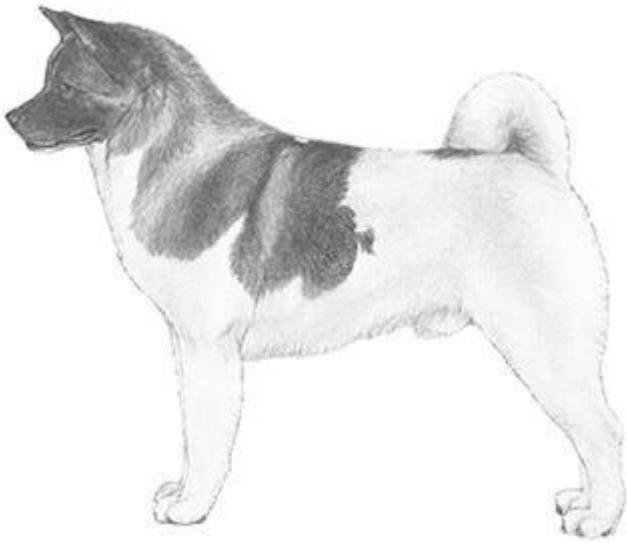
FEDERATION CYNOLOGIQUE INTERNATIONALE (AISBL)
SECRETARIAT GENERAL: 13, Place Albert 1er B – 6530 Thuin (Belgique)

24.04.2026/ EN

FCI-Standard N° 344

AMERICAN AKITA



ORIGIN: Japan.

DEVELOPMENT: USA.

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICIAL VALID STANDARD: 11.02.2026.

UTILIZATION: Companion Dog.

FCI-CLASSIFICATION: Group 5 Spitz and primitive types.
Section 5 Asian Spitz and related breeds.
Without working trial.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY: In the beginning, the history of the American Akitas is similar to the history of Japanese Akitas. Since 1603, in the Akita region, Akita Matagis (medium-sized bear-hunting dogs) were used as fighting dogs. From 1868, Akita Matagis were crossbred with Tosas and Mastiffs. Consequently, the size of Akitas increased, but characteristics associated with Spitz type were lost. In 1908 dog fighting was prohibited, but Akitas were nevertheless preserved and improved as a large Japanese breed. As a result, nine superior examples of Akitas were designated as « Natural Monuments » in 1931.
During World War II (1939-1945), it was common to use dogs as a source of fur for military garments. The police ordered the capture and confiscation of all dogs other than German Shepherd Dogs used for military purposes. Some fanciers tried to circumvent the order by crossbreeding their dogs with German Shepherd Dogs. When World War II ended, Akitas had been drastically reduced in number and existed as three distinct types: 1) Matagi Akitas 2) Fighting Akitas 3) Shepherd Akitas. This created a very confusing situation in the breed. During the restoration process of the pure breed after the war, Kongo-go of the Dewa line enjoyed a temporary, but tremendous popularity. Many Akitas of the Dewa line, which exhibited characteristics of the Mastiff and German Shepherd influence, were brought back to the United States by members of the Military Forces.

The Akitas from the Dewa line, intelligent and capable of adapting to different environments, fascinated breeders in the United States and the line was developed with increasing number of breeders and a great rise in popularity.
The Akita Club of America was established in 1956 and the American Kennel Club (AKC) accepted the breed (inscription into the stud book and regular show status) in October 1972. However, at this time, the AKC and the JKC (Japan Kennel Club) did not have reciprocal agreements for recognizing each other's pedigrees and therefore the door was closed for the introduction of the new bloodlines from Japan. Consequently, Akitas in the United States became considerably different from those in Japan, the country of origin. They developed as a type unique in the United States, with characteristics and type unchanged since 1955. This is in sharp contrast with Akitas in Japan which were crossbred with Matagi Akitas for the purpose of restoring the original pure breed.

GENERAL APPEARANCE: Large-sized dog, sturdily built, well balanced, with much substance and heavy bone. The broad head, forming a blunt triangle, with deep muzzle, relatively small eyes and erect ears carried forward almost in line with back of neck, is characteristic of the breed.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS:

- The ratio of height at withers to length of body is 9 to 10 in males and 9 to 11 in bitches.
- The depth of the chest measures one-half of the height of the dog at withers.
- The distance from tip of nose to stop corresponds to the distance from stop to occiput as 2 does to 3.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT: Alert and responsive, dignified and courageous. **American Akitas may be highly responsive of other dogs, particularly of the same sex.**

HEAD: Massive, but in balance with the body, free of wrinkles when at ease. Head forms a blunt triangle when viewed from above.

CRANIAL REGION:
Skull: Flat and broad between ears. A shallow furrow extends well up on forehead.
Stop: Well defined, but not too abrupt.

FACIAL REGION:
Nose: Broad and black. Slight and diffuse lack of pigment on nose is acceptable in white dogs only but black is always preferred.
Muzzle: Broad, deep and full.
Lips: Black. Not pendulous; tongue pink.
Jaws/Teeth: Jaws not rounded, but blunt, strong and powerful. Teeth strong with regular and full dentition (lack of PM1 and M3 allowed). Scissor bite preferred, but level bite acceptable.

EYES: Dark brown, relatively small, not prominent, almost triangular in shape. Eye rims black and tight.

EARS: Strongly erect and small in relation to the rest of the head. If the ear is folded forward for measuring length, tip will touch upper eye rim. Ears are triangular, slightly rounded at tip, wide at base, not set too low. Viewed from the side, the ears are angled forward over the eyes following the line of the neck.

NECK: Thick and muscular with minimal dewlap, comparatively short, widening gradually toward shoulders. A pronounced crest blends harmoniously into the base of skull.

BODY: Longer than high. Skin not too thin, neither too tight nor too loose.
Back: Level.
Loin: Firmly muscled.
Chest: Wide and deep. Ribs well sprung with well developed brisket.
Underline and Belly: Moderate tuck-up.

TAIL: Large and well furnished with hair, set high and carried over back or against flank in a three-quarter, full, or double curl, always dipping to or below level of back.
On a three-quarter curl, tip drops well down on flank. Root large and strong.
The terminal bone of tail reaches hock when let or pulled down. Hair coarse, straight and dense, with no appearance of a plume.

LIMBS

FOREQUARTERS:
General appearance: Forelegs heavy-boned and straight as viewed from front.
Shoulder: Strong and powerful with moderate layback.
Pasterns: Slightly sloping forward in an angle of approximately 15° to the vertical.
Forefeet: Straight, cat feet, well knuckled up with thick pads.

HINDQUARTERS:
General appearance: Strongly muscled, width and bone comparable to forequarters. Dewclaws on hind legs customarily removed.
Upper thigh: Strong, well developed, parallel when viewed from behind.
Stifles: Moderately bent.
Hock joints: Well let down, turning neither in nor out.
Hind feet: Straight, cat feet, well knuckled up with thick pads.

GAIT / MOVEMENT: Powerful, covering ground with moderate reach and drive. Hindlegs move in line with forelegs. Back remaining strong, firm and level.

COAT

Hair: Double-coat. Undercoat thick, soft, dense and shorter than outer coat. Outer coat straight, harsh/stiff and standing somewhat off body. Hair on head, lower legs and ears short. Length of hair at withers and croup approximately 5 cm, which is slightly longer than on rest of body, except tail, where coat is longest and most profuse.

Colour: Any colour like red, fawn, white, etc; or even pinto and brindle. Colours are brilliant and clear, and markings are well balanced, with or without mask or blaze. White dogs (solid in colour) have no mask. Pinto have a white ground colour with large, evenly placed patches covering head and more than one-third of body. Undercoat may have a different colour from the outer-coat.

SIZE:
Height at withers: For males: 66 to 71 cm
for females: 61 to 66 cm

FAULTS: Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog.

- Feminine dogs, masculine bitches.
- Narrow or snipey head.
- Any missing tooth (except PM1 and M3).
- Blue or black spotted tongue.
- Light eyes.
- Short tail.
- In or out at elbows.
- Any indication of ruff or feathering.
- Shyness or viciousness.

SERIOUS FAULTS:

- Light in substance.
- Light bone.

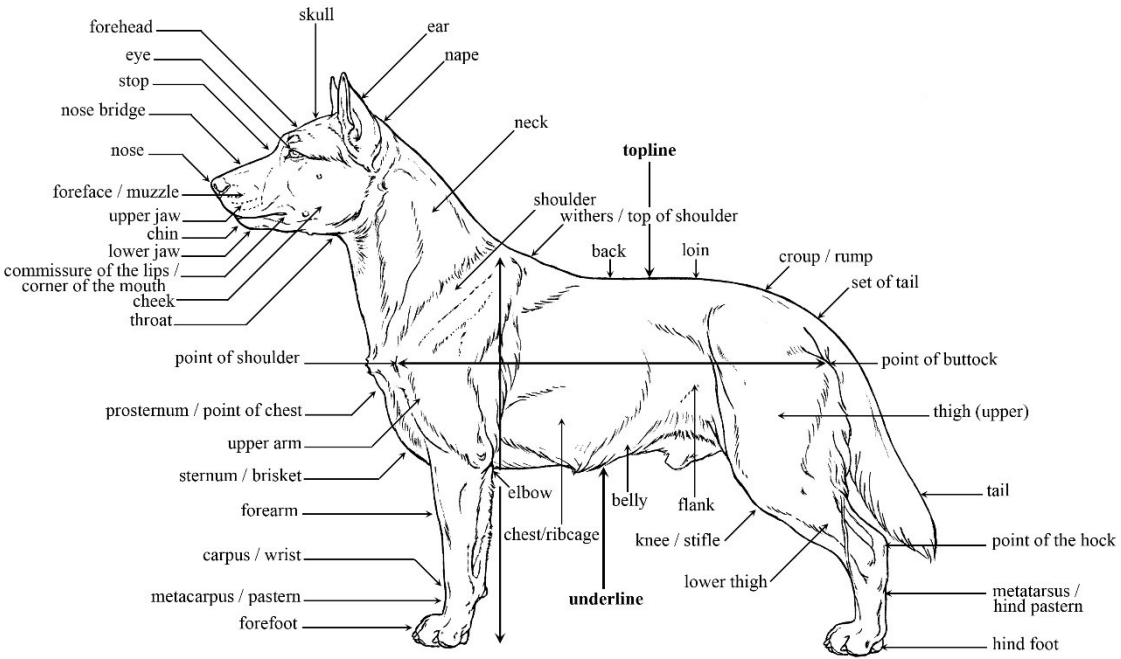
DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- **Merle marking pattern; Liver color.**
- Totally unpigmented nose. A nose with unpigmented areas (Butterfly nose).
- Drop, hanging or folded ears.
- Under- or overshot bite.

- Sickle or uncurled tail.
- Males under 63,5 cm; females under 58,5 cm.

N.B.:

- Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.
- Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.

The latest amendments are in bold characters.

Surface Anatomy