Temperament Meets Experience

How biology and surroundings shape personality together

PS.5.3 "Explain how biological and environmental factors interact to influence personality."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two biological tendencies, circle two environmental influences, and number two sentences that explain how a tendency and an experience work together to shape behavior.

What Happens in Debate Club?

1. At the first meeting of a debate club, Maya speaks only when called on. She has long been quick to notice unfamiliar sounds and faces, a pattern that may partly reflect her inherited temperament. Temperament includes early tendencies in how strongly people react and how readily they approach new situations. It is not a fixed personality. Maya's older sister is similarly cautious, but their behavior need not be identical. Experiences such as friendships, family expectations, and classroom routines can change how each person expresses a tendency. Neither biology nor surroundings alone can explain why Maya is quiet at this meeting.

2. The club coach invites Maya to practice her opening statement with one partner before speaking to the whole group. Maya's alertness to small changes helps her catch an opponent's weak claim, while repeated, low-pressure practice makes speaking feel less threatening. After several weeks, she volunteers to lead a round. Her growing confidence does not mean her cautious temperament has vanished. A different environment could draw out a different response: when a visiting judge interrupts students sharply, Maya becomes reluctant to speak again. Her reaction reflects both her sensitivity to criticism and the way that judge treats her.

3. Another member, Eli, tends to seek excitement and speaks before planning his points. In a club with no speaking limits, that tendency leads him to interrupt others, and classmates stop asking him to join their teams. With the coach's turn-taking rules and clear feedback, Eli learns to pause and use his energy to start lively discussions. His behavior also helps shape his environment: classmates now invite him to practice, giving him more chances to develop self-control. Personality develops through this ongoing exchange. Biological tendencies can influence how someone responds to an experience, and experiences can strengthen, redirect, or soften those tendencies.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why might Maya and her older sister behave differently even though both tend to be cautious?

2. How do Maya's alertness and the coach's practice plan work together to change her participation?

3. Why does Maya become reluctant to speak after the visiting judge interrupts students, even though she had begun leading rounds?

4. How do Eli's tendency and the club's rules change both his behavior and his opportunities with classmates?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a student who tends to stay calm under pressure joining a school theater crew. In four sentences, explain how a specific crew experience could affect the student's behavior and how that behavior might then change the student's opportunities.

ANSWER KEY

Temperament Meets Experience

HIGH SCHOOL · PS.5.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two biological tendencies, circle two environmental influences, and number two sentences that explain how a tendency and an experience work together to shape behavior. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why might Maya and her older sister behave differently even though both tend to be cautious?	**Their friendships, family expectations, or classroom routines may differ, changing how each expresses a similar tendency.**
2	How do Maya's alertness and the coach's practice plan work together to change her participation?	**Her alertness helps her spot weak claims, while low-pressure practice makes speaking less threatening. After several weeks, she volunteers to lead a round.**
3	Why does Maya become reluctant to speak after the visiting judge interrupts students, even though she had begun leading rounds?	**Her sensitivity to criticism interacts with the judge's sharp interruptions, making her reluctant to speak.**
4	How do Eli's tendency and the club's rules change both his behavior and his opportunities with classmates?	**Eli's excitement can lead him to interrupt, but turn-taking rules and feedback help him pause. Classmates then invite him to practice, giving him more chances to develop self-control.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Nina tends to stay calm when plans change, a tendency that may partly reflect her temperament. When a prop breaks before a performance, the crew leader gives her time and tools to make a replacement. Nina's calm response helps her solve the problem, and the crew starts trusting her with last-minute fixes. Their trust gives her more chances to practice solving problems under pressure.

Accept explanations that connect a tendency with a specific experience rather than treating either as the sole cause of behavior. For the open task, look for a four-sentence response that also explains how the student's behavior changes later opportunities.