

DOG-ESE

Dogs just can't open their mouths and clearly tell us what's on their minds. Fluffy are you afraid? Fido are you mean? Fifi do you want to play? No answer.

Since dogs communicate mainly through body language, understanding "dog speak" can be a major milestone in keeping safe around dogs.

How do dogs speak?

While dogs don't use words like humans do, they do make noises that have meaning.

Whines can indicate a dog that is anxious or afraid. It can mean that the dog is over excited similar to our kids after eating way too much candy.

Barks can range from a friendly invitation to an order "Woof, don't make me bite you, back off now!"

Growls, especially very low pitched growls coming deep from the dog's throat, are almost always a very stern warning not to bother that dog. Some breeds and types of dogs may growl while playing.

Since there is no dictionary to tell us what all the various noises dogs make might mean, step two of learning "dog-ese", is learning to read a dog's body language. Taking the time to learn how to read a dog's ear position, tail position, body position, eyes, mouth and so on is absolutely invaluable to learning how to stay safe around your own dog and strange dogs.

Take a look for yourself at the Canine Body Language diagrams and learn to look for those same behaviors in the dogs you see everyday around you.