

## 76 - Dog Dreams

When humans sleep, we dream -- but what about dogs? How do we know dogs dream at all? Do they think about their dreams the next day? Do they have nightmares or sleep walk?

Researchers were able to make electrical recordings of rats' brains while they learned their way through a maze. And when they recorded them sleeping they saw the same brain activity on the recordings. The scientists determined the rats were dreaming about what they were doing during the day. The recordings were so specific the researchers were able to tell where in the maze the rat would be and whether it would be moving or standing still. And since a dog's brain is way more complex than a rat's, we can say dogs dream in a similar fashion. In fact, you can actually see a dog start to dream when they doze off.

After a period of about twenty minutes for an average-sized dog, their first dream usually starts. You'll recognize the change because their breathing will become shallow and irregular. If you look closely, you might even be able to see your dog's eyes moving behind its closed lids. These eye movements are characteristic of dream-sleep. When humans are awakened during this period of sleep, known as REM, or rapid eye movement, they almost always report they were dreaming.

Researchers also believe a dog's dreams depends a lot on their breed. For example, a Retriever might dream of hunting. While a German Shepherd might dream of protecting their family. But according to clinical and evolutionary psychologists, dogs are attached to their human owners, so it's very possible your dog is just dreaming of your face, your smell and of pleasing you. The scientific evidence also supports the idea that dogs can have happy, sad, and even scary dreams.

### Things You Will Learn

1. How much sleep does a dog need?
2. Should you wake a dog that is having a bad dream?
3. What kinds of things do dogs dream about?

# Activities

1. There isn't a way to know what dogs are dreaming about but you can remember your own dreams! Keep a journal for a week and write down the dreams you've had. Read through them at the end of the week and see if they reflected the things you did that day.
2. Do you have a dog? Ask an adult if you can take it for a walk or play with it in the dog park! You'll both get some great exercise and give you and your dog some new things to dream about.
3. Don't have a dog? You can make one! [These](#) instructions will help you create the dog of your dreams.

# Additional Resources

Thinking about getting a dog? Check out [The Humane Society](#) for information, locations, and volunteer opportunities. All good dogs dream about having a forever family.

Thanks to our friends at the National PTA for their kind support of Who Smarted? We suggest you check out their podcast [Notes from the Backpack](#). [Notes from the Backpack](#) is a PTA podcast designed for parents like you! Each episode features engaging conversations that offer real-life advice and strategies for supporting your children's learning and development—all in parent-friendly language. Listen wherever you get your podcasts or visit [www.notesfromthebackpack.com](http://www.notesfromthebackpack.com) to learn more.

# Kid News

Hayley Arceneaux will be achieving many new firsts. She will soon be one of the first to go to space as part of a civilian astronaut mission. This will make her the youngest American in space, and the first with a prosthetic limb. The mission of the civilian space program is to pick people based on four ideals: leadership, prosperity, generosity, and hope. As a cancer survivor, Hayley represents hope. Read more about this historic mission [here](#).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This activity guide is for the Who Smarted? podcast [www.WhoSmarted.com](http://www.WhoSmarted.com)