

Cute canine head tilt: What are dogs thinking?

Ask your dog if they want to go to the park, and you might get an inquisitive-looking head tilt in response. This [cute canine behavior](#) is familiar to dog owners, but no one really knows why human's best friend does it—and scientists have published just one study focusing on possible reasons for head tilting in dogs. That research suggests the animals might cock their furry noggins [when processing familiar words](#).

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"In humans, when you remember a story or something, you tilt your head to the side, and you have this mental image of something in your mind," says Andrea Sommesse, an animal cognition researcher at Eötvös Loránd University in Hungary and lead author of the study. "Probably it's the same for dogs."

Many animals tilt their head as they encounter the sights, sounds and smells of the world. Much of this has to do with having a preferred ear (or sometimes nostril), Sommesse says.

In other cases, it's about localizing a sound, says Julia Meyers-Manor, an animal cognition researcher at Ripon College, who was not involved with the research. "Humans do it; birds do it; dogs do it," Meyers-Manor says. "Lots of different species will do this head tilt because that changes the angle that your ears are at, and now the sound is reaching one ear faster than the other."

[**This is an excerpt. Read the full article here**](#)