

**High-Intermediate 1**  
**Unit 10: Reading**  
**Presented by Mohammad Rajabpur**

**The Twin Questions: Nature or Nurture?**  
by RUTH SANBOR

**nature** = inborn or hereditary characteristics

**nurture** = upbringing, education, and environment



**Mark S. Newman & Gerald I. Levy**

MARK AND GERALD are identical twins. Mirror images of each other, they also share many similarities in life-style. Mark is a firefighter, and so is Gerald. Mark has never been married, and neither has Gerald. Mark likes hunting, fishing, and Chinese food. Gerald does too.

**identical** = exactly the same

**similarity** ≠ difference

These similarities might not be unusual in identical twins, except for one fact: Mark and Gerald were separated when they were five days old. They grew up in different states with different families. Neither one knew that he had a twin until they found each other accidentally at age thirty-one.

**except for** = excluding

**neither one** = none of them

Average people are fascinated by twins, and so are scientists. Identical twins share the same genes. Therefore, they offer researchers the chance to study the effect of genetic inheritance on health and personality.

**average people** = common people; ordinary people

**gene** (noun) = a unit of heredity which is transferred from a parent to children and is held to determine some characteristic of the children

**genetic** (adjective) = related to the genes

**genetics** (noun) = the science of studying genes

**effect** = influence; impact

**inherit** (verb) = to be born with the same physical or mental characteristics as one of your parents or grandparents

*Tom has inherited his grandpa's eyes.*

**inheritor** (noun) = a person who has been given something by someone who is dead

*Europeans are the inheritors of Greek and Roman culture.*

**inheritance** (noun) = a physical or mental characteristic inherited from your parents, or the process by which this happens

*genetic inheritance*

*A particular gene is responsible for the inheritance of eye color.*

However, when identical twins grow up together, they also experience the same environment. How can researchers separate these environmental factors from genetic factors? By looking at identical twins who are separated at birth! Twins with completely different childhoods give researchers the chance to study the age-old question: Which has more effect on our lives, heredity (the genes we receive from our parents) or environment (the social influences in our childhood)?

**factor** = parameter

**age-old question** = a question that has been asked for a long time

**heritage** (noun) = a person's racial, ethnic, religious, or cultural background

*cultural heritage*

**heredity** (noun) = biological inheritance = the process by which characteristics are given from a parent to their child through the genes

*Diet and exercise can influence a person's weight, but heredity is also a factor.*

These three terms are often confused, but they have distinct meanings:

### 1. **Heritage:**

- **Definition:** Heritage refers to the traditions, achievements, beliefs, and artifacts that are passed down from previous generations. It encompasses cultural, historical, and natural aspects.
- **Example:** The Great Wall of China is a significant part of China's cultural heritage.

### 2. **Inheritance:**

- **Definition:** Inheritance is the process by which property, money, or titles are passed down from one generation to another, usually after someone's death. It can also refer to the genetic traits received from parents.
- **Example:** She received a large inheritance from her grandmother, including a house and some jewelry.

### 3. **Heredity:**

- **Definition:** Heredity is the biological process by which genetic traits are passed from parents to their offspring. It is a fundamental concept in genetics.
- **Example:** Eye color is determined by heredity, as it is passed down from parents to children through genes.

Some startling coincidences have turned up in these studies. One astonishing pair is the Springer and Lewis brothers, who were adopted by different families soon after birth. The Springer family

named their adopted son Jim. So did the Lewis family. When the two Jims met for the first time as adults, they discovered more surprising similarities. Jim Lewis had worked as a gas station attendant and a law enforcement agent. So had Jim Springer. Both men had had dogs. Lewis had named his Toy; so had Springer. And believe it or not, Lewis had married a woman named Linda, divorced her, and later married a woman named Betty. So had Springer.

**startling** = surprising, astonishing

**incidence** = event, happening

**coincidence** = two events happening at the same by chance

**adopt** = legally take (another's child) and bring him or her up as one's own

**gas station** (American) = **petrol station** (British)

**gas, gasoline** (American) = petrol (British) = a kind of fuel used in cars

**gas station attendant** = a worker at a gas station

**law enforcement** = the police force

**law enforcement agent** = police officer

Lewis had named **his** Toy.

- **his** = his dog
- **his** ⇔ a possessive pronoun

Do our genes really determine our names, our spouses, our jobs, even our pets? The lives of other twins indicate that the question of nature or nurture is even more complicated than that.

**determine** = cause (something) to occur in a particular way or to have a particular nature

**spouse** = husband or wife

**lives** = life + s

**indicate** = show

**complicated** = complex ≠ simple

Identical twins Andrea and Barbara, for example, were born in Germany and separated shortly after birth. Andrea stayed in Germany, but Barbara didn't. She moved to the United States with her adoptive American family. The twins grew up in different cultures, speaking different languages. Barbara didn't know she had a twin, but Andrea did, and she searched for her sister. When they met, they discovered amazing similarities. Each had a scar on her lip from an accident. Each had had a tonsillectomy —on the same day!

**tonsil** (noun) = one of two small, soft organs at the back of the mouth

**tonsillectomy** = the surgical removal of the tonsils

Nevertheless, there were important differences. Andrea is outgoing and expressive, but Barbara isn't, despite her identical genetic heritage. Both sisters got married and had two children. Andrea stayed married, but Barbara married and divorced several times.

**outgoing** = sociable ≠ shy

**expressive** ≠ reserved

Clearly, heredity doesn't completely govern our lives. Our environment doesn't either. The lives of twins separated at birth suggest that we have a lot to learn about the complex role these two powerful forces play in shaping human lives.

**govern** = control, determine  
**role** = part

**Full Text:**

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**Source:**

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