



MASKA

DOGNITION REPORT - MAY 09, 2025



A SMOOTH OPERATOR, THE CHARMER RELIES ON HIS SECRET WEAPON - YOU.

Maska can work a problem out on his own as well as anybody, but he prefers to rely on his secret weapon - you. As a Charmer, Maska has exceptional social skills, which means he can read your body language like a book. He is not above using this information to get his own way. Maska is no fool when it comes to independent problem solving, and his scores reflect a keen understanding of the physical world. However, Maska's real genius is that he sees you as an ally and partner, and he will usually turn to you for help before trying to figure out a problem on his own.



THE DOGNITION PROFILE

Usually, when you get test results, you see a score that means you either passed or failed. To compare your results to someone else, you see who got the higher score. This is why your dog didn't take a test. Instead, you played a series of games together - and when you play a game there is more than one way to win. Success often comes from playing to your strengths.

There has recently been a revolution in how we think about intelligence. The Dognition Profile is based on this cutting-edge field called cognitive science. Cognition is the study of how the mind works and draws on many scientific disciplines, from psychology to computer science to neuroscience.

By studying animals, cognitive scientists have made three important discoveries:

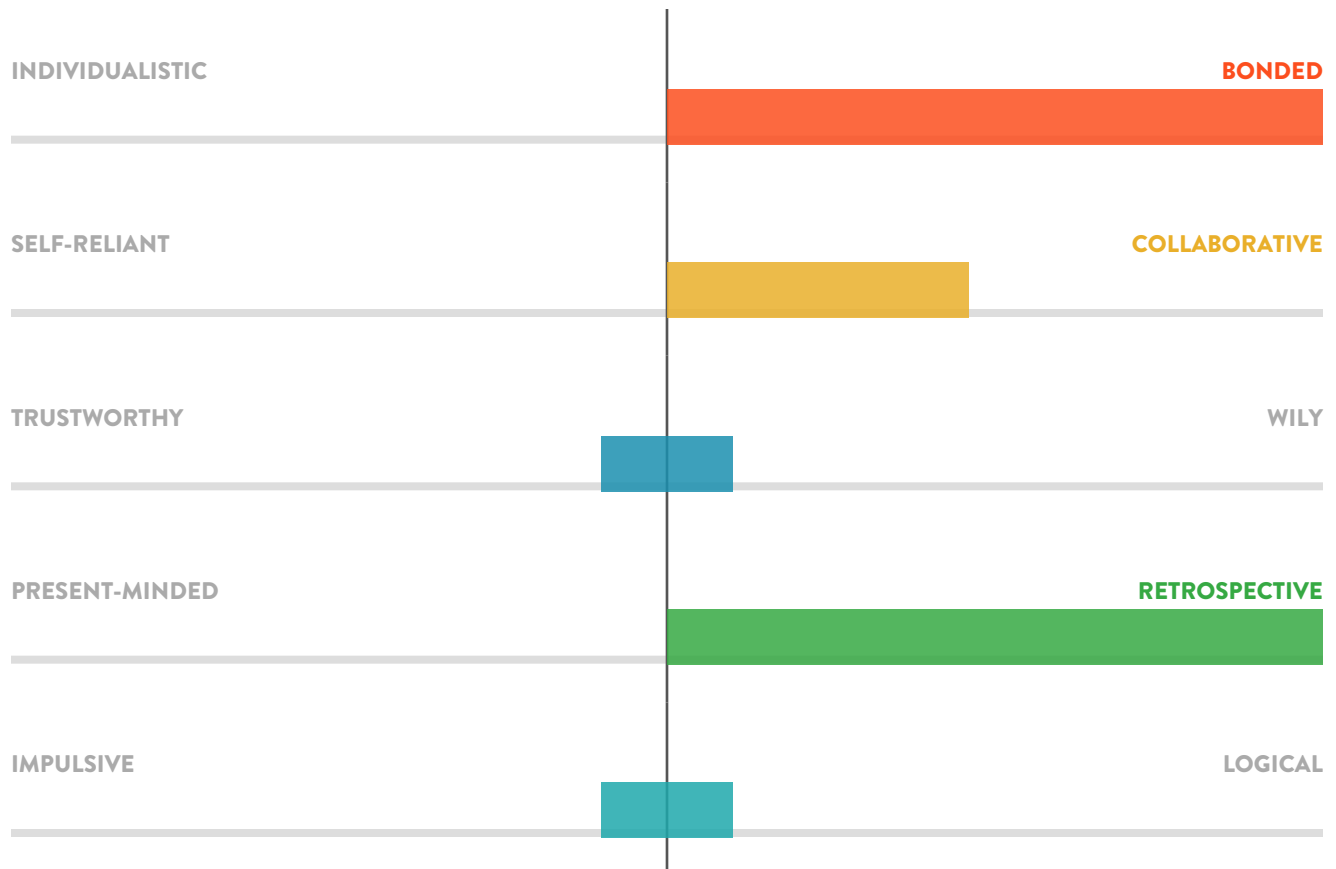
Animals use many types of cognition to survive (learning skills from others, remembering the location of food, inferring the solution to a new problem or deceiving others during competition).

Different animals rely on different cognitive strategies. Asking if a crow is more intelligent than a dolphin is like asking whether a hammer is a better tool than a saw. Each animal has strategies to solve a unique set of problems.

Just because an animal tends to use a certain strategy to solve specific problems doesn't mean he or she will always apply that strategy to all types of problems. Animals rely on a toolbox of strategies that depend on a variety of factors. Dognition gives you insight to the most significant tools that your dog will use on a daily basis to interact with you and the world.

Based on these findings, the Dognition Profile looks at five cognitive dimensions. Rather than counting correct and incorrect answers, the Dognition Profile identifies your dog's cognitive style, and the strategies he relies on to solve a variety of problems. Using this revolutionary new science, the Dognition Profile will give you an unprecedented window into the workings of Maska's mind and reveal his particular genius.

COGNITIVE DIMENSION RESULTS



EMPATHY - Reading and responding to the emotions of others

COMMUNICATION - Using information from others to learn about the environment

CUNNING - Using information from others to avoid detection

MEMORY - Storing past experiences to make future choices

REASONING - Inferring the solution to new problems

EMPATHY

Maska's empathy scores were off the charts. Empathy is the ability to feel what someone else is feeling. Humans are extremely empathetic; it is one of our best qualities. Empathy is not something we are taught; it is present even in young children, growing and strengthening as we get older.

Researchers have recently suggested that other animals also have empathy, or at least a basic form of empathy. If this is true, dogs are an ideal place to look. Humans and dogs go back thousands of years - enough time for the bond between us to develop into something special.

If most dogs are bonded to their owners, Maska absolutely adores you.

FIG.1





YAWN GAME

It is quite impressive that, during a limited amount of time, Maska yawned when you yawned. Humans laugh when we see someone laughing, and we cry when we see someone in distress. Our ability to "catch" the emotions of others is called emotional contagion. A common form of emotional contagion is yawning. If you see, hear or even think about someone yawning, you will probably feel an irresistible urge to yawn. Contagious yawning is related to empathy scores in adults.

If Maska could take a human empathy test, he would probably score quite high! So far, only a few species besides humans have been shown to contagiously yawn. Although dogs may yawn when they are stressed, they also yawn socially. Contagious yawning has been seen in dogs, but not all dogs yawn. It looks like Maska is one of the empathetic ones.

Recent studies have shown that dogs only catch yawns from humans, not other dogs.



EYE CONTACT GAME

In this game, you timed how long Maska held your eye contact. Before babies can hug or speak, they use eye gaze to bond with their mothers. Research with dogs has shown that a similar phenomenon may happen with owners and dogs. Owners whose dogs stared at them for longer had significant increases in the hormone oxytocin. Oxytocin, also known as the "hug hormone," is related to feelings of bonding, pleasure and affection.

Judging by the extraordinary length of time Maska spent gazing soulfully into your eyes, you probably often find him staring at you for no reason. You might wonder if Maska is trying to tell you something, like he is hungry, needs to go to the bathroom or has an opinion on what to do over the weekend. But Maska may not want or need anything - he may be just hugging you with his eyes.

Dogs can even be better than aspirin. Children in a hospital reported that their pain was four times less when they played with a dog than when they spent the same time relaxing.



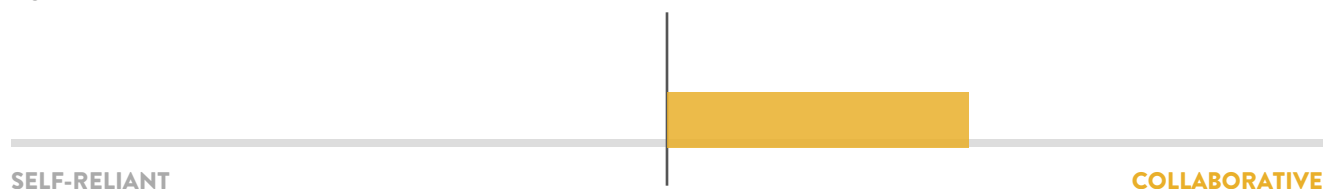
COMMUNICATION

Maska's performance was highly collaborative. You probably notice that Maska can read you like a book. Maybe he seems to know where you are going before you do. Maybe he can tell where to find a lost ball just by you glancing in the right direction. However his talent expresses itself, you can be sure that Maska pays close attention to your gestures and what you are trying to communicate.

Maska is remarkably like a human infant, who start reading communicative gestures at around nine months old. This ability is the foundation for all forms of culture and communication, including language.

Communication is the basis of many relationships, including our relationship with dogs. Maska's behavior in the Communication games demonstrated exactly why the dog and human relationship is so special.

FIG.2



ARM POINTING

Although the pointing game may have seemed simple, the skills it requires are quite specialized. Dogs are one of the only animals that rely on human gestures - but even among dogs there is variation. Some dogs are more like infants and rely heavily on our communicative gestures, while other dogs are more like chimpanzees and try to solve problems on their own without our help. Maska seems to use a mixed strategy. Because Maska could see food in both places, he didn't really need your help, but occasionally chose to follow your gestures anyway.

Did you know that, on average, dogs can start following a human point as young as 6 weeks old?



FOOT POINTING

Just like in the hand pointing game, Maska thought he had better cover all his bases by sometimes choosing the treat you pointed at and sometimes striking out on his own.

Maska probably does not see you point with your foot very often, so this game was a way of seeing how flexibly Maska can read new gestures. Giving animals a new version of a problem they have seen before is a common tactic used to reveal what strategy they are using to solve a problem.

Although Maska did not follow you every time, he may have sensed your communicative intent, and would probably not need much practice to start using a range of new gestures.

Many dogs tend to ignore unintentional cues from humans. The most effective way to communicate is to call the dog's name, make eye contact, then point and look in the direction of the object.



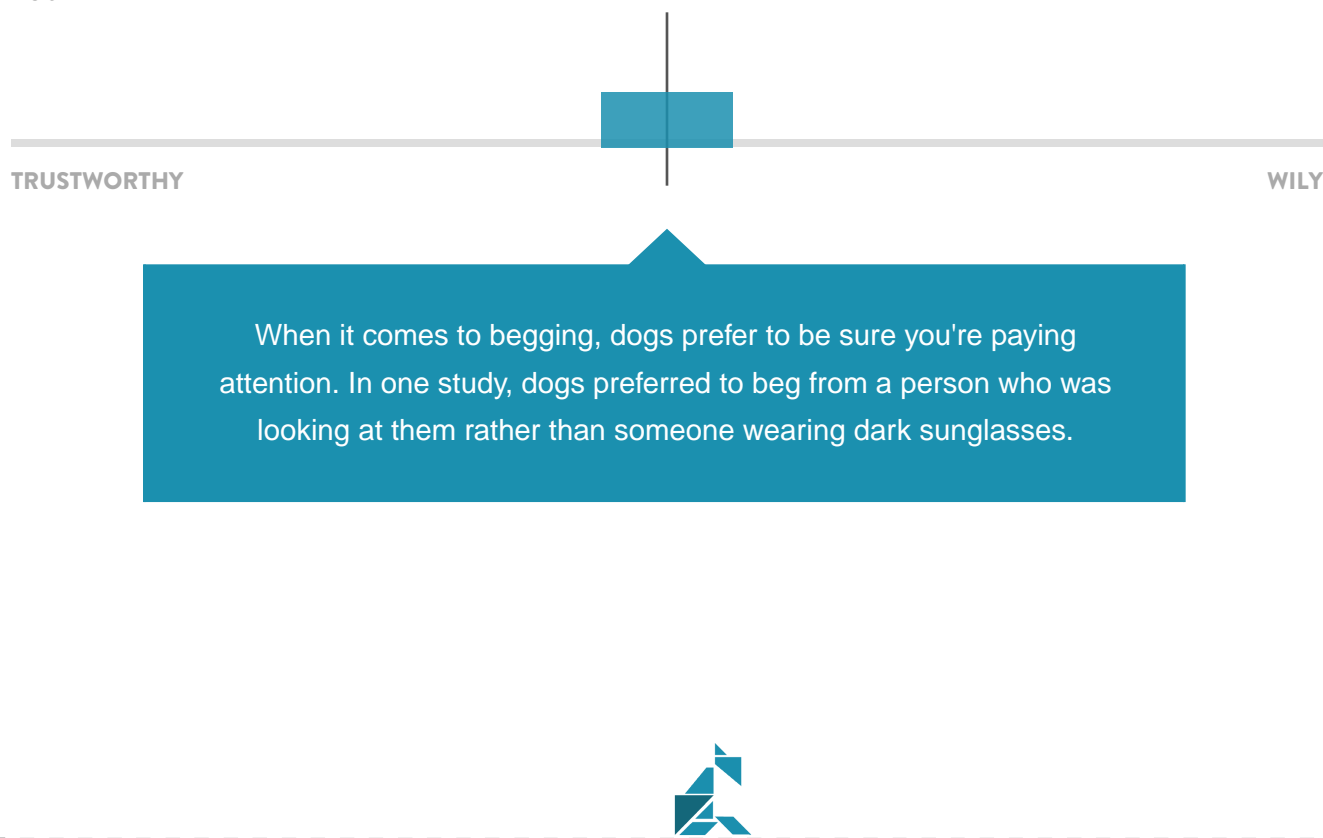
CUNNING

In the Cunning games, you placed a treat in front of Maska and let him know not to take the treat. You then showed Maska three different attentional states -- watching, turning your back, and covering your eyes.

In order to be at either end of this cognitive dimension, trustworthy or wily, Maska must show that he can tell when you are looking, and use this information when deciding when to go for the treat. In this case, Maska's decision did not change no matter which attentional state you presented; he waited roughly the same amount of time in each trial.

This doesn't mean that Maska can't be trusted, it just shows us that there are other internal factors influencing Maska's decision.

FIG.3



MEMORY

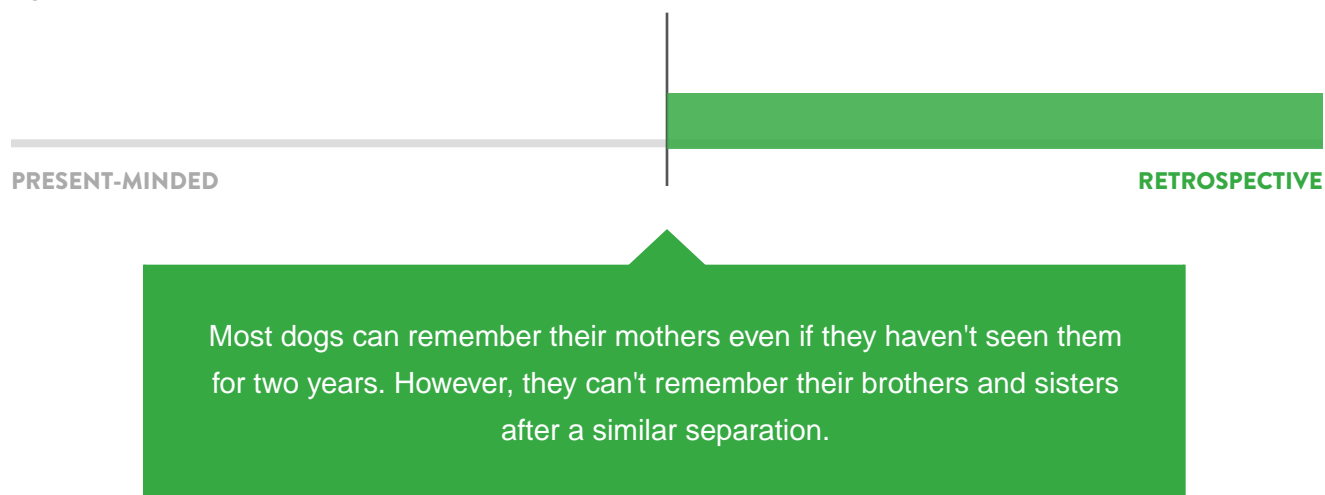
Maska has an amazing working memory, which is a type of memory that allows your dog to keep information in mind for a few minutes and mentally manipulate it. This may sound simple, but working memory is crucial for any kind of problem-solving. In humans, working memory has been found to correlate with skills in learning, math, reading, and language. Researchers have even found some evidence that in children, working memory is more predictive of academic success than IQ.

In these memory games, Maska had to understand that the treat continued to exist, even though it had disappeared from view. In the wild, this ability is essential. Animals have to keep track of mates, predators, and prey that might disappear momentarily behind a bush or a rock.

If Maska is an avid fetch player, you've probably noticed that no stick or ball escapes for long. Maska skillfully searching for an object that has briefly disappeared is a perfect example of him using his working memory to solve a problem.

For Maska, out of sight is definitely not out of mind.

FIG.4





MEMORY VERSUS POINTING

In this game, Maska saw you put the treat under one cup, but point to the other cup. Maska preferred to rely on the information in his working memory rather than what you pointed to. Even though you gave Maska misleading information, he remembered where the treat was and chose to ignore you. This shows an independent thinker; you should be aware that in other situations Maska might not listen to you if he thinks you are wrong.

Despite being genetically similar, dogs and wolves make opposite choices in this game. This difference may be behind why we love dogs so much.



MEMORY VERSUS SMELL

Although Maska did occasionally go to where the treat was hidden, rather than where you showed him you hid the treat, it is unlikely Maska could smell the food. If Maska relied on smell alone he would have found the food each time.

This is completely normal. Whenever we run a study where we hide a treat under one of two cups, the first question people always ask is, "Can't my dog just smell the food under the cup?" It was certainly our first question, but extensive research by half a dozen independent research groups has concluded that dogs do not rely on their sense of smell to find the food in these games.

If dogs were using smell, they would go directly to the cup with the hidden food. However, in similar studies, dogs only choose the correct cup around half the time - which means they are guessing. Dogs do have an excellent sense of smell and can probably detect food if allowed to sniff both cups before choosing. But when you look at their first choice, they cannot localize the food to a specific cup from a distance of 6 feet away.

One study found that to successfully track a person's direction of travel, tracking dogs need at least five sequential footsteps.



DELAYED CUP GAME

This game was a perfect demonstration of Maska's excellent working memory. After you hid the treat Maska had to retain the information for up to two and a half minutes before making a choice.

This skill comes in handy in the wild. Feral dogs tend to be endurance hunters, slowly wearing down their prey. During the chase, the prey may not always be in direct sight, and feral dogs have to remember where their prey was last seen and predict where they might reappear.

In these kinds of memory games, most cats quickly start to forget where an object is after only 10 seconds, while most dogs are still able to show success for up to 4 minutes.

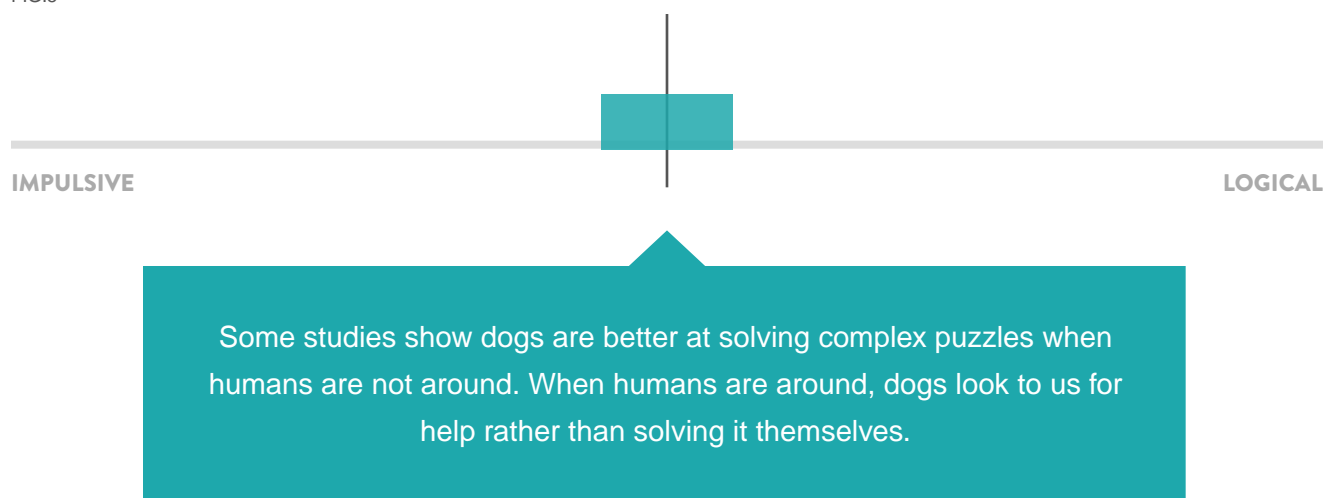


REASONING

Maska shows solid reasoning skills in one or both of the games. This is impressive, since the games in this dimension were the most difficult of the Assessment. Reasoning is the ability to solve a problem when you can't see the answer and have to imagine the solution.

Maska was somewhere in between logical and impulsive. It seems that sometimes he uses his powers of deduction, but sometimes he prefers to make decisions on the fly.

FIG.5



INFERENTIAL REASONING GAME

In this game, you presented Maska with a problem and provided some, but not all of the information needed to solve it. When you showed Maska the empty cup he had to infer that the treat must be in the other cup.

This is not as easy as it sounds because Maska was also attracted to the empty cup, for the simple reason that you touched it. It looks like Maska switched back and forth between strategies in this game, sometimes making an inference and choosing the correct cup, and sometimes relying on your social cues. Either way, this shows impressive flexibility.

By no means did Maska do badly on this game; in fact, he developed quite a clever strategy. He developed a right or left side bias, meaning when he didn't know which side was correct, he went to one side every time. This is pretty clever, because 50% of the time he was correct.



PHYSICAL REASONING GAME

Maska did seem to understand the principle of solidity - that one solid object cannot pass through another - at least some of the time.

Although this might have seemed like a simple game, it was actually quite complicated. First, Maska had to infer that you hid a treat (since Maska didn't actually see you hide it). Then he had to understand enough of the physical world to infer that a piece of paper at an angle indicated that the treat was hidden behind it. It is impressive that Maska figured out the answer as often as he did.

Even though many dogs may struggle with physical properties like gravity, this doesn't stop them from thoroughly enjoying a game of fetch.





NEXT STEPS

We hope you've enjoyed reading Maska's Dognition Profile and gaining fresh perspective on how he sees the world!

You can fill your friends in on what you've discovered about Maska very easily. Download and email or print Maska's profile report any time from your portal.

Of course, these five cognitive dimensions are only part of the picture; the magic of your relationship with Maska is how you spend your time together. To that end, a Dognition membership gives you on-going games and tips that will help provide even more insight into what makes Maska tick and how to act on that information.

As a member, each month you'll receive:

- A new game that will shed light on another aspect of how Maska thinks and sees the world.
- Tips and activities prepared for Maska from canine training experts based on how Maska sees the world.
- Exclusive offers from Dognition partners, including brands such as Kong and Purina ONE.
- New findings about how all dogs think and how Maska's strategies compare.

At the same time, by contributing to Dognition you and Maska are helping to build the world's knowledge about all dogs. This allows us to tackle fresh questions -- how do certain breeds think compared to others? To what extent do memory skills decline by age? Are female dogs any more empathic than male dogs? And many more!

What questions would you like answered? We'd love any feedback on that or anything else related to Dognition. Contact us any time at hello@dognition.com.

Woof!

The Dognition Team



Dognition

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