

# One Big Nose

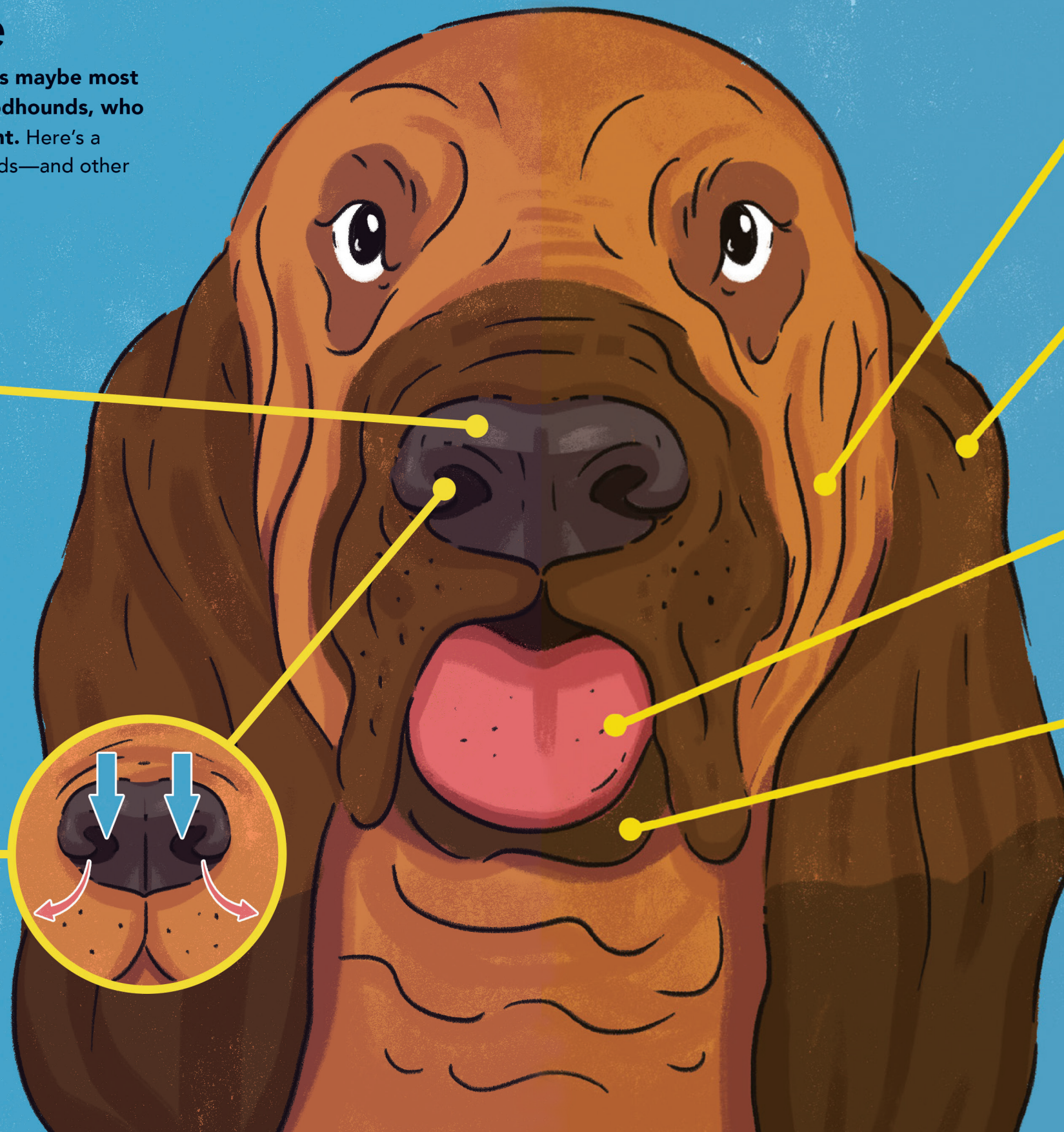
All dogs are designed for smelling, but it's maybe most obvious in the distinctive features of bloodhounds, who are famous for their ability to track a scent. Here's a closer look at the parts that make bloodhounds—and other dog breeds—act like one big nose.

## NOSE

Why is a dog's nose usually wet? It's to help her smell. The nose is kept moist by a layer of mucus that traps odor particles. This allows the dog to breathe them in on the next inhale.

## NOSTRILS

When a dog breathes, air goes in through her nostril holes and out through the slits at the sides. This protects odor molecules already in the dog's nose from being disturbed when air is exhaled. That way, odor molecules are inside the nose for longer and have a better chance of being detected. Breathing out of the nostril slits also helps the dog collect more smells, especially from the ground. How? Air exhaled out of the slits swirls around and kicks up new odor particles. Then on the next inhale, there are more scents for her nostrils to capture. Dogs can even use their nostrils independently: for familiar smells they enjoy, they rely on their right nostril, and for smells they find upsetting, they use their left.



## WRINKLES

Breeds such as bloodhounds have so much loose skin, they have deep wrinkles all over their faces. It's thought that these wrinkles also help trap scent particles.

## EARS

Long, droopy ear flaps help funnel smells up from the ground toward the dog's nose.

## TONGUE

Dogs lick their noses to keep them damp since a dry nose doesn't work as well for collecting scents. Nose licking can also carry odor particles into the mouth and closer to the vomeronasal organ.

## FLEWS AND DEWLAPS

Some dog breeds have what look like extra folds of skin on their heads and necks. Long, droopy lips are called flews or jowls. And a flap of sagging skin dangling from a dog's neck is called a dewlap. All this loose skin is not just adorable; it collects and traps smells.



Discover more fascinating facts about a dog's five senses in *Making Sense of Dog Senses!*

Written by Stephanie Gibeault and illustrated by Raz Latif

