| 4. determine | d. Related to or resembling a dog or dogs. |
| 5. cognition | e. The ability or power to do, experience, or understand something. |
| 6. capacity | f. Desired or was curious to know something. |
| 7. exists | g. The mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding. |

Paragraph 2

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 8. respond | h. An order to do something. |
| 9. command | i. An important topic or problem for debate or discussion. |
| 10. issue | j. Showed. |
| 11. sense | k. Stated clearly and in detail, leaving no room for confusion or doubt. |
| 12. explicit | l. A function of the mind and body by which someone or knows and understands an external stimulus. |
| 13. fundamental | m. Say or do something in reply. |
| 14. exhibited | n. Basic. |

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210223-self-awareness.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. A team of scientists investigated self-analysis in dogs. **T / F**
- b. Researchers looked into whether canines had a sense of body awareness. **T / F**
- c. A researcher said there is much research into dog cognition. **T / F**
- d. The study is published in a journal called "Canine Reports". **T / F**
- e. The research looked at self-awareness in over 540 dogs. **T / F**
- f. Dogs had to get off a mat and take a toy to their owner. **T / F**
- g. A researcher said dogs understand they are an explicit object. **T / F**
- h. Researchers said dogs exhibited self-representation in tests. **T / F**

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms. The words in **bold** are from the news article.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. wondered | a. conscious |
| 2. explored | b. thought |
| 3. canines | c. feeling |
| 4. cognition | d. basic |
| 5. aware | e. reflected on |
| 6. commands | f. fixed |
| 7. attached | g. dogs |
| 8. sense | h. orders |
| 9. fundamental | i. showed |
| 10. exhibited | j. investigated |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. scientists explored | a. exhibited this |
| 2. canines | b. capacity |
| 3. a rather poorly | c. tests on 54 dogs |
| 4. mental | d. hold information |
| 5. The study is published in the | e. have a sense |
| 6. The scientists conducted | f. to other objects |
| 7. respond to commands | g. journal "Scientific Reports" |
| 8. the ability to | h. from their owners |
| 9. in relation | i. investigated area |
| 10. dogs in the tests | j. this question |

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210223-self-awareness.html>

1. Where is the university that conducted this research?
2. What did a researcher say was poorly investigated?
3. What kind of capacity did a researcher say body awareness is?
4. What did the tests try to make dogs aware of?
5. What is the name of the journal the study is published in?
6. How many dogs did scientists have in the tests?
7. What did dogs have to give to their owners?
8. What did many of the dogs understand?
9. What thing did a researcher say self-awareness allowed us to hold?
10. What kinds of blocks were mentioned in the article?

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210223-self-awareness.html>

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'dog' and 'aware'.

dog	aware

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• wondered• university• explained• area• action• position	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 54• respond• understand• task• mind• exhibited
--	---

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'dog'?
3. What do you think of dogs?
4. What do you know about self-awareness?
5. How self-aware are you?
6. How self-aware do you think dogs are?
7. How intelligent are dogs?
8. What do you think dogs think about?
9. What do you think dogs worry about?
10. What questions would you like to ask a dog?

Dogs may be self-aware – 23rd February, 2021
Thousands more free lessons at breakingnewsenglish.com

DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'self'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What do you think of the expression: 'A dog is man's best friend'?
15. Is a dog or a cat a better pet?
16. How can we make dogs more self-aware?
17. How important is this research?
18. How would life change if you were more self-aware?
19. What questions might dogs like to ask humans?
20. What questions would you like to ask the researchers?