



The Dog Days of Summer

of stars. The images drawn were dependent upon the culture: the Chinese saw different images than the Native Americans, who saw different pictures than the Europeans. These star pictures are now called constellations. They saw images of bears (Ursa Major and Ursa Minor), twins (Gemini), a bull (Taurus), and others, including dogs (Canis Major and Canis Minor).

The brightest of the stars in Canis Major (the big dog) is Sirius, which also happens

to be the brightest star in the night sky. In fact, it is so bright that the ancient Romans thought that the earth received heat from it. In the summer, Sirius, the “dog star,” rises and sets with the sun. During late July, Sirius is in conjunction with the sun, and the ancients believed that its heat added to the heat of the sun, creating a stretch of hot and sultry weather. They named this period of time, from 20 days before the conjunction to 20 days after, “dog days” after the dog star. ☼

Everyone knows that the hottest and muggiest part of the season is called the “dog days of summer,” but where does the term come from? Why do we call the hot, sultry days of summer “dog days”?

In ancient times, different groups of people in different parts of the world drew images in the sky by “connecting the dots”

How Well Do You Know Your Dog Breeds?

1. Hola! I am the smallest breed of dog, and the oldest breed in North America. I weigh between two and ten pounds and am often seen being carried under some celebrity’s arm.

- a. Maltese
- b. Chihuahua
- c. Doberman
- d. Great Dane

2. Hello. I am one of the most intelligent dog breeds and am popular with many people. I come in three different sizes. My original purpose was for hunting game, but today most people just give me silly haircuts and take me to shows.

- a. Puli
- b. Scottish Terrier
- c. Poodle
- d. American Eskimo

3. Cheerio! I’m sure you’ll recognize me. I am in many cartoons, movies, and am the unofficial canine mascot of Great Britain, as my name suggests. Although my wrinkled face may make me look mean, I am one of the sweetest and most gentle breeds.

- a. English Bulldog
- b. English Setter
- c. Scottish Terrier
- d. Norwich Terrier

4. Hi there! I am the only breed with its own motto: “Multo in Parvo,” meaning “a lot of dog in a small space.” It’s hard to resist my cute, wrinkled little face and my curly tail.

- a. Boston Terrier
- b. Golden Retriever
- c. Pug
- d. Beagle

5. Top o’the mornin’ to you! As my name suggests, I come from Ireland. I am a bird-hunting dog who loves to run and walk. I have a shiny, glossy coat, which requires weekly grooming.

- a. Irish Wolfhound
- b. Irish Setter
- c. Irish Terrier
- d. Irish Water Spaniel

6. Hey, mon! Check out my dreadlocks! Aren’t they cool? They’re a lot of work, though, and I require a lot of grooming. If you want to own me, you had better like dog grooming, because I may take up to an hour to bathe and three days to dry!

- a. Chihuahua
- b. Puli
- c. Scottish Terrier
- d. German Shepherd

7. Howdy! My name is Frank—short for frankfurter. I am a member of the hound family, and my ancestors used to hunt badgers. A famous American writer said I was “a half-dog high and a dog-and-a-half long.”

- a. Shih Tzu
- b. Dachshund
- c. Newfoundland
- d. Schnauzer

8. Hello. Aren’t I pretty? Don’t you like my pretty bows that mommy has put in my long, white hair to keep it out of my eyes?

Although I have long silky hair, I don’t shed, but I do require a lot of grooming.

- a. Pekingese
- b. Norweigan Elkhound
- c. Bichon Fries
- d. Maltese

9. Greetings! I am a huge, friendly breed, often called the “gentle giant.” Despite my name, my origin is German. The most famous one of my kind stars in his own cartoon and rides in a groovy van.

- a. Great Dane
- b. Labrador Retriever
- c. Irish Wolfhound
- d. Newfoundland

10. Aroo! That’s my attempt at a bark. I don’t really know how to bark. I am a short cutie with a curly tail that comes from exotic Africa.

- a. Akita
- b. Sheepdog
- c. Basenji
- d. Poodle

Books for the Dog Days of Summer

Because of Winn-Dixie by Katie DiCamillo

During her first summer in Naomi, Florida, good things happen to India Opal Buloni because of her big ugly dog Winn-Dixie. (Juvenile Fiction)

Do Your Ears Hang Low: A Love Story illustrated by Caroline Jayne Church

Two long-eared dogs use their heads, or their ears, to bring the traditional song “Do Your Ears Hang Low” to life. (Easy Fiction)

Dog’s Colorful Day by Emma Dodd

Count from one to ten during Dog’s colorful but messy adventure. (Easy Fiction).

Harry the Dirty Dog by Gene Zion

Harry escapes bath time and revels in getting as dirty as he possibly can. Will his family recognize him when he comes home? (Easy Fiction).

Shiloh by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Marty finds a mistreated stray dog that he is determined to care for and keep. The owner wants him back, and Marty’s family doesn’t want another mouth to feed. (Juvenile Fiction).

Tornado by Betsy Byars

While waiting out a storm, the family’s farmhand, Pete, tells stories of growing up with his dog Tornado. Tornado landed in Pete’s back yard, and his heart, dog house and all, during a twister. (Juvenile Fiction).

Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls

A young boy in the Ozarks trains two redbone hounds as hunting dogs. He falls in love with them, and they change his life. (Juvenile Fiction).

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