Beyond the Lunch Table

How biology and experience shape social choices

S.2.3 "Identify and apply elements of nature vs. nurture in explaining human social behavior."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details about bodies or senses, and circle two details about learned customs or habits. Number one place where both kinds of influence help explain a person's behavior.

A Bowl of Noodles

1. At a school lunch table, Maya sees a classmate offer a bowl of spicy noodles. Her mouth waters because she is hungry, but she pauses before taking any. Hunger is a biological signal: bodies need energy, and that need can push people toward food. People also differ in how strongly they sense the heat of chili peppers. Such physical differences can affect what foods feel pleasant or painful. Neither hunger nor sensitivity tells Maya whether she should take the bowl. To understand her next move, look at the social rules she has learned.

2. At home, Maya's family serves guests first and waits for everyone to sit before eating. She has practiced offering food to others, so she asks the new student beside her if he wants some noodles. He says no because his family avoids meat, and the bowl contains chicken. Both students' choices reflect habits and values learned from people around them. Those influences are often called nurture. A custom does not erase hunger or taste: the new student may be hungry, yet he still passes the bowl to someone else.

3. Later, Maya takes a small serving. The chili feels too hot, and she reaches for water. She smiles rather than complaining because her friends have shown her how to respond politely when someone shares a meal. Another student who senses the same heat might laugh and ask for more. Biology can shape the experience of eating, while learned expectations shape how people act with others. Nature and nurture are not rival explanations with one winner. In this lunchroom, they work together, but they do not force every person to make the same choice.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Maya's mouth waters, but she pauses before taking noodles. Identify one nature influence and one nurture influence that help explain these actions.

2. Maya offers noodles to the new student. Which practice helps explain this social action, and why is it nurture?

3. The new student may be hungry but passes the chicken noodles to someone else. How could nature and nurture pull him in different directions?

4. The chili feels too hot to Maya, yet she smiles instead of complaining. What does each kind of influence help explain?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences about a social situation outside a meal. Include a biological influence, a learned influence, and how both help explain one person's behavior toward others.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond the Lunch Table

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details about bodies or senses, and circle two details about learned customs or habits. Number one place where both kinds of influence help explain a person's behavior. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Maya's mouth waters, but she pauses before taking noodles. Identify one nature influence and one nurture influence that help explain these actions.	**Hunger is a biological influence that makes her mouth water. Her learned rule about serving guests first helps explain why she pauses.**
2	Maya offers noodles to the new student. Which practice helps explain this social action, and why is it nurture?	**She has practiced offering food to others at home. It is nurture because she learned this behavior from her family.**
3	The new student may be hungry but passes the chicken noodles to someone else. How could nature and nurture pull him in different directions?	**Biological hunger could push him to eat. His family's practice of avoiding meat leads him to pass the chicken noodles.**
4	The chili feels too hot to Maya, yet she smiles instead of complaining. What does each kind of influence help explain?	**Her physical response to the chili helps explain her discomfort. Her friends' example of responding politely helps explain her smile.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before her debate club presentation, Lila's heart beats faster because she feels nervous in front of a crowd. She has learned from her coach to wait while teammates speak and to applaud their ideas. Although she wants to rush through her own part, she pauses and listens before answering a question. Her body's stress response affects how she feels, while the club's practiced rules shape how she treats the group.

Accept other passage-supported examples of biological influences and learned practices. For the open task, accept plausible situations that explain how both influences contribute to a social behavior without treating either as the sole cause.