

What Are Heredity, Instincts, and Learned Behaviors?

Science Words

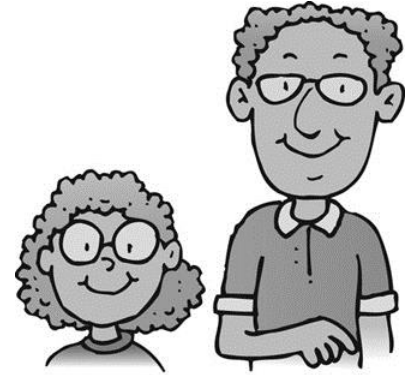
Say each word quietly to yourself. Then read the meaning.

Read the tip to help you remember.

heredity [huh•RED•ih•tee] the passing of traits from parent to offspring

Heredity and *inherit* are in the same word family.

When people say, “She has her mother’s beautiful black hair,” they mean that the person inherited this feature from her mother. You inherit features from your parents as part of your *heredity*.

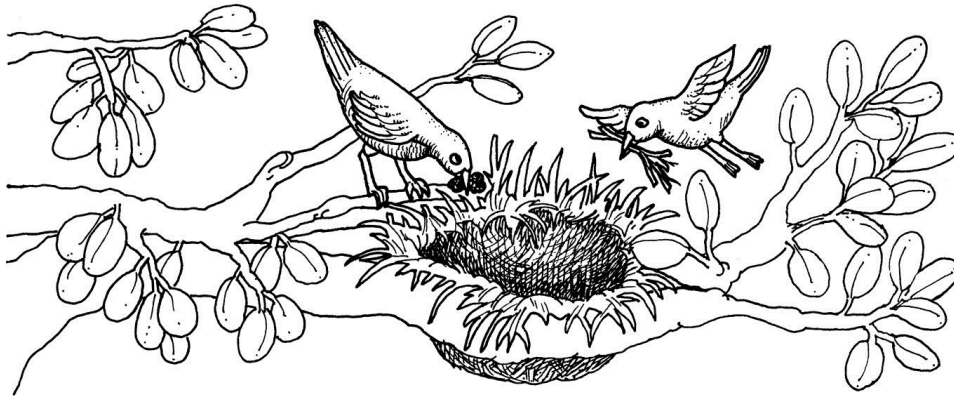


learned behavior [LERND bee•HAYV•yer] something an animal learns from experience or by watching other animals

You can teach a puppy to sit, come, and roll over on your command. These are *learned behaviors*, because a dog is not born knowing how to do them. The dog must learn.

instinct [IN•stinkt] behaviors that an animal is born knowing how to do

Instinct contains the word *in*. *Instincts* are behaviors that are built in. For example, no one needs to teach a puppy to drink milk from its mother because this behavior is an *instinct*.



Knowing how to build a nest is an instinct.

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Science Concepts

Read the Ideas more than once. Do your best to remember them.

1. Heredity is when parents pass on features, or traits, to their young.
2. Heredity affects the color of a plant's flowers; heredity affects the shape of a bird's beak.
3. Genes carry information about traits.
4. A living thing gets half its genes from its female parent and half from its male parent.
5. The environment of a living thing affects its traits.
6. The soil a plant is growing in may affect the color of its flowers.
7. A learned behavior is something that is learned from experience or by watching others.
8. Chimps learn how to make a tool from a branch by watching other chimps do it.
9. An instinct is something a living thing knows how to do without having to learn it.
10. Birds have an instinct to build nests; babies have an instinct to cry when they are hungry.