تمارين فهم المقروء حول طبيعة الشخصية





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التواصل الاجتماعي بحسب الصف الثاني عشر المتقدم					
صفحة المناهج الإماراتية على فيسبوك					
المواد على تلغرام	التربية الاسلامية	اللغة العربية	اللغة الانجليزية	الرياضيات	

المزيد من الملفات بحسب الصف الثاني عشر المتقدم والمادة لغة انجليزية في الفصل الأول	
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تطبيق المناهج على Store App (آبل)	تطبيق المناهج على Play Google (أندرويد)

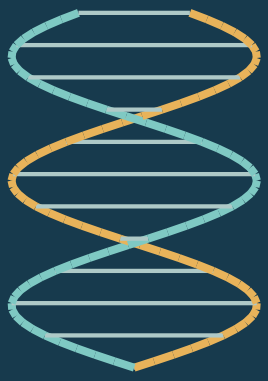
READ BEYOND THE LABEL

Reading Comprehension Practice

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

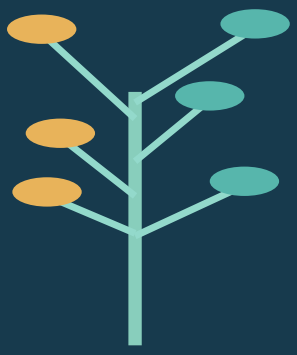
Personality: Nature or Nurture?

NATURE



Influences we inherit

NURTURE



Experiences that shape us

A PROVERB TO REMEMBER

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

Prepared by Tr. Ahmed Abd Elaty

READING 01

The Quiet Leader

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

At a school leadership workshop, Mariam was placed in charge of a group planning a charity event. Her classmates expected her to struggle. She rarely volunteered answers in large lessons, and she preferred to prepare her thoughts before speaking. A visiting trainer, however, questioned the assumption that the most confident voice belonged to the strongest leader. She asked the group to assess Mariam's decisions rather than the volume of her contributions. The distinction mattered because schools often mistake visible enthusiasm for competence, unintentionally excluding students who lead through careful observation and deliberate judgement.

During the first meeting, Mariam invited everyone to write one proposal anonymously before the discussion began. This simple change made it harder for outspoken students to dominate and encouraged quieter members to share ideas. She then organised the suggestions into a database, noting each proposal's likely cost, volunteers required and possible consequences. Her classmates initially considered the process slow. Yet when two popular suggestions proved unrealistic, the group already had evidence for choosing a more cost-effective alternative. Mariam's method did not eliminate disagreement; it helped turn disagreement into a decision that could be defended.

Some researchers argue that traits related to sociability have partly heritable influences, whereas others emphasise the significance of expectations, practice and social context. Neither explanation means a person's leadership capacity can be read directly from a personality label. A confident teenager may need to learn to listen, just as a reserved student may learn to speak firmly in an unfamiliar situation. These are not necessarily attempts to replace a natural personality. They may instead be ways of expanding the actions available to someone. Treating temperament as destiny reduces the freedom to develop skills that feel uncomfortable at first.

The event eventually exceeded its fundraising target, but the trainer resisted declaring Mariam a 'born leader'. Success also depended on cooperative classmates, realistic objectives and a timetable that protected meetings from interruptions. If those supports disappeared, the outcome might change. Conversely, another student could perform just as well with different methods. The useful lesson was not that introverts are secretly superior to extroverts. It was that organisations should create more than one route to effective leadership and judge results using evidence. Personality can influence how a student begins, without deciding where that student must finish. For observers, the workshop also offered a practical reminder that genuine confidence can be expressed through preparation and inclusive decisions.

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READING 01

The Quiet Leader | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **Which function did the database primarily serve?**

A Estimating the total number of donors
B Predicting students' personalities
C Recording options and practical constraints

02 **If the school removed opportunities for written preparation, what is the most plausible outcome?**

A Some capable students might contribute less effectively
B The group's decisions might become quicker
C The event might meet its fundraising target sooner

03 **Which statement best captures the central argument?**

A Reserved students generally make more reliable leaders
B Leadership should be assessed by performance, not stereotypes
C Written planning matters more than group interaction

04 **Why did classmates first question Mariam's method?**

A It excluded confident speakers
B It required expensive software
C It seemed unnecessarily slow

05 **What broader message does the passage convey?**

A Successful leadership requires the suppression of natural traits
B A person's initial temperament need not limit future development
C Personality categories are useful for assigning fixed roles

06 **What does the author suggest about sociability and leadership?**

A Temperament does not determine the full range of skills
B Sociability has no biological influence
C Leadership outcomes can be inferred from a label

07 **How did Mariam collect ideas at the group's first meeting?**

A Through individual interviews
B Through anonymous written proposals
C Through a public vote

08 **Why is the fundraising result not conclusive proof of inborn ability?**

A The event benefited from several supporting conditions
B Its financial target had been reduced
C The trainer collected no observations

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READING 02

The Talent Myth in Music

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

When a youth orchestra auditioned new players, one examiner described a candidate as having 'natural musical talent'. The teenager had performed a demanding passage with ease, while another candidate hesitated despite months of preparation. It was tempting to treat the contrast as evidence that musical ability is a gift possessed by a fortunate few. Yet the description concealed important information. The first candidate had grown up with instruments at home, had regular access to lessons and had been encouraged to experiment without fear of mistakes. What sounded spontaneous may have been the product of an unusually supportive environment.

This does not prove that everyone begins with identical abilities. Differences in auditory processing, coordination and sensitivity to rhythm may influence how rapidly learners progress. Some of these differences could be partly heritable. Nevertheless, a potential advantage is not the same as an inevitable outcome. A young musician who learns quickly but receives little feedback may eventually fall behind someone whose first attempts were clumsy. Practice quality matters too. Repeating a familiar piece for hours can strengthen confidence without correcting a specific weakness; targeted feedback may produce greater improvement in less time.

The orchestra redesigned its selection process. Instead of relying entirely on a polished performance, examiners gave candidates a short unfamiliar passage, explained one technique and listened again after a practice interval. They also considered how applicants responded to advice. The additional task did not erase inequality, since students differed in their experience of formal instruction. It did, however, reveal adaptability that the original audition barely measured. A candidate who began less impressively made a significant improvement after one focused explanation. The examiners decided that her capacity to learn deserved serious attention, even though her final performance remained imperfect.

Critics argued that the revised process might reduce artistic standards. The director replied that high standards and fair assessment were not opposites. A professional orchestra still needs skilled performers, but a youth programme also has a responsibility to develop future ability. If access to lessons is confused with inherited genius, institutions may reinforce disadvantages while congratulating themselves on recognising merit. The real question is not whether nature or nurture wins a contest. It is whether an assessment identifies present achievement, future learning potential, or some unclear mixture of the two. Those are different judgements, with different consequences for young people. That distinction matters whenever selection determines who receives further instruction and support.

READING 02

The Talent Myth in Music | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **What might happen if auditions reward only polished performances?**

A The revised task would eliminate the effect of prior coaching
B Inborn differences in hearing would disappear
C Existing inequalities could be mistaken for inherited merit

02 **What new task was added to the audition?**

A Candidates performed a second prepared composition
B Candidates rehearsed an unfamiliar extract after feedback
C Candidates completed a written music history test

03 **Which limitation of the revised audition does the author acknowledge?**

A It gives too little attention to the final performance quality
B It awards places randomly after training
C It cannot remove differences in previous instruction

04 **Why could the first candidate's ease be misleading?**

A Previous access to musical resources was not visible
B The piece had been practised for only a short time
C The passage was below the required standard

05 **How does the passage distinguish practice quantity from quality?**

A Confidence grows more from repetition than from correction
B Focused correction may matter more than repeating known material
C Extended practice is the main predictor of accurate performance

06 **What did one less polished candidate demonstrate?**

A Complete mastery of the new technique
B An unchanging advantage in musical memory
C Notable improvement following precise guidance

07 **What is the author's overall position?**

A Ability reflects interacting influences, so evaluation should be thoughtful
B Aptitude is best judged through rapid first impressions
C Musical standards must be abandoned to ensure fairness

08 **Which issue is most central to the passage?**

A Whether school orchestras should charge tuition
B The difference between current performance and learning potential
C The effect of instrument choice on auditory ability

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READING 03

The Risk Behind the Wheel

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

A city recorded a rise in dangerous driving among licensed teenagers. During a meeting, one speaker blamed adolescent biology: young people, he argued, were naturally attracted to risk, so warnings were unlikely to work. Another speaker insisted that reckless driving was simply a matter of poor upbringing. Both explanations offered the comfort of a single cause. Neither captured the variation in behaviour. Some teenagers drove cautiously, some took risks only when friends were passengers, and others behaved differently depending on the road or time of day. A useful policy had to explain these differences rather than merely assign blame.

The transport department reviewed reports from driving instructors, interviews with students and observations near two schools. Several risky incidents occurred immediately after social gatherings, when passengers encouraged drivers to impress the group. Students also described junctions where confusing signs led to abrupt manoeuvres. The findings did not rule out differences in sensation-seeking or impulse control. They suggested that personal tendencies could be amplified or restrained by the environment. A cautious road layout might not change a teenager's personality, but it could make a moment of poor judgement less likely to cause harm.

Officials proposed three measures: supervised practice in varied conditions, clearer road markings, and a campaign encouraging passengers to challenge unsafe decisions. A councillor objected that training alone could not remove heritable tendencies. The project manager agreed, then asked why complete personality change should be the goal. Safety improvements in other fields rarely depend on everyone becoming naturally careful. Seat belts, reliable procedures and well-designed systems reduce the consequences of predictable errors. The relevant question was whether the measures could reduce harm, not whether they could make all drivers alike.

There was still a risk of overconfidence. The department could not treat a short-term fall in incidents as proof that the campaign had worked, particularly if traffic levels changed. It would compare similar periods, examine both near misses and collisions, and ask whether young drivers felt able to speak against peer pressure. The argument for the programme was therefore conditional: if different influences combine to shape behaviour, several modest interventions may work better than a lecture about character. Calling teenagers 'naturally reckless' is not only unfair to careful drivers; it may distract authorities from circumstances they have the power to improve. The city's approach also recognised that young drivers deserve realistic guidance rather than an enduring verdict about their character.

READING 03

The Risk Behind the Wheel | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **Which is the text's principal claim?**

A Risk is shaped by interacting influences and needs layered solutions
B The strongest policy is a campaign against social pressure
C Teenage driving should be banned until adulthood

02 **If near misses declined but collisions did not, which response best fits the author's approach?**

A Declare the campaign a complete success
B Investigate further before drawing a firm conclusion
C Assume the measures are ineffective because collisions persisted

03 **What complicated the claim that all teenagers are naturally reckless?**

A No teenager admitted taking risks
B Student reports pointed to only a single common factor
C Their actions varied with passengers and circumstances

04 **Why would a short-term decrease in incidents be weak evidence?**

A Driving instructors were prohibited from observing students
B Other factors, such as traffic levels, could change
C The programme had no measurable outcome

05 **Why were road markings included in the proposal?**

A They could reduce dangerous errors without changing personalities
B They would prevent passengers from entering cars
C They were cheaper than any other possible measure

06 **What was the project manager's response to biological explanations?**

A The city should screen drivers genetically
B Biology was irrelevant to any driving decision
C Reducing harm need not require eliminating dispositions

07 **What larger idea does the argument support?**

A Fixed labels can obscure practical opportunities to improve outcomes
B Biological tendencies should be the primary target of policy
C Public safety improves most when penalties become more severe

08 **Where did officials examine confusing road signs?**

A Outside the transport department
B Along a newly opened motorway
C At junctions identified by students

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READING 04

Two Languages, One Mind

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

A parent at a school information evening asked whether some children were 'born good at languages'. Her son enjoyed conversations in Arabic but struggled to speak English in front of classmates. She feared that no amount of practice would overcome his lack of talent. The language coordinator resisted giving a reassuring but simplistic answer. Children vary in memory, attention and confidence, and some of those differences may have biological components. Yet the ability to communicate in another language is also shaped by opportunities to use it, the quality of feedback, and the emotional cost of making mistakes in public.

To illustrate the point, the coordinator described two imaginary learners. One recognises grammatical patterns quickly but rarely speaks outside lessons. The other takes longer to notice patterns but regularly talks with neighbours, asks questions and experiments with unfamiliar expressions. The first may achieve higher scores in controlled exercises while the second becomes more flexible in spontaneous conversation. Neither result proves that one child possesses a superior 'language gene'. It shows that different tasks reward different strengths. Even the word 'fluency' can conceal several abilities, including accuracy, speed, listening and the freedom to communicate without excessive self-censorship.

The school then introduced conversation circles where students selected topics connected to their own interests. Teachers corrected recurring errors after discussions rather than interrupting every sentence. The change was intentional: constant corrections had been discouraging students who already feared embarrassment. At the same time, teachers did not abandon explicit instruction. Learners received focused feedback and opportunities to practise sounds or structures that remained difficult. The coordinator emphasised that a supportive atmosphere is not one in which accuracy no longer matters. It is one in which students can make useful attempts before their performance is judged.

After a term, the parent's son volunteered in a group discussion. His vocabulary was still limited, and his progress could not establish the cause of every improvement. Nevertheless, the experience challenged the original prediction that an early difficulty defined his future. It also raised a question about assessment: an exam built entirely around rapid answers may overlook the thoughtful communicator who needs a little preparation time. Schools cannot promise identical outcomes, nor should they ignore real differences in learning needs. They can, however, avoid turning temporary performance into permanent identity and provide several routes through which learners may develop genuine communicative competence. Such distinctions can reshape a learner's expectations significantly.

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READING 04

Two Languages, One Mind | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **A school tests speaking only through immediate responses. What might the coordinator predict?**

A Students with slower preparation may be underestimated
B The results would separate confidence from other language skills
C The results will measure listening accuracy perfectly

02 **Why did the school reduce immediate corrections?**

A Teachers wanted to focus exclusively on speaking speed
B Frequent interruptions discouraged hesitant speakers
C Students were unable to understand teacher feedback

03 **What does the coordinator mean by a supportive atmosphere?**

A Accuracy is irrelevant in language assessment
B Classroom speaking must be replaced by written exercises
C Learners can attempt communication before judgement

04 **Why is the son's improvement treated cautiously?**

A His vocabulary became indistinguishable from a native speaker's
B It cannot identify the exact cause of every gain
C The student performed better only on written grammar tasks

05 **What contrast do the two imaginary learners illustrate?**

A Fast pattern recognition guarantees fluent conversation
B Formal grammar teaching prevents spontaneous speech
C Different language tasks reward different strengths

06 **When did teachers correct repeated language errors in the conversation circles?**

A After discussions had finished
B Before students entered the conversation circle
C Before students selected topics

07 **What is the main focus of the argument?**

A Why bilingual learners need no explicit instruction
B How language learning combines individual differences and experience
C Why students need conversational practice instead of grammar

08 **Which lesson extends beyond language learning?**

A Early difficulty should not be mistaken for an unchangeable limit
B Communication growth depends mainly on reducing anxiety
C Biological influences should be excluded from educational decisions

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READING 05

Who Becomes an Inventor?

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

At a regional innovation fair, visitors crowded around a robot built by a teenage finalist. A judge praised the girl's 'inventor's mind', suggesting that exceptional creativity was an uncommon natural gift. The finalist disagreed with the description. Her first three designs had failed, and the fourth worked only after a classmate suggested replacing an expensive sensor with a simpler one. If the finished product was the only evidence considered, its long, uncertain development would disappear. That mattered because students who did not identify as naturally creative might conclude that they had no reason to begin experimenting.

Creativity undoubtedly involves individual differences. Some people enjoy exploring unconventional possibilities; others prefer refining existing ideas. Yet a preference is not a fixed capacity. In the finalist's classroom, students were rewarded for explaining failed attempts, and teachers protected time for revising designs. A neighbouring school, by contrast, displayed only the most successful projects and allowed few opportunities to modify work after grading. The difference could influence whether students take intellectual risks. Failure in the first classroom supplied information; in the second, it threatened reputation. It would be premature to attribute different levels of innovation entirely to students' personalities.

The finalist's robot also illustrated that invention is rarely an isolated achievement. Its programming depended on freely available tutorials, its frame was cut in a shared workshop, and its data were tested by classmates who noticed mistakes the designer had missed. The judge wondered whether this reduced her individual credit. She responded that recognising collaboration did not erase responsibility for integrating the parts. In fact, a willingness to revise an idea after criticism can be as significant as producing the first unusual suggestion. A school seeking future inventors should therefore evaluate reasoning, adaptation and cooperation alongside originality.

A critic warned that encouraging everyone to innovate might waste resources on weak ideas. The finalist accepted that projects require limits: budgets, safety tests and an honest, thorough assessment of likely benefits. What she opposed was using an early impression of talent to decide who deserved access to those opportunities. The consequences of that decision could accumulate over several years. Students excluded from workshops gain less experience, then appear less capable at the next competition. In that cycle, an institution may manufacture the very difference it claims merely to discover. The fair ended with a broader question: how many potential innovators remain invisible because nobody lets them practise inventing?

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READING 05

Who Becomes an Inventor? | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **Which idea best summarises the passage's central reasoning?**

A Opportunity and evaluation practices influence who becomes inventive
B Competition encourages originality more effectively than feedback
C Early recognition identifies the most promising inventors

02 **Why does collaboration not necessarily diminish individual achievement?**

A The inventor should be credited mainly for finding collaborators
B Integrating contributions can itself require judgement
C Shared resources matter more than design judgement

03 **What concern does the finalist accept about innovation programmes?**

A Successful projects should receive additional funding first
B Innovation is improved mainly by competitive selection
C Projects must face budgets and practical evaluation

04 **How did the two schools differ?**

A Both offered equal opportunities to explain unsuccessful trials
B One treated unsuccessful attempts as information for revision
C One assessed prototypes more often than written reports

05 **Why did the finalist resist the judge's description of her talent?**

A It ignored failed versions and collaborative revision
B She had completed the entire project without help
C She believed the robot was not an invention

06 **What is a likely long-term effect of excluding students after early weak performance?**

A The academy of inventors would need to raise entry standards
B Their creative preferences will inevitably disappear
C Their reduced experience may later be misread as low potential

07 **What change helped the finalist's fourth robot design work?**

A Replacing the programmable frame with a simpler one
B Replacing a costly sensor with a simpler component
C Installing a more powerful battery

08 **What overall view of creativity does the writer defend?**

A Original ideas are more important than practical constraints
B Creativity is best understood as an individual gift independent of context
C Originality matters, but development also depends on practice and collaboration

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READING 06

The Problem with Praising Grit

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

When a student fails an examination, adults often advise them to become more determined. The advice sounds reasonable: effort matters, and students who abandon difficult tasks have fewer opportunities to improve. Yet a headteacher questioned whether the popular language of 'grit' had become too convenient. In her school, some pupils could attend revision sessions and use quiet study rooms, while others cared for younger relatives or shared crowded homes. Praising perseverance without noticing those differences might turn unequal access into a judgement about personal character. A concept designed to encourage students could instead become another way to blame them.

The school investigated why students missed a mathematics workshop. Several participants said the material was too advanced; others wanted to attend but could not stay after school. One student had attended every session yet continued making the same mistakes because nobody explained his misunderstandings. The headteacher proposed recording not only attendance but also the kind of assistance students received. When the workshop began offering shorter lunchtime sessions and targeted feedback, participation widened. The change did not prove that determination was unimportant. It showed that persistent effort becomes more productive when suitable conditions allow it to be directed intelligently.

Personality researchers sometimes study differences in self-discipline, including the possibility that such tendencies are partly heritable. However, it would be a mistake to infer from that possibility that effort cannot be developed or supported. Habits emerge through routines, expectations and experiences of success or failure. A student repeatedly punished for errors may avoid a challenging task not because of laziness but because the anticipated consequence is humiliation. Another may persist for hours on the wrong method, demonstrating determination without learning. Educational programmes should therefore ask whether students are working effectively, rather than merely how long they continue.

The headteacher's revised policy paired challenging goals with support and opportunities to change strategy. Some teachers worried this would lower expectations. She argued that removing unnecessary obstacles is different from removing intellectual challenge. Her school still required independent work and honest assessment, but it stopped treating endurance as evidence of moral superiority. At the end of the year, improved mathematics results were encouraging, although several changes had happened at once and no single cause could be isolated. The more defensible claim was narrower: resilience is valuable, but institutions should not use it as an excuse to ignore the environments in which students are asked to succeed.

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READING 06

The Problem with Praising Grit | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 What made attendance an incomplete measure of progress?

A Some regular attendees still needed feedback on errors
B The school had not recorded workshop dates
C Students attended more often than records suggested

02 Why could some students not attend the original workshop?

A They were required to select another subject
B They lacked time after school because of responsibilities
C They were barred after receiving low grades

03 How did the redesigned workshop address access?

A It required longer evening classes
B It moved the workshop to longer weekend sessions
C It introduced shorter sessions and focused guidance

04 What distinction does the headteacher make about standards?

A Reducing barriers differs from lowering intellectual demands
B Support can reduce the need for difficult independent work
C Higher expectations should precede additional support

05 Why might avoiding a difficult task not indicate laziness?

A Effort matters more than the fear of embarrassment
B The subject may have no challenging content
C The student may fear humiliation after past mistakes

06 What is the passage's primary contention?

A Determination matters, but institutions must consider access and guidance
B Students with demanding responsibilities cannot achieve well
C Schools should stop encouraging persistence

07 A pupil studies longer but repeats the same errors. Which change is most defensible?

A Conclude the pupil lacks an inherited ability
B Offer diagnostic feedback and a different strategy
C Raise the pupil's grit score

08 Which principle best fits the essay as a whole?

A Support systems determine results more than student choices
B Teachers should judge resilience rather than attainment
C Personal qualities and supportive systems jointly affect success

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READING 07

Can Empathy Be Learned?

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

At a community centre, volunteers were preparing to welcome families displaced by flooding. One organiser described empathy as something people either possess or lack: some volunteers immediately sensed what others needed, while some appeared awkward or distant. A social worker challenged that conclusion. Visible warmth is not a reliable measure of concern, she argued, and concern is not identical to understanding another person's circumstances. A quiet volunteer may notice practical problems that a friendly speaker overlooks. If the centre equated empathy with a particular style of expression, it risked misjudging both volunteers and families.

The social worker arranged a training exercise in which volunteers read two conflicting accounts of the same temporary-housing problem. A parent wanted privacy and a stable routine; an official had to allocate limited space fairly across dozens of households. Participants were asked to identify what each person knew, feared and could realistically control. The exercise did not ask them to declare one side virtuous and the other selfish. Instead, it revealed that good intentions can still produce harmful decisions when information is incomplete. Volunteers changed their proposals after recognising that a seemingly generous solution would separate siblings from their schools.

Some aspects of emotional sensitivity may vary between individuals, and these tendencies can have biological as well as experiential influences. Yet empathy also requires skills: asking questions without making assumptions, detecting misunderstandings and resisting the urge to turn another person's situation into a story about oneself. A volunteer who feels strong sympathy but ignores a family's stated preferences may be less helpful than one who calmly checks the consequences of a decision. Training cannot guarantee compassion, and a short role-play cannot replicate the pressure of displacement. It can, however, encourage habits that make care more accurate and respectful.

After several weeks, organisers collected feedback anonymously. Families valued clear information and the freedom to reject unsuitable offers as much as reassuring conversation. The social worker warned against interpreting this as proof that emotional connection was unnecessary. Rather, respect was one way concern became visible. The centre added a review process in which families could question decisions without being labelled ungrateful. The broader argument was that empathy should not be treated as a flattering personality badge. It is better understood partly through the actions people take when another person's needs conflict with their first assumptions. That standard also invites volunteers to reconsider their first impressions of others carefully.

READING 07

Can Empathy Be Learned? | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **What overall standard for empathy does the writer favour?**

A Judging people by apparent emotional intensity
B Examining how concern shapes informed, respectful decisions
C Ranking volunteers by personality questionnaires alone

02 **Why was anonymous family feedback important?**

A It captured what families themselves valued
B It proved the role-play reproduced displacement exactly
C It eliminated the need for any further review

03 **What accounts did volunteers compare during training?**

A Two descriptions of the same medical treatment
B Two perspectives on temporary housing
C Two reports about a transport accident

04 **A volunteer insists on an unwanted offer because it seems kind. What would the social worker most likely advise?**

A Explain why refusing assistance is ungrateful
B Offer the same arrangement without discussion
C Ask the family about its priorities before proceeding

05 **Which claim best expresses the text's main idea?**

A Empathy includes learnable practices of perspective and respect
B Empathy is best demonstrated through reassuring conversation
C Empathy is primarily an emotional reaction that cannot be taught

06 **Why did the social worker question visible warmth as a test?**

A Volunteers were prohibited from speaking to families
B Expressive friendliness may overlook practical needs
C Visible friendliness reveals intentions rather than understanding

07 **How does the text distinguish sympathy from useful empathy?**

A Strong feelings can coexist with ignoring stated preferences
B Respecting preferences prevents emotional connection
C Sympathy is more useful than checking stated preferences

08 **What did volunteers realise about a generous proposal?**

A It would require more volunteer training
B It would reduce the number of temporary housing places
C It could disrupt children's school arrangements

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READING 08

The Memory Champion's Secret

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

A television programme introduced a student who could remember the order of a shuffled deck of cards. The presenter called her an example of extraordinary natural memory, and viewers were invited to decide whether they possessed the same gift. The student later explained that she had spent months practising a method that linked unfamiliar information to vivid locations along an imagined journey. The cards were not retained as isolated symbols; each became part of a mental scene. Her achievement remained impressive, but the explanation complicated the distinction between inherited ability and deliberate technique.

The programme's producers arranged a small demonstration. A group of volunteers learned a simplified version of the method and practised it with lists of everyday objects. Most improved on the trained task. However, when they were asked to understand a difficult historical argument, the same improvement was not obvious. Remembering a sequence and evaluating complex ideas draw on overlapping but distinct processes. A learner who memorises facts accurately may still misunderstand their relationship. The presenter had initially implied that memory training would improve almost every aspect of school performance. The demonstration supported a much narrower conclusion.

There may be genuine differences in attention, working memory and speed of learning, some of which have partly heritable components. But those differences cannot be separated neatly from sleep, anxiety, motivation or previous experience. A student distracted by constant interruptions may perform poorly in one setting and well in another. Likewise, technology that automatically stores reminders in a database can reduce the need to memorise minor details, leaving more attention for analysis. Critics worry that automation weakens memory. The stronger question is which information deserves to be memorised and which can be managed responsibly with tools.

The memory champion argued that techniques should be taught without promising miraculous results. She still revised definitions, tested herself on explanations and asked teachers to challenge the quality of her reasoning. A competition score measured one remarkable skill, not the total capacity of her mind. Her advice also carried a social consequence: if exceptional performances are described only as gifts, ordinary learners may never discover methods that could help them. Yet the opposite exaggeration is equally misleading. Training cannot guarantee identical outcomes for everyone. The more useful view is that human potential includes differences, strategies and limitations, and that educational claims should match the evidence available. Strategies also work best when their purpose remains clear.

READING 08

The Memory Champion's Secret | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **If a school promises higher grades in every subject after memory drills, what would the text suggest?**

A The claim is justified by card-memory performances
B The drills should replace normal teaching
C The claim goes beyond the evidence presented

02 **Which issue drives the passage?**

A The difference between a trained memory feat and general learning ability
B The history of electronic reminders in schools
C Whether card competitions should award prizes

03 **What limitation emerged in the volunteers' demonstration?**

A The method required expensive equipment
B Participants failed to memorise the everyday objects
C Training did not clearly improve analysis of historical arguments

04 **Why does the champion still practise explanations?**

A Competitions are more demanding than classroom explanations
B Recall alone does not establish conceptual understanding
C Her spatial technique no longer works

05 **What may help explain poor performance in one setting?**

A Distractions or stress affecting attention
B The absence of any biological differences
C An unchanging inability to learn

06 **Why does the author mention a reminder database?**

A To suggest that electronic storage improves general reasoning
B To show that technology changes how attention can be allocated
C To prove digital tools improve inherited memory capacity

07 **What broader lesson emerges?**

A Memory strategies mainly benefit strong natural learners
B Memory training can replace broader reasoning instruction
C Abilities can be developed, but improvements must not be exaggerated

08 **What strategy did the student use for the cards?**

A Sorting cards by numerical value
B Linking cards to imagined locations
C Grouping cards into numerical categories

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READING 09

Born to Run?

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

A sports company advertised a test that supposedly identified children with the genes of future endurance champions. Parents were promised an early answer to a difficult question: should their child invest years in athletics or choose another activity? A physiologist criticised the promise as stronger than the available evidence. Endurance depends on many interacting characteristics, including cardiovascular function, training history, recovery and motivation. Some variation is partly heritable, but a genetic profile cannot reliably predict every experience a young person will have. More importantly, a test result could influence whether that experience becomes available in the first place.

The physiologist described two runners from different regions. One had trained regularly on safe tracks with experienced coaches, while the other had practised on crowded roads between family responsibilities. Their race times differed significantly. It would be misleading to assign the entire difference to biology, although that would not prove the athletes had identical physical potential. Coaching and opportunity are part of the observed result. In addition, young athletes mature at different rates; someone who excels at fourteen may not remain ahead at eighteen. Early selection can reward temporary advantages while excluding those whose development follows a different timetable.

The company defended its service by arguing that families wanted cost-effective decisions. The physiologist replied that an apparently efficient choice can have a hidden consequence. If a child labelled 'unsuited to running' stops training, later poor performance cannot confirm the original prediction. The test has helped create the outcome it claims to foresee. Conversely, a favourable result may lead parents to pressure a child who dislikes competitive sport. A more responsible programme would assess health, interest, access to coaching and progress over time, then allow young people to revise their goals as they learn.

This does not mean coaches should ignore individual needs or promise everyone an international medal. Training must be adapted to differences in fitness, injury risk and response. Resources are limited, and teams sometimes need to select athletes for particular events. Yet selection criteria should be transparent and revisited rather than disguised as a permanent verdict on identity. The physiologist's argument was therefore neither anti-science nor anti-competition. It was a warning against using incomplete biological information to close future opportunities. The most valuable destination of youth sport may not be a podium at all, but a lasting capacity to enjoy physical activity. Such decisions may influence motivation long before adulthood.

READING 09

Born to Run? | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **Why are the runners' times difficult to compare?**

A They had unequal access to safe training and coaching
B Their results were recorded at different stages of training
C One race was officially cancelled

02 **What is the central critique of the genetic test?**

A It prevents sports scientists from studying inherited traits
B It dismisses the usefulness of performance assessment
C It gives incomplete information an unjustified power over future opportunity

03 **A runner receives an unfavourable prediction yet later improves markedly. What does this imply?**

A The result proves that training is more important than physiology
B The original prediction should not have been treated as conclusive
C The athlete had no biological influences

04 **What hidden consequence concerns the physiologist?**

A A positive result might weaken the need for ongoing coaching
B A negative result may prompt excessive physical training
C A negative label may discourage the very training needed for progress

05 **What does the physiologist recommend instead of a fixed verdict?**

A Monitoring interest and improvement while adapting support
B Ignoring injury risk when assigning activities
C Selecting athletes through family background

06 **What service did the sports company promote?**

A Personalised meal delivery for runners
B Guaranteed coaching placements overseas
C An early genetic prediction of endurance potential

07 **How can maturation complicate early selection?**

A Early superior speed usually predicts later endurance
B Athletes develop at different rates across adolescence
C Maturation explains performance more reliably than training

08 **What view of youth sport does the writer promote?**

A Science should guide support without determining a child's identity
B Competitive results are more valuable than health
C Current race times should receive the greatest weight in selection

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READING 10

The Digital Attention Experiment

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

A technology company offered schools software that measured how often students switched between tasks. Its sales team presented distraction as a stable personality weakness and promised to identify learners who lacked natural concentration. A head of learning technology was unconvinced. Some students may differ in sensitivity to interruptions, but software notifications, classroom noise and unclear tasks can also shape attention. If the product treated every change of screen as a failure of character, its conclusions would be misleading. A student might switch to a dictionary to clarify a difficult word, while another might open an entertainment site to escape the work.

The headteacher authorised a limited trial with privacy rules. Students could review their own records, and teachers were not allowed to rank them publicly. For the first week, the software recorded task changes while classroom conditions remained unchanged. During the second week, teachers introduced longer uninterrupted reading periods and removed unnecessary alerts. Screen switching decreased in many classes, although the trial was too short to prove a lasting effect. The result suggested that attention was responsive to the learning environment, not merely a fixed trait that the company could measure once and for all.

The trial also exposed the importance of interpretation. One student had few recorded switches because he stared at the same page without understanding it. Another changed screens repeatedly to compare sources and build a careful argument. Neither pattern, by itself, established how deeply the student was thinking. The headteacher insisted that digital data be combined with observations of actual learning. She also challenged the company's claim that constant monitoring was a cost-effective replacement for teacher judgement. Automation can process large amounts of information, but it cannot automatically determine the intention behind an action.

Parents were divided. Some welcomed personalised feedback; others feared that a permanent record of 'distractibility' would follow their children into future assessments. The school decided not to adopt individual attention scores for high-stakes decisions. Instead, it used the trial to improve lesson design and to help students reflect privately on their working habits. This compromise did not deny that self-regulation matters. It recognised that freedom to improve requires more than a label. The deeper lesson is that educational technology should reveal opportunities for change, not create a database of apparently permanent weaknesses that students are then expected to overcome alone. Their contrasting experiences showed why simple numerical rankings could distort educational judgement.

READING 10

The Digital Attention Experiment | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **What changed during the second week of the trial?**

A Students were assigned public attention rankings
B Students were encouraged to compare several digital sources
C Students were given longer uninterrupted reading time

02 **What risk might follow from using attention scores in admissions?**

A Records could unfairly become lasting judgements about ability
B The school could stop investigating classroom conditions
C Students might avoid digital research even when useful

03 **Why did the short trial not establish permanent improvement?**

A The same decline would occur without any changes in lessons
B The observation period was too limited
C The school did not measure any behaviour

04 **Why could switching to another screen be misclassified?**

A It might serve a learning purpose, such as checking a source
B Screen changes can be interpreted without considering intent
C The school used the data to evaluate students numerically

05 **What central distinction structures the argument?**

A The price difference between software platforms
B Attention as fixed personal weakness versus context-sensitive behaviour
C The superiority of paper materials over digital texts

06 **Which principle does the passage ultimately defend?**

A Attention records are most useful for ranking individuals
B Student privacy must be sacrificed to improve efficiency
C Schools should use technology to support improvement, not freeze identity

07 **What does the student who stared at one page illustrate?**

A The software accurately identified misunderstanding
B Low digital activity does not guarantee understanding
C Students who remain on one task learn more deeply

08 **Why did the headteacher question automated scores?**

A The software could not reveal the intention behind actions
B Parents had unanimously approved the product
C The teachers refused to learn digital skills

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READING 11

When Courage Is Quiet

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

After witnessing a classmate being mocked online, a student named Khalid hesitated to intervene. He feared that speaking publicly would attract the same attention to himself. A visiting speaker interpreted the silence as evidence that some people simply lack courage. The school's counsellor disagreed. Feeling afraid and acting responsibly are not opposites, she explained; fear may be an ordinary response to social risk. Courage is more useful as a description of choices made under pressure than as a permanent label attached to a personality. The difference matters especially when adults want to encourage action without pretending that consequences are harmless.

The school surveyed students anonymously about situations in which they had witnessed unkind behaviour. Many wanted to help but were uncertain which response would protect the target rather than escalate the conflict. Some believed public confrontation was the only courageous option. Others preferred private messages of support or reporting harmful material. The counsellor organised small-group discussions where students compared the likely effects of these choices. A direct challenge could interrupt public mockery, but it could also provoke retaliation. Reporting through a trusted channel might be slower yet safer when several people were involved.

Some differences in emotional reactivity may be partly heritable, and experience can influence how threatening a situation feels. Nevertheless, a school cannot responsibly wait for naturally fearless students to solve every problem. It can teach practical responses, make reporting procedures trustworthy and protect those who speak up. During the programme, Khalid learned how to preserve evidence and contact a trained staff member. When another incident occurred, he used the reporting system and checked privately whether the targeted student needed support. He did not become unusually outspoken; he developed a way to act that matched the risk.

The counsellor resisted turning Khalid into a heroic example. The report was handled confidentially, and the intervention's success also depended on adults responding promptly. If the school had ignored previous complaints, students might reasonably have distrusted its promises. Calling such hesitation a personality defect would conceal an institutional failure. The programme therefore measured whether students knew their options and believed they could use them safely, rather than asking whether they felt fearless. Its central argument was that moral courage is not one dramatic gesture. It can be a careful decision supported by the systems that make responsible action possible. This distinction matters when students face a genuine risk of social exclusion.

READING 11

When Courage Is Quiet | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 How does the passage treat public confrontation?

A It is generally safer than using a reporting procedure
B It can be useful but may also invite retaliation
C It is the most effective response when several people are involved

02 What larger point does the passage make?

A Fearlessness is necessary for ethical behaviour
B Responsible behaviour emerges independently of institutions
C Institutions can help people act well without changing their temperament

03 What is the text's central argument?

A Bravery is most reliably measured by public confidence
B Courage can take several responsible forms shaped by support and context
C Responsible action mainly requires personal confidence

04 What did Khalid do after another online incident?

A He reported the incident and offered private support
B He forwarded the harmful posts to friends
C He confronted the group in a public assembly

05 Why did the counsellor avoid celebrating Khalid publicly?

A The school had no evidence that a report was made
B The intervention had been formally judged unsuccessful
C She wanted to protect confidentiality and recognise wider support

06 Why did some students hesitate to intervene?

A They were uncertain which actions might prevent escalation
B They believed the mockery was harmless
C The school had banned reporting online incidents

07 If school reports were routinely ignored, what would most likely happen?

A The biological causes of fear would increase
B Students might be less willing to use the reporting system
C Public confrontation would become free of risk

08 What role did trusted reporting procedures play?

A They reduced the need to consider individual circumstances
B They removed the need for student judgement
C They offered a safer route for acting on concern

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READING 12

The Clock Inside Us

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

A sixth-form college considered starting lessons later after students complained of exhaustion. One parent argued that teenagers had become lazy and should simply learn discipline. Another insisted that biological sleep preferences determined when each student could perform well, making school schedules almost irrelevant. A sleep specialist rejected both extremes. People's preferred sleep and waking times vary, and changes during adolescence may shift some learners toward later bedtimes. Yet habits, lighting, commuting demands and family responsibilities also influence how much rest a student actually gets. Understanding these factors requires more than assigning everyone the label 'early bird' or 'night owl'.

The college reviewed attendance and student diaries, not just end-of-term grades. Several students who arrived late were travelling long distances, while others stayed awake using devices until midnight. A smaller group reported difficulties sleeping despite consistent routines. The specialist warned that these patterns called for different responses. A later start might help some adolescents, but it would not solve lengthy journeys or noisy homes. Similarly, telling every tired student to abandon a phone would ignore those whose schedules were shaped by work or caring duties. Policies based on a single explanation might benefit one group while overlooking another.

A proposed trial moved the first lesson thirty minutes later and shifted some optional activities to lunch. Teachers also offered guidance on regular routines and reduced unnecessary early-morning assessments. The principal insisted that the college track concentration, attendance and student wellbeing, rather than treat an immediate rise in test results as the only sign of success. Parents raised practical objections: some relied on existing transport connections or collected younger children at fixed times. The college therefore planned alternatives before introducing the trial. A timetable may appear administrative, but it can distribute opportunities and burdens across families in unequal ways.

The specialist's argument was not that students should follow every preference without compromise. Education requires shared schedules, and individuals still make decisions about sleep. But institutional routines should not be mistaken for neutral measurements of character. A learner who struggles at eight in the morning may be dealing with biological timing, poor habits, difficult travel or several influences together. Treating the problem as inherited destiny removes the incentive to improve routines; treating it as laziness removes the incentive to improve systems. The defensible approach is to test reasonable changes, listen to affected families and remain willing to revise their assumptions when evidence points elsewhere.

READING 12

The Clock Inside Us | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 What general lesson does the college's debate illustrate?

A Personal routines are more decisive than school schedules
B Personal sleep preferences should receive more weight than shared schedules
C School routines can shape who appears disciplined and capable

02 How much later was the proposed first lesson?

A Thirty minutes
B One hour
C Fifteen minutes

03 Why did the principal propose several outcome measures?

A The college lacked a marking system
B Test results were considered irrelevant
C The effects of a timetable change extended beyond grades

04 Which concern limited the benefits of a later start?

A It would eliminate optional activities
B It might conflict with existing family and transport arrangements
C It might reduce the amount of time students spent in lessons

05 If attendance improves while wellbeing declines, what should the college do?

A Examine the competing outcomes before deciding
B Conclude that sleep preferences are fictitious
C Treat the trial as successful because lateness fell

06 Why were attendance records insufficient on their own?

A They excluded students travelling from distant areas
B They were recorded before the timetable was debated
C They did not explain why students arrived late

07 What does the specialist argue about individual sleep habits?

A Habits are determined completely by school timetables
B Individuals retain responsibility even when systems also matter
C Adolescent biology prevents any routine from being learned

08 Which tension is at the centre of the argument?

A How biological variation and practical conditions should inform scheduling
B Whether guidance on sleep habits should replace timetable changes
C Whether technology is the main cause of student lateness

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READING 13

The Athlete Who Missed Selection

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

A football academy selected boys for an elite training squad every September. Those born near the beginning of the eligibility year appeared unusually often on the final list. A coach described the pattern as proof that these players possessed stronger natural athletic ability. A parent suggested a different explanation: within the same official age group, some children could be nearly a year older than others. During adolescence, that gap can matter for size, confidence and experience. A selection process intended to identify potential might instead reward an advantage produced partly by the calendar.

The academy examined several seasons of records. Early-born players were more likely to be offered extra coaching, while later-born players were more likely to leave before a second trial. The pattern did not prove that every selection decision was unfair. Some successful athletes may genuinely have shown stronger judgement or technique. However, the opportunity to train with skilled peers could widen an initial difference. By the following season, the selected group might appear even more talented, partly because the academy had invested in it. The organisation needed to consider how its own choices shaped the performances it later evaluated.

Coaches proposed rotating training groups and holding a second trial later in the year. They also began assessing decisions made under pressure in realistic team situations, rather than relying mainly on running speed and physical strength. One coach objected that competitive teams require immediate results. The director accepted this point for some matches but argued that development programmes have a different destination. Their task is to identify which players could improve substantially over several years, not simply which adolescents currently outperform their classmates. An immediate performance measure may be useful without being sufficient for judging long-term promise.

Parents asked whether the changes guaranteed fairness. The director said no. Resources were finite, evaluators could still make mistakes, and different growth rates would remain. Yet acknowledging uncertainty was preferable to disguising a temporary advantage as an inherited gift. The academy also published its selection criteria so rejected players could identify specific skills to practise. For the first time, applicants were told when they could try again. The change did not make every dream of professional sport achievable, but it reduced the consequence of a single early judgement. The larger lesson is that selecting talent can become a process of creating talent, particularly when access to opportunity follows the selection itself.

READING 13

The Athlete Who Missed Selection | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 What calendar pattern did the academy notice?

A Players with summer birthdays usually requested transfers
B Early-born players appeared frequently among those selected
C Selection depended mainly on the season of each trial

02 How might selection amplify an initial advantage?

A Selected players get extra coaching and stronger practice partners
B The academy gives unsuccessful players longer training sessions
C Selection stops individual athletes from maturing

03 Why did the director distinguish matches from development programmes?

A Matches require no technical ability
B Long-term potential is not identical to current competitive performance
C Development programmes should ignore match results completely

04 What is the passage's main argument?

A Selection processes can magnify the differences they claim to discover
B Coaches should avoid judging performances under pressure
C Athletic talent is fixed by the start of adolescence

05 If a rejected player improves after a later growth spurt, which response fits the reform?

A Remove the player from future eligibility lists
B Keep the original rejection because it reflected natural talent
C Reconsider the player under the revised assessment process

06 What wider issue does this example reveal?

A Early results can be unreliable when access to improvement is unequal
B Uncertainty about talent makes organised sport unworkable
C Fair selection can be achieved through a single performance metric

07 Why might an age-group trial misrepresent potential?

A The same training has different effects across age groups
B Relative age can affect physical development and experience
C Coaches weigh technical ability more than physical size

08 What was gained by publishing criteria and retrial dates?

A More opportunities to appeal the current match score
B More time for coaches to investigate family background
C Clearer feedback and a route to future assessment

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READING 14

The Entrepreneurial Personality

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

A business magazine claimed that successful founders share an inherited appetite for risk. Its cover featured a technology entrepreneur who had left a secure job to build a company from a small workshop. The story was dramatic, but an economics teacher asked her class to examine what it omitted. The founder had savings, advice from experienced relatives and a professional network that helped attract early customers. Someone without those resources might face the same uncertainty yet make a different decision. Calling one person naturally adventurous and another naturally cautious could mistake unequal consequences for different personalities.

Students investigated three fictional founders with comparable ideas. One could afford to test a prototype while keeping a part-time job. Another had technical skills but needed an immediate income to support family members. A third had financial backing yet little experience listening to customers. The class initially ranked the third candidate most likely to succeed because she possessed the largest budget. When they examined customer feedback, however, her expensive design solved a problem few people considered urgent. Resources helped, but sound judgement and adaptability remained essential. The exercise challenged both the romance of fearless risk-taking and the assumption that money alone determines enterprise.

Some personality differences, such as preference for novelty or tolerance of uncertainty, may be partly heritable. They can affect which situations people find attractive or stressful. Yet entrepreneurship also depends on regulation, access to markets, trustworthy partners and the freedom to recover from failure. In a community where bankruptcy carries devastating social consequences, caution may be rational rather than evidence of limited ambition. Similarly, a cost-effective small business can be more sustainable than a highly visible venture supported by repeated investment. The measure of success must be established before a personality trait is credited with producing it.

The teacher concluded by asking whether schools should encourage every student to become a founder. Her answer was no: enterprise is one possible route to contributing value, not a superior identity. Education can teach financial reasoning, ethical decisions and the evaluation of uncertain evidence without demanding that everyone enjoy risk. The magazine's narrative remained inspiring, but its lesson was incomplete. A fairer account would show the supports that made experimentation possible and the trade-offs that shaped choices. The boundary worth pushing is not simply personal fear. It is the tendency to explain unequal opportunities through flattering stories about character in profoundly unequal economic circumstances.

READING 14

The Entrepreneurial Personality | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **A capable student declines a risky start-up to support relatives. What follows from the argument?**

A The student should be excluded from enterprise education
B The decision confirms a lack of entrepreneurial aptitude
C The decision can be rational without revealing fixed ability

02 **What does the author imply about cautious business decisions?**

A They may be reasonable responses to serious consequences
B They tend to weaken the quality of a business idea
C They are incompatible with creative problem-solving

03 **What broader educational lesson does the text suggest?**

A Business success is a direct measure of inherited confidence
B Schools can teach entrepreneurial reasoning without idealising one personality
C Entrepreneurship should be promoted as the best career path

04 **Which resource helped the magazine's featured founder find early customers?**

A A guaranteed retail contract
B An overseas government grant
C A professional network

05 **What is the central criticism of the magazine's account?**

A It exaggerates the importance of market research over advertising
B It ignores the interaction between personal choices and opportunity
C It focuses too much on technical details of the product

06 **Why does the teacher question a single definition of success?**

A Different forms of sustainable value may matter
B Start-up work matters mainly to large technology companies
C Market size is less important than initial investment

07 **Why did the well-funded fictional founder appear less promising?**

A She refused to hire technical specialists
B She had invested in a product with weak customer demand
C She lacked the funding to make a working prototype

08 **Why might two equally ambitious people make different business choices?**

A One has probably developed a stronger preference for security
B Ambition cannot exist alongside family responsibilities
C Different levels of financial exposure alter the cost of failure

READING 15

Learning to Listen

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

In a city planning meeting, a new architect spoke confidently about a proposed public library. She explained the building's modern design and anticipated cost savings, but residents remained dissatisfied. Her manager concluded that she lacked the natural charisma needed for leadership. A colleague offered another interpretation: the architect had prepared to persuade rather than to listen. She had answered objections before understanding them. The distinction mattered because confidence can hide communication weaknesses just as hesitation can conceal thoughtful judgement. The architect's problem might not have been an absence of charm; it might have been a set of habits she could change.

Before the next meeting, the colleague asked the architect to record residents' concerns without responding immediately. The complaints were more varied than she expected. Elderly visitors wanted accessible entrances, students requested quiet study areas, and shopkeepers feared that deliveries would block nearby roads. The architect originally treated all opposition as resistance to change. Once she separated the objections, she discovered that some could be addressed through minor revisions, while others involved genuine trade-offs. Increasing study space, for instance, would reduce the area available for community events. Listening did not make the decisions easy; it made the disagreement more precise.

People differ in social energy, auditory sensitivity and comfort with spontaneous debate, and some differences may reflect biological influences. However, communication is not one fixed ability. It involves asking relevant questions, recognising when a response misses the point and explaining why a decision has consequences for different groups. The architect practised summarising a speaker's concern before defending a proposal. She also used visual diagrams when technical language caused confusion. These adjustments did not require her to become a different person. They required her to consider what the audience needed in order to participate meaningfully.

At the final consultation, several residents still opposed the design. Yet more participants agreed that their priorities had been represented accurately. The project team published a short account of which suggestions had been adopted and why others could not be accommodated. The architect's manager initially regarded continued disagreement as failure. She argued instead that public consultation should not be judged by unanimous approval: a responsible process can expose genuine conflicts without eliminating them. What improved was the quality of explanation and trust. The wider point is that effective communication should be assessed through understanding and responsiveness, not merely the impression made by the most polished speaker.

READING 15

Learning to Listen | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **Why did the architect initially misunderstand objections?**

A She treated different concerns as general resistance to change
B Residents submitted their views anonymously
C The manager refused to share the plans

02 **How did visual diagrams help?**

A They eliminated several of the residents' concerns
B They helped residents follow technical explanations
C They removed the need for residents to debate choices

03 **If a future meeting produces strong objections, how should the team respond?**

A Classify critics according to their personality styles
B Avoid recording criticism until after construction
C Clarify concerns and make the trade-offs explicit

04 **What trade-off emerged in the revised design?**

A A loading zone would reduce space for community events
B Additional study areas would leave less room for community events
C Greater accessibility would reduce the number of quiet study rooms

05 **What is the passage's main argument?**

A Communication effectiveness depends on responsive practice, not charisma alone
B Residents should decide design priorities without technical advice
C Public consultations mainly exist to publicise completed designs

06 **What does the architect's response to persistent disagreement imply?**

A Continued criticism indicates that organisers have failed to listen
B Further discussion is pointless once alternatives are stated
C Fair representation can matter even without consensus

07 **What does the library debate illustrate about personality?**

A Skills can improve without changing a person's underlying temperament
B Visible confidence is a sufficient measure of understanding
C Natural sociability is essential for technical leadership

08 **Which group was concerned about nearby deliveries?**

A Elderly library visitors
B Students using study rooms
C Shopkeepers near the proposed library

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READING 16

The Anxiety Before the Test

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

A talented science student performed below expectations in timed examinations. Her teachers were puzzled: during lessons she explained complex experiments clearly and corrected other students' reasoning, yet under exam conditions she sometimes forgot familiar definitions. One teacher attributed the problem to an inherited tendency toward anxiety. Another insisted that she simply had not revised enough. The school psychologist cautioned that either explanation could become a self-fulfilling label. Test anxiety can involve individual sensitivity, preparation, previous experiences and the design of assessment itself. A useful response should identify what happens during the test rather than assume the cause from one disappointing mark.

The psychologist asked the student to describe the moments before her difficulties began. She explained that she spent too long on early questions, monitored the remaining time constantly and became distracted by classmates turning pages. After making one error, she imagined that her entire result was ruined. Her anxiety then interrupted the attention needed to understand later tasks. The problem was not a total absence of knowledge; it was partly a failure to access and apply what she knew under pressure. A practice examination with structured timing checkpoints helped her notice this pattern before it became overwhelming.

Teachers debated whether reducing test pressure would compromise standards. The psychologist argued that validity should be the priority: assessments should measure intended skills as accurately as possible. Giving unlimited time to every candidate might change what some tasks were designed to test. But explaining the format, teaching time-management strategies and providing reasonable adjustments when justified need not reduce intellectual difficulty. The school also compared several sources of evidence, including coursework, practical tasks and timed assessments. The aim was not to guarantee that each student received the same result in every setting. It was to avoid treating a single performance as a complete description of ability.

By the end of the term, the student completed timed questions more steadily, though she still felt nervous. The school avoided claiming that an intervention had permanently removed her anxiety. It also declined to describe her progress as proof that biology played no part. Her strategies and support became more varied. The episode raised a broader educational concern: if learners are told that a stressful performance reveals their fixed intellectual limits, they may lose the freedom to try different methods. Fair assessment requires demanding work, clear evidence and the humility to distinguish a score from a person.

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READING 16

The Anxiety Before the Test | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **What does the outcome demonstrate, according to the passage?**

A A brief strategy can permanently eliminate inherited anxiety
B Improvement can occur without removing nervousness completely
C Practice tests remove anxiety for the majority of learners

02 **What is the central concern of the passage?**

A Separating test performance from simplistic judgements about ability
B Showing that biological explanations of anxiety are incorrect
C Arguing that examination results have no educational purpose

03 **What specific problem did the student report during timed tests?**

A Struggling to understand the science curriculum in lessons
B Repeatedly checking how much time remained
C Being unable to read the written questions

04 **A different student performs poorly only in unfamiliar exam formats. What would the psychologist likely suggest?**

A Explore the format's influence before judging the student's ability
B Conclude that anxiety must be inherited
C Remove difficult questions from the entire curriculum

05 **What overall principle does the example illustrate?**

A Academic performance can be predicted accurately from confidence
B Schools should keep the same timing for each type of examination
C A single score should not define a learner's potential

06 **Why does the psychologist emphasise assessment validity?**

A Time pressure is inappropriate in most demanding subjects
B Examinations should measure their intended skills accurately
C No timed task can evaluate complex thinking

07 **What was the purpose of timing checkpoints?**

A To replace the final test with classroom discussion
B To reduce the scientific knowledge required
C To help the student recognise and manage a harmful pattern

08 **Why did one early error affect later performance?**

A It triggered thoughts that the whole examination was lost
B The test rules prevented her from returning to earlier items
C It caused the teacher to remove her answer sheet

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READING 17

Cooperation or Competition?

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

Two schools introduced different reward systems during a science challenge. At the first, students received individual points for finishing tasks faster than their classmates. At the second, teams earned recognition when every member could explain the final solution. Visitors soon noticed different behaviour. The first school produced several impressive individual results, but some students concealed useful information. The second school saw more shared explanations, although group discussions sometimes delayed decisions. A columnist declared that children are naturally competitive and that the cooperative school was forcing them to behave unnaturally. The evidence did not justify so simple a conclusion.

Competition may motivate people who enjoy clear rankings, and cooperative work can sometimes encourage stronger students to carry weaker participants. However, a reward system also tells students which behaviours matter. When speed earns a prize, sharing a strategy may feel costly. When understanding is assessed collectively, explaining a method becomes an advantage. Students' choices therefore cannot be interpreted without examining the conditions under which they were made. The science challenge offered a particularly revealing detail: several pupils behaved competitively in one format and collaboratively in another. Their apparent personalities had not transformed overnight; the incentives had changed.

A researcher invited both schools to revise their arrangements. At the first, pupils still received recognition for individual achievement, but additional credit was available for explaining a method that helped others progress. At the second, teams retained shared goals while each member completed an independent reflection to demonstrate personal understanding. Neither scheme was a perfect compromise. Students sometimes felt that cooperative credit rewarded an unfair contribution, and some resented being individually tested after a group task. Yet the new designs allowed teachers to observe more than one kind of ability rather than rewarding a single behavioural style.

A debate then emerged about the role of inherited temperament. Some individuals may indeed be more inclined toward competitive situations, but such preferences do not establish which environment produces the best learning. The answer depends on the task: rapid individual recall may benefit from different conditions than designing a complex investigation. The researcher argued that schools should specify what they want to develop before choosing incentives. If the goal includes explaining evidence and listening to alternative solutions, rewards must make those actions worthwhile. The case suggests that human tendencies are real, but institutions influence which tendencies are expressed, strengthened or overlooked. Such incentives therefore require thoughtful, explicit design.

READING 17

Cooperation or Competition? | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 What broader conclusion does the text support?

A Observable choices are influenced by personality and institutional design
B A person's competitive style can be identified from one activity
C Schools must choose either individual or team learning permanently

02 How did teams earn recognition at the second school?

A By receiving the highest individual average
B When all members could explain the solution
C By submitting answers sooner than rival teams

03 What was added to the first school's revised system?

A An increased weighting for individual speed
B An end to individual recognition
C Extra recognition for helping others understand a method

04 Why was the columnist's conclusion weak?

A Students behaved differently under different reward conditions
B The challenge involved students of unequal ages
C Cooperative work had no measurable outcomes

05 What unintended effect appeared at the first school?

A Students refused to complete tasks independently
B Students sometimes kept useful methods to themselves
C Students ignored the individual points

06 For a project requiring evidence-based debate, which reward choice follows the researcher's advice?

A Reward the first group to announce an answer
B Give the highest mark to the most confident speaker
C Reward accurate explanation and responsiveness to alternatives

07 Why did the second school add independent reflections?

A To remove teamwork from the grading process
B To assess what each person learned within a group task
C To prevent any group disagreement

08 What proposition best captures the passage?

A Teamwork is the most reliable indicator of scientific skill
B Competition should be preferred for most assessment tasks
C Incentives shape the expression of behaviour and should match learning aims

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READING 18

The Perfectionism Trap

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

A high-achieving student named Noor refused to submit her design project until every detail looked flawless. Her teacher praised this as exceptional commitment. Yet Noor had discarded several ideas because she feared they might be criticised. She spent hours adjusting minor features while avoiding tests that could reveal important weaknesses. When a classmate submitted a rough prototype and received useful feedback, Noor felt threatened rather than encouraged. The teacher began to wonder whether what appeared to be dedication was partly a response to an environment where mistakes were treated as evidence of limited ability.

The class had developed a rule: the best students displayed finished work, not uncertain thinking. Teachers had not intended to create that expectation, but public displays usually featured polished results, and marks rarely rewarded thoughtful revision. Noor's carefulness may have reflected a personal preference for accuracy, possibly shaped by temperament. However, the consequence of that preference depended on what the classroom valued. In a setting where revision counted as progress, the same attention to detail could strengthen an investigation. In a setting where visible errors felt humiliating, it could prevent experimentation altogether.

The teacher changed the project assessment. Students first submitted a brief account of two discarded ideas and explained what testing had revealed. They then received feedback before presenting a final solution. Noor initially considered this unfair: she believed good work should not require exposing mistakes. The teacher argued that designers in professional settings often test weak versions before building reliable products. A model that appears perfect but has not been examined under conditions may be less useful than an imperfect design supported by careful evidence. The task therefore rewarded a process of justified improvement, not merely an attractive final appearance.

Noor eventually presented a project that still contained one acknowledged limitation. She explained the trade-off and proposed a future test rather than hiding the problem. Her teacher did not claim that Noor had become less conscientious. Instead, she had learned to use her carefulness in a way that permitted uncertainty. The change also exposed a danger in educational praise: calling someone 'naturally brilliant' may make them reluctant to risk losing that identity. Praise for specific reasoning and revision can be more informative. The lesson is not that standards should fall or mistakes should be celebrated automatically. It is that demanding standards require room to discover, challenge and correct errors before they become expensive consequences.

READING 18

The Perfectionism Trap | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 What classroom practice reinforced the fear of errors?

A Requiring students to explain design decisions orally
B Rewarding preliminary ideas more than final solutions
C Publishing anonymous peer feedback

02 How did Noor's final presentation differ?

A She abandoned the project because of an unresolved flaw
B She hid the remaining limitation from the audience
C She described a limitation and suggested further investigation

03 Which claim is central to the passage?

A Standards improve chiefly when students receive more praise for originality
B Rigorous standards are improved when revision and uncertainty are permitted
C Careful students should avoid creative tasks until fully confident

04 What is the best interpretation of Noor's development?

A She learned to apply a personal strength more productively
B She began to value audience approval over accuracy
C She had to abandon her natural attention to detail

05 What did the revised assessment require?

A A final presentation without earlier feedback
B A final design supported by a written explanation
C Two discarded approaches and evidence from testing

06 Why was Noor's meticulousness becoming unproductive?

A She lacked enough time to prepare a first prototype
B She used time on details while avoiding tests of major weaknesses
C She received no feedback from her teacher at any stage

07 What type of project did Noor initially avoid testing?

A A design project with promising but unfinished ideas
B A group debate about school uniforms
C A report based on historical photographs

08 If a teacher praises students only as 'naturally gifted', what risk follows?

A The criteria for success will become more transparent
B They may concentrate more on protecting their strong reputation
C They may avoid challenges that threaten the flattering identity

READING 19

Can an Algorithm Predict a Personality?

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

A college admissions company developed an algorithm that claimed to estimate applicants' personalities from their online writing. Its promotional material suggested that the system could identify future leaders faster and more cheaply than interviews. The company's database contained thousands of examples of public comments linked to survey responses. A college administrator asked whether the apparent precision justified using the scores to decide who deserved a place. The developer argued that automated analysis removed human bias. A statistician replied that automation can reproduce the assumptions embedded in the information on which a system is trained.

The administrator examined how the model classified short messages. An applicant who wrote cautiously about uncertainty received a low 'confidence' score, while another who used energetic language received a high one. Yet caution in written expression might reflect careful reasoning, cultural expectations or the audience being addressed. The system could not observe how either student worked in a laboratory or collaborated in a difficult project. This limitation mattered because the college advertised the score as evidence of stable personal qualities. A style of communication had quietly been transformed into a judgement about identity.

Privacy raised a separate problem. Many examples in the database had originally been shared for social conversation, not educational selection. Even where collection was technically permitted, applicants might not expect such information to influence an important decision. The administrator demanded clear consent, an explanation of the model's limitations and a way to challenge mistakes. The developer objected that these safeguards would reduce efficiency. The statistician argued that a cost-effective system is not genuinely efficient if it makes avoidable errors that are difficult to correct. The social consequences of a wrong classification can outweigh the apparent saving of staff time.

The college ultimately declined to use automated personality scores for admissions. It retained technology for organising applications and checking whether documents were complete, tasks with outcomes that could be verified. Critics called the decision a rejection of innovation; the administrator described it as a distinction between useful automation and unjustified prediction. Her concern was not that personality research has no value, but that complex characteristics cannot be reduced responsibly to a convenient label without evidence that the label predicts what matters. The wider lesson is that new tools do not remove the need to ask old questions about fairness, purpose and the freedom to be more than a data profile over time and experience.

READING 19

Can an Algorithm Predict a Personality? | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **Which technology use did the college retain?**

A Verifying the completeness of application documents
B Predicting leadership from public comments
C Ranking applicants by inferred confidence

02 **What information was used to build the company's database?**

A Classroom video recordings from admissions interviews
B Applicants' examination marks from the college
C Public comments linked with personality survey responses

03 **Why was a cautious writing style an unreliable sign of low confidence?**

A It suggested the writer was reluctant to cooperate with others
B It could reflect careful thinking or audience expectations
C It was measured through laboratory behaviour

04 **How does the statistician challenge the efficiency argument?**

A Checking automated decisions may be necessary to prevent costly mistakes
B Automated decisions offer little value when applicants can appeal
C Admissions officers can correctly interpret linguistic style without training

05 **Which issue is most central to the passage?**

A The need for colleges to replace admissions officers with data systems
B The reliability and fairness of turning written behaviour into personality judgements
C The advantages of public social networks for student recruitment

06 **What made the privacy concern distinctive?**

A The company had based scores on private interview recordings
B Applicants were told their writing would be analysed for admissions
C Social posts were created for purposes other than selection

07 **What general principle does the college's decision represent?**

A Automated personality models are appropriate for low-stakes decisions
B Technology should serve verifiable goals without overreaching its evidence
C Admissions technology is valuable mainly when it reduces staff time

08 **If an applicant writes differently in private and academic contexts, what would this suggest?**

A Communication context makes any single personality score less secure
B More samples of written language could fully settle the uncertainty
C The system has measured the applicant's confidence with less bias

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READING 20

The Future Is Not Inherited

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

At the end of a school debate entitled 'Nature or Nurture?', two groups presented confident verdicts. One claimed that genetic influences set the limits of human achievement; the other insisted that a supportive environment could make anyone succeed at anything. Their teacher challenged both positions with a question: if the evidence is complicated, why are simple answers so appealing? Students realised that a single explanation makes success easier to celebrate and failure easier to assign. It also removes the uncomfortable task of examining several interacting causes. Yet the ease of a story is not evidence that the story is true.

The teacher introduced three cases. A talented swimmer lacked access to a pool. A highly motivated learner continued using an ineffective study method. A naturally reserved student successfully organised a community project through careful planning. None could be understood through biology or environment alone. The swimmer's ability could not fully develop without opportunity; effort alone did not correct the learner's strategy; and the organiser's temperament did not prevent effective leadership. Together, the cases challenged simplistic explanations of observed ability.

Students next considered how the word 'heritable' is frequently misunderstood. It can refer to patterns of variation studied across populations under particular conditions; it does not mean a characteristic is fixed for an individual or unaffected by experience. Equally, evidence that training can improve a skill does not show that everyone will achieve an identical outcome. The teacher emphasised the limits of prediction: complex human behaviour depends on many influences that change over time. Some are difficult to measure, and others interact in ways researchers are still investigating. Scientific uncertainty should encourage better questions, not permission to make limitless claims.

For their final task, students designed school policies that could help people develop without promising miracles. Suggestions included clear feedback, flexible chances to demonstrate learning and access to meaningful practice. They also wrote down how they would check whether a policy worked and whose needs it might overlook. One student concluded that the debate had shifted from asking who was born capable to asking what conditions would help different people use their abilities. The teacher agreed, with a caution: institutions cannot remove every disadvantage, and individuals still make choices. The lasting lesson today was neither that identity is predetermined nor that potential is boundless. It was that responsible decisions respect meaningful differences while refusing to confuse today's evidence with tomorrow's destiny.

READING 20

The Future Is Not Inherited | Questions

PUSHING BOUNDARIES / PERSONALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

01 **Why did the teacher resist the environment-only explanation?**

A Environmental support is irrelevant to developing talent
B Previous experience is more important than genetic influence
C Improvement through training does not guarantee the same result for all

02 **Why is 'heritable' often misunderstood?**

A It is sometimes taken to mean an individual trait cannot change
B It refers exclusively to characteristics acquired through practice
C It predicts the same response to training within families

03 **Which statement most accurately expresses the overall message?**

A Early evidence should determine access to advanced learning
B Complexity makes educational intervention pointless
C Evidence should guide support without becoming a permanent verdict on people

04 **A programme improves average performance but leaves one group behind. What response best follows the teacher's approach?**

A Claim the overall average resolves fairness concerns
B Investigate which needs the programme overlooks and revise it
C End the programme because no intervention can work equally well

05 **What made the students' policy proposals more responsible?**

A They selected policies that were already used across the school
B They prioritised policies that benefited the largest number of students
C They included ways to assess effectiveness and overlooked needs

06 **What did the learner using an ineffective study method demonstrate?**

A A supportive environment guarantees immediate results
B Motivation alone may not lead to better learning
C Personal interest prevents learning errors

07 **What unifying claim drives the passage?**

A Nature and experience interact, so simple deterministic verdicts are inadequate
B Existing research is too incomplete to shape school policy
C Environmental explanations are inherently less scientific than genetic ones

08 **What final task did the teacher assign?**

A Assign students to learning groups based on study preferences
B Design policies and ways to evaluate their effects
C Write genetic profiles of classmates