A bark is a noise most commonly produced by dogs and puppies. Other animals that make this noise include wolves and quolls. Woof is the most common representation in the English language for this sound (especially for large dogs). Other transliterations include the onomatopoeic ruff, arf, au au, yip (for small dogs), and bow-wow.

**Why Dogs Bark**

Although dogs are descended from the wolf, Canis lupus, their barking constitutes a significant difference from their parent species. Although wolves do bark, they do so only in specific situations. According to Coppinger and Feinstein, dogs bark in long, rhythmic stanzas but adult wolf barks tend to be brief and isolated.[1] Compared with wolves, dogs bark frequently and in many different situations.

It has been suggested that the reason for the difference lies in the dog’s domestication by humans.[2] An increased tendency to bark could have been useful to humans to provide an early warning system. Domestication has altered the physical appearance of dogs. Dogs present a striking example of neoteny, the retention of juvenile characteristics in the adults. They are similar to young wolves in many of their mannerisms and physical features, such as large heads, flat faces, large eyes, submissiveness and vocalizing – all of which are exhibited in wolf puppies.

Individual dogs bark for a variety of reasons. They may bark to attract attention, to communicate a message, or to express excitement. Statistical analysis has revealed that barks can be divided into different subtypes based on context and that individual dogs can be identified by their barks. Disturbance barks tend to be harsh, low frequency, and unmodulated, whereas isolation and play barks tend to be tonal, higher frequency, and modulated. Barks are often accompanied by body movements as part of a broader package of dog communication.

**Types of Barking**

**Warning bark**

A warning will usually start out as a low, quiet, but ferociously noticeable growl before escalating into something of a howling bark. This type of reaction is most typically seen in
domesticated animals in response to a perceived territorial intrusion. The dog may also bare its teeth if it feels immediately threatened.

Also most monkeys make this type of barking noise when communicating with other monkeys or to scare off larger animals.

**Alarm barking**

It is a dog's attempt to be alert, attentive, and informative to its human "pack", as regarding unusual events. This kind of barking is known as 'alarm barking', and is common within a variety of breeds. It does not signify aggression, and (although often associated with unusual noises intruding on the dog's 'territory') is not the same as territoriality type barking. It may take the form of just one or a few barks, or it may give rise to sustained barking until the dog sees that some action has been taken. Alarm barking is more likely to arise when a dog can hear, but not see the source of, some noise. Examples of sounds which commonly cause alarm barking include doorbells, cars, noises from adjacent dwellings, and the like. It is a behavior that tends to develop with age and maturity, and also can be related to whether there are others around who might need to be informed of such events - often an alarm barker will remain quiet if alone and there is nobody to 'tell'.

**Barking on command**

A dog can be trained to bark on command.

**Playful bark**

Some dogs will bark for a treat or when they are playing. Dogs will also bark when they like what they're playing.

**Need bark**

Many dogs can self-develop actions that serve themselves if they need something. This is commonly done along with a form of action. Example, a dog may nudge its bowl and bark if it is hungry, or it may nudge its owner and bark if it wants some form of attention such as petting.

**Barking as Nuisance**

**Bark control**

Nuisance-barking dogs sound off for no particular reason. “Many dogs bark when they hear other dogs barking,” said Katherine A. Houpt, V.M.D., Ph.D., director of the Cornell Animal Behavior Clinic. Nuisance, inappropriate, or excessive barking comprises between 13 and 35 percent of behavior-problem complaints by dog owners, Houpt noted. The electric collars deliver an irritating shock of adjustable intensity when a vibration sensor in the collar detects barking. The citronella collar releases a spray of the plant-based fragrance when a microphone in the collar senses barking. For the eight dogs that wore both types of collars (one shepherd mix did not complete the study), all owners found the citronella collar to be effective in reducing or stopping nuisance barking and most preferred the fragrance spray. Four out of eight owners said electric shocks had no effect on their dogs—they kept on barking. The citronella collars were not without problems, Juarbe-D’az noted. One dog owner complained that citronella oil stained the upholstery when the couch-potato pooch barked. “One owner thought the scent was preferable to her dog’s body odor.” [3]

Canine barking can be a nuisance to neighbors, and is a common problem dog owners or their neighbors may face. (Many dogs can bark at 100 dBA. Even at 17.5 yards away and with the dog outside a closed window, the noise level of a barking dog can be well over the level that causes psychological distress.[4]) Different kinds of barking often require different kinds of approach to reduction.

Common approaches are as follows:

1. Attempting to understand, and if possible eliminate, the causes of barking
2. Using positive training methods to correct the behavior. Dogs may bark from anxiety or stress, so punishment can often cause problems by reinforcing a cycle of bad behavior.

Positive approaches can include:

- Repeated exposure to stimuli whilst calming the dog and persuading it to remain quiet.
- Distraction as the stimulus happens, through treats, praise, or similar.
- Reshaping via clicker training (a form of operant conditioning) or other means to obtain barking behavior on command, and then shaping the control to gain command over silence.

3. Seeking professional advice from local organizations, dog trainers, or veterinarians.
4. Use of a mechanical device such as a bark collar. There are several types, all of which use a collar device that produces a response to barking that the dog notices:
Citrus spray ("citronella") – dogs as a rule do not like citrus. At the least, it is very noticeable and disrupts the pattern through surprise. These collars spray citrus around the dog’s muzzle when it barks. (Sometimes these devices make a "hissing" noise before spraying, as an additional deterrent – see "Combination and escalation devices" below)

**Sonic/ultrasonic** (including vibration) – these collars produce a tone which humans may or may not be able to hear, in response to barking. Over time, the sound becomes annoying or distracting enough to deter barking.

**Electrical** – these collars produce a mild stinging or tingling sensation in response to a bark. It is important that such devices have a fail-safe mechanism and shut off after a certain time, to prevent ongoing operation.

**Combination and escalation devices** – many sound and/or electrical collars have combination or escalation systems. A combination system is one that (for example) uses both sound and spray together. An escalation device is one that uses quiet sounds, or low levels of output, rising gradually until barking ceases. Escalation devices are effective since they "reward" the dog for stopping sooner by not having "all-or-nothing" action, so the dog can learn to react by stopping before much happens.

Note:
Different bark collars have been both praised, and criticized, and some are considered inhumane by various people and groups. Electrical devices especially come under criticism by people who consider them torturous and akin to electrocution. However most Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals agree that in a last resort even an electric collar is better than euthanasia if it comes to an ultimatum, for a stubborn dog that will not stop any other way. It is generally agreed that understanding the communication and retraining by reward is the most effective and most humane way.

**Surgical debarking**

The controversial surgical procedure known as ‘debarking’ is a veterinary procedure for modifying the voice box so that a barking dog will make a significantly reduced noise. It is considered a last resort by some owners, on the basis that it is better than euthanasia, seizure, or legal problems if the matter has proven incapable of being reliably corrected any other way.

Debarking is illegal in Europe and opposed by many animal welfare organizations.

**Representation**

Woof is the conventional representation in the English language of the barking of a dog. As with other examples of onomatopoeia or imitative sounds, other cultures “hear” the dog’s barks differently and represent them in their own ways. Some of the equivalents of “woof” in other European and Asian languages are as follows:

- **English** – woof, woof; ruff, ruff; arf, arf (large dogs and also the sound of sea lions); yap, yap; yip, yip (small dogs), bow wow
- **Afrikaans** – blaf, blaf; woef, woef; keff, keff (small dogs)
- **Albanian** – ham, ham
- **Arabic** – hau, hau; how how (عَاهُ, عَاهُ)
- **Armenian** -haf, haf
- **Basque** – au, au; txau, txau (small dogs); zaunk, zaunk (large dogs); jau, jau (old dogs)
- **Balinese** – kong, kong
- **Bengali** – gheu, gheu; bhao, bhao
- **Bulgarian** – bau-bau (бау-бау); jaff, jaff (джав-джав)
- **Brazilian Portuguese** – au au
- **Burmese** – woke, woke
- **Catalan** – bau, bau; bub, bub
- **Chinese, Cantonese** – wow, wow (汪汪)
- **Chinese, Mandarin** – wang, wang
- **Croatian** – vau, vau
- **Czech** – haf, haf; štěk (the bark itself)
- **Danish** – vov, vuf
- **Dutch** – waf, waf; woef, woef
- **Esperanto** – boj, boj
- **Estonian** – auh, auh
- **French** – wauw, waouh; ouah, ouahn; vaf, vaf; wouf, wouf; wouaf, wouaf; jappe jappe
- **German** – wuff, wuff; wau, wau; rawrau, rawrau
- **Greek** – ghav, ghav (γαβ, γαβ)
- **Hebrew** – hav, hav; hau, hau

[Top]
Naturally “Barkless” Dog Breeds

Compared to most domestic dogs, the bark of a dingo is short and monosyllabic. During observations, the barking of Australian dingoes was shown to have a relatively small variability; sub-groups of bark types, common among domestic dogs, could not be found. Furthermore, only 5% of the observed vocalizations were made up of barking. Australian dingoes bark only in swooshing noises or in a mixture atonal/tonal. Also, barking is almost exclusively used for giving warnings. Warn-barking in a homotypical sequence and a kind of “warn-howling” in a heterotypical sequence has also been observed. The bark-howling starts with several barks and than fades into a rising and ebbing howl and is probably, similarly to coughing, used to warn the puppies and members of the pack. Additionally, dingoes emit a sort of “wailing” sound, which they mostly use when approaching a water hole, probably to warn already present dingoes.[6] According to the present state of knowledge, it is not possible to get Australian dingoes to bark more frequently by making them associate with other domestic dogs. However Alfred Brehm reported a dingo that completely learned the more “typical” form of barking and knew how to use it, while its brother did not.[7] Whether dingoes bark or bark-howl less frequently in general is not sure.[8]

The now extinct Hare Indian dog of northern Canada was not known to bark in its native homeland, though puppies born in Europe learned how to imitate the barking of other dogs.[9] When hurt or afraid, it howled like a wolf, and when curious, it made a sound described as a growl building up to a howl.[10]

The Basenji of central Africa produces an unusual yodel-like sound, due to its unusually shaped larynx.[11] This trait also gives the Basenji the nickname “Barkless Dog.”[12]

Barking in Other Animals

Many animals communicate via various vocalizations. While there is not a precise, consistent and functional acoustic definition for barking, researchers may classify barks according to several criteria.[13] University of Massachusetts Amherst researchers identified volume, pitch, tonality, noise, abrupt onset and pulse duration are amongst the criteria that can be used to define a bark.[14]
Besides dogs and wolves, other canines like coyotes and jackals can bark. Their barks are quite similar to those of wolves and dogs. The bark of a dingo is short and monosyllabic.

The warning bark of a fox sounds much like a dog’s, but generally the vocalization of foxes is higher and more drawn out than barks of other canids.

There are also non-canine species with vocalizations that could be described as barking. Because the Muntjac’s alarm call resembles a dog’s bark, they are sometimes known as Barking Deer. Eared seals are also known to bark. Prairie dogs employ a complex form of communication that involves barks and rhythmic chirps.[15] A wide variety of bird species produce vocalizations that include the canonical features of barking, especially when avoiding predators.[14]

References
5. Rikaichan Japanese-English dictionary extension, version 2.01
12. BCOA African Stock Project – 1945 Letter from Africa
Whether your class is full of young kids or full-grown business English students, BusyTeacher.org's 265 first-day-of-school worksheets offer something just right for your class. We've got worksheets with friendly pictures and simple vocabulary, worksheets based on popular movies and songs, exercises that let your students review what they did over the holidays, and even colorful posters to hang on your classroom wall. All this variety comes thanks to BusyTeacher.org's worldwide community of participating ESL teachers, who are kind enough to share the worksheets and other resources they develop.

Yoobi Classroom Pack contains the most fundamental tools needed for learning and creativity. We created special Yoobi products designed specifically for Elementary grade students. For every Yoobi item you buy, a Yoobi item is contributed to a Yoobi Classroom Pack. Once we fill up a Yoobi Classroom Pack, we work with The Kids In Need Foundation to distribute it to a classroom in need here in the U.S. With your help, our goal is provide free school supplies to all classrooms in need. What's in a classroom pack? Each Yoobi Classroom Pack contains the following goodies, specially packed in...