

Level 5

The Australian Kelpie

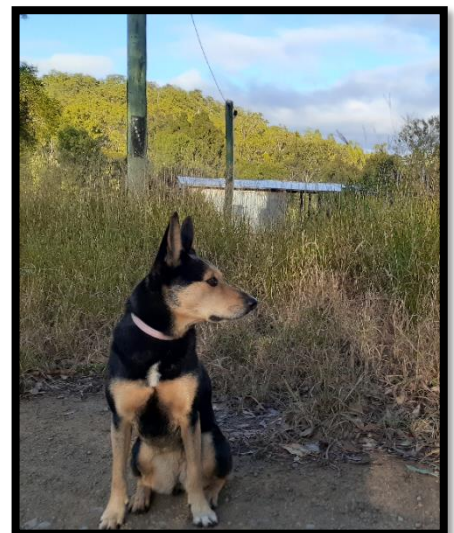
The Australian Kelpie is a very special breed of dog. While its exact origins are unclear, the Kelpie breed began in Scotland. Bred as a working dog, the Kelpie played a significant role in helping to grow Australia's wool industry in the 1800s. To this day, farmers all across Australia use Kelpies to herd sheep, cattle and other livestock from the pasture to the pen, and sometimes to the truck. What is it about the Kelpie that makes it such a successful working dog?

Kelpies have strong limbs and a trim build. Well-developed muscle combined with their athletic build means Kelpies can move at very high speeds; a very important trait when rounding up large herds of sheep. Kelpies also move with great agility and balance. They skilfully jump on top of herds of sheep. This is known as 'sheep backing' and is useful for quickly getting from one side of the herd to the other. It also helps when the dog is moving around in tightly packed pens. The Kelpie's shortish double coat repels the weather. This makes them perfect for working in both hot and cold climates.

Kelpies are hard workers and will work until they drop. Kelpies are independent dogs and will work with very little guidance. They are very alert, eager to please and very loyal. These qualities are very desirable to farmers who need a capable and dedicated helper.

Kelpies are also famed for their high intelligence. They are easy to train which is important because herding sheep is very complex. There are many commands a herding dog needs to remember, such as: 'hold', 'gather' and 'keep distance'. Sheep herding is a dynamic job, meaning situations can change quickly and often. As natural problem solvers, kelpies are capable of handling such challenging situations.

All these points considered, it is easy to see why the Kelpie is such an extraordinary breed of dog. The Australian Kelpie to this day remains a very popular breed in Australia for both families and farmers. Poems have been written and statues have been built to honour the contribution Kelpies have made to Australia. They really are Australia's wonder dogs.



Task A: Comprehension

1. What is 'sheep backing'?

2. Which word from the text means 'to fight off'?

3. Why is moving around on the back of sheep an important skill for a Kelpie?

4. What helps give Kelpies their high speed?

5. What is something about Kelpies that indicates their high intelligence?

6. Do you think Kelpies would make a good family pet? Why or why not?

7. Summarise this text in 20 words or fewer.

Task B: Language and Grammar

1. A **possessive noun** is noun that possesses, owns, or has something. We show possession with an apostrophe.

the Kelpie's coat = the coat of the Kelpie

Add an **apostrophe before the s** to complete the following possessive nouns:

- a. The sheep's back (the back of the sheep)
- b. _____ wonder dog (the wonder dog of Australia)
- c. The _____ dog (the dog of the farmer)
- d. The _____ intelligence (the intelligence of the dog)
- e. _____ climate (the climate of the Australia)

2. **Edit** the following passage for full stops, capital letters, commas and spelling. Rewrite it correctly.

while kelpies are excellent working dogs they can also make loyal and loveing pets its important that they are trained well and kept mentally and fisically stimulated

Task C: Challenge

What are some other ways animals help people? Research service animals and make a list of different animals and the jobs they perform.