

Scientists Explain Why People Love "Puppy Dog Eyes"

"Puppy dog eyes" have a specific purpose, new research shows: to help man's best friend bond with his human carers.

A study carried out at the University of Portsmouth in the UK compared the faces of domesticated dogs with those of their ancestors, wolves, from which dogs separated around 33,000 years ago. The faces were found to be almost the same in structure. However, one very interesting difference was noted. Nearly all dogs have a different muscle around their eyes, which is mostly missing in wolves.

Our canine friends can use their unique eye muscle to imitate sadness, which makes humans want to care for them. Every dog owner knows how charming that look can be; therefore, people may have selected animals with the most expressive eyes—probably without realizing we were doing so—when we were breeding dogs as pets. The ones that could best communicate with us therefore had a major advantage.

It seems that even dogs themselves know the power of a wide-eyed gaze, as previous research suggests that they move their eyebrows much more when people are looking at them.

QUESTIONS

1. Researchers say that dogs' and wolves' faces _____.
 - a) are identical
 - b) are not very different
 - c) are different in many ways
2. Which animals can use their eyes to imitate sadness, according to the article?
 - a) dogs
 - b) wolves
 - c) both of the above
3. How do dogs show happiness?
 - a) a wide-eyed gaze
 - b) eyebrow movements
 - c) This is not mentioned in the passage.
4. In which country was research conducted on dogs' and wolves' faces?
