

## What Makes You Who You Are?

Every person is different. We all have a combination of **traits** that we get from our parents or learn from the world around us. **Inherited traits** are characteristics that we are born with. We inherit traits from our parents. Some examples of inherited traits are the color of our hair and eyes. **Acquired traits** are things that we learn. It is not always easy to tell which traits are inherited and which are acquired. In fact, scientists think that some traits may be a combination of both. Sometimes we start out with an inherited trait that we develop because of what we learn. For example, you may have inherited intelligence from your mom, but it is up to you to use your intelligence to do well in school. Some people are born with a calm, quiet personality and some people are more outgoing and energetic. A calm, quiet person can be pleasant and a good listener. An outgoing, energetic person can be entertaining to others. But both of these people can also have problems if they don't work with their traits in a positive way. A quiet person can become shy and awkward and an outgoing, energetic person can demand too much attention and forget about others.

Some acquired traits come from observing family members or others around us. For example, if your parents play musical instruments, you may become interested in learning about music as well. This is not always the case though. Perhaps your mom likes to cook but you will never be interested in cooking, or perhaps your dad plays golf but you would rather be a skateboarder. You may also acquire interests because of the environment in which you grow up. Someone who grows up near the beach is more likely to be interested in swimming than someone who grows up in a cold mountain environment where many people enjoy skiing.

Part of the challenge in growing up and becoming you is learning to like who you are. This is easy if you are like most of the people around you. But what if you are different in some way? Sometimes it's hard to be different if you feel like there is something wrong with that. But there is nothing wrong with being different and every person has traits that are different from others. If we were all the same, the world would be a boring place! If you learn to like yourself, you will be happier being yourself. If there are things you do not like about yourself, you can work to change those things if possible. Some traits cannot be changed. You can also learn to accept all or most of your traits after all.

## What Makes You Who You Are? Questions

1. Each person is different because of his or her own combination of \_\_\_\_\_.
  
2. Inherited traits
  - a. are traits we get from our parents.
  - b. are traits we learn from experience.
  - c. depend on our environment.
  - d. are the same for every person.
  
3. Which statement is not true?
  - a. Everyone has inherited traits.
  - b. Everyone has acquired traits.
  - c. Some traits are a combination of inherited and acquired.
  - d. We can choose our inherited traits.
  
4. Acquired traits
  - a. depend on our environment.
  - b. depend on things we learn.
  - c. depend on our interests.
  - d. All of the above.
  
5. The color of your eyes is
  - a. an inherited trait.
  - b. an acquired trait.
  - c. a combination of inherited and acquired traits.
  
6. If you are artistic and decide to take art classes, you are showing
  - a. an inherited trait.
  - b. an acquired trait.
  - c. a combination of inherited and acquired traits.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## What Makes You Who You Are? Answers

1. traits
2. a
3. d
4. d
5. d
6. a
7. c
8. Answers will vary.
9. Answers will vary.
10. You can change them if possible or learn to like them after all.