

Reading Progress

Student name _____

Group/Class _____

Date _____ Score _____

READING

Do twins share personalities, too?

We know identical twins look so much alike that we can't always tell who's who! But what about their personalities—are they identical, too?

Because identical twins develop from the same egg, they share the same genetics. They have the same hair and eye color, and are usually the same height and build, too.

So, how are identical twins different? Scientists have been studying twins for decades to try to understand more about how personalities are formed. Although there might be slight variations in eye color and height, any major differences between twins are due to their environment. In other words, their personalities are shaped by their experiences and how they choose to react to them.

Take Sue and Meg as an example. They are identical twins who have very different personalities. Sue is outgoing and social, while Meg is more reserved and quiet. Sue loves to play soccer, and Meg would rather read a book about history. Why are they so different? It could be because Sue watched soccer games with her father every Saturday while Meg spent time with her mother at the library. Or perhaps it's because Sue was given a soccer ball for her second birthday. Whatever the reason, sets of twins provide scientists with a unique opportunity to study nature versus nurture in a real-life scenario.

1 Choose T (True) or F (False) for each sentence, according to the text.

1 Identical twins have the same genes.

☒ T / F

2 Any major differences between twins are genetic.

T / ☒ F

3 Studying twins can help us understand more about personalities.

☒ T / F

4 A person's personality is formed by his or her environment. (T) / F

5 Scientists think that, for example, a person might like a sport because he or she was exposed to it at an early age. (T) / F

Score: / 5

2 Find the underlined words in the text. Write the word each underlined word refers to.

1 ... are they identical, too?

their personalities

2 They have the same hair and eye color ...

twins

3 ... their personalities are shaped by their experiences and how they choose to react to them.

experiences

4 It could be because Sue watched soccer games with her father ...

Sue

5 Or perhaps it's because ...

why twins are different

Score: / 5

Feng shui

Feng shui, an ancient Chinese philosophy, has been used as a design model for centuries. This system of rules governs how the orientation of furniture will affect the flow of energy in a space—for example, an office building or a home. Feng shui is now a very popular tool for interior decorating in the West, where people aspire to align their home environments with positive energy to create harmony and positive energy in their living space.

Whether or not you believe in feng shui, there are certainly principles that can be easily applied to any space to create a warm and welcoming environment.

First of all, look around you. Is there a clear path to the door, or do you have to sidestep around clunky furniture such as an oversized desk or table? Or is there too much clutter—namely, papers and books? Replace any items that are too big for the room. Getting rid of the clutter will calm your mind.

Another example you can follow is this: rearrange furniture so that there is a natural flow from the door of a room to the seating area. For example, move the couch so that it is easy to reach as you walk in. Make sure the back of the couch is facing away from the door. You may not realize it, but you will feel much more comfortable and relaxed when you can see who is coming and going from the room.

Follow the examples here, and you might just feel a bit more harmony in your home!

3 Read the text. Then choose the correct word or phrase to paraphrase the underlined word.

- 1 Feng shui, an ancient Chinese philosophy, has been used as a design model for centuries.

☒ A way of thinking
B language
C recipe

- 2 This system of rules governs how the orientation of furniture will affect the flow of energy in a space ...

☒ A direction
B color
C pattern

- 3 ... people aspire to align their home environments with positive energy ...

☒ A balance
B fix
C solve

- 4 Whether or not you believe in feng shui, there are certainly principles that can be easily applied ...

☒ A main ideas
B designs
C furniture

5 Follow the examples here, and you might just feel a bit more harmony in your home!

- Ⓐ peace and balance
- B music and tune
- C excitement and high energy

Score: / 5

Speaking more than one language is no longer something that makes you special. In many countries, most children grow up bilingual - exposed, on a daily basis, to more than one language. Scientists have started studying bilingual children and adults recently. These studies take many forms and shapes. But they are usually preoccupied with one question: is there a benefit to being bilingual?

It is a well-known and measured fact that employees with a good command of a foreign language have a greater chance of being promoted at work. So it could be said that bilingualism has definite, tangible benefits. But are these the only ones being studied? Researchers are much more interested in another aspect of this phenomenon. The impact of another language on thought, memory, and creativity - that is their latest focus.

In terms of thinking and performance, bilinguals seem to be better at tasks which involve managing conflicting needs. The tests showed that they fared better when having to switch from one kind of task to another, or dealing with several types of information at once. This could result from the fact that different languages occupy different "spheres" of their lives - have you ever felt like you're a different person when switching languages? - but the exact mechanism of this is still being studied.

When it comes to creativity, a recent study suggested that a good command of a foreign language is also a benefit in this area. Participants did better than their monolingual counterparts when given design tasks, or when asked to draw a character for a story. The most surprising highlight of the study? Another language didn't need to be involved in the task at all - it seems that bilingual participants simply felt more at ease with creative tasks, no matter the language.

Who knows what the future holds for research into bilingualism? Scientists are already hoping to provide evidence of its links to delaying dementia and Alzheimer's Disease. As the awareness of the long-term effects of certain pastimes and activities increases, so does the confidence of researchers in pointing to beneficial and simple methods of taking care of the brain. Learning a foreign language may certainly be one of them.

4 Find these sentences in the text. Choose what the underlined word or phrase in each sentence refers to.

1 ... exposed, on a daily basis, to more than one language.

- ☐ A children ☐ B countries

2 But are these the only ones being studied?

- ☐ A benefits ☐ B employees

3 This could result from the fact that different languages occupy different "spheres" of their lives ...

- ☐ A The task information ☐ B The bilinguals' performance

4 Participants did better than their monolingual counterparts when given design tasks...

- ☐ A the creativity test subjects ☐ B the researchers

5 Learning a foreign language may certainly be one of them.

- ☐ A effects on the brain ☐ B methods of taking care of the brain

Score: / 5

5 Find the following questions in the text. Choose the sentence that best describes each question's function.

1 ... is there a benefit to being bilingual?

To introduce information - this is the question being studied.

/ To encourage readers to try to work out the answer.

2 But are these the only ones being studied?

A genuine question which the author wants answered.

/ A rhetorical question - the answer is given.

3 ... have you ever felt like you're a different person when switching languages?

To encourage readers to submit their answers.

/ To make the subject more personal and interesting.

4 The most surprising highlight of the study?

To organize the text and prepare readers for the information which follows.

/ To make readers decide what they find surprising.

5 Who knows what the future holds for research into bilingualism?

The author uses the question to introduce subject expert opinions.

/ A rhetorical question - the answer is not known or necessary.

Score: / 5

A day in the life of a firefighter

Firefighters are essential to public safety, and fortunately, most towns have a fire station. These men and women bravely put out fires and pull people from burning cars, buildings, and other dangerous situations. A firefighter needs to be fit and healthy, and must be able to jump up and race out to an emergency at any time. But thankfully, they don't always have to rush off to a catastrophe—there is plenty of downtime, too. This means that a firefighter must be patient, sometimes having to sit around for hours when there's no emergency call. Waiting for that call is understandably difficult, especially when all they want to do is help a person in need. Luckily, though, a firefighter is part of a team and not working alone, which helps with camaraderie and morale.

A day in the life of a firefighter can vary widely. But a typical schedule, when there's no emergency, is not just about putting out fires and saving people. There are different departments in the station that support crews, such as the mechanics who make sure the fire trucks run and the dispatchers who take calls from the community. A firefighter needs to have good communication skills to relay information to each department, as well as the ability to be resourceful and flexible.

A typical schedule for a firefighter when there isn't an emergency might look something like this:

8:00-8:30 a.m.: Check that all fire appliances and equipment are in good operational order. Report any defects and check on standby equipment in case a problem arises.

8:30-9:30 a.m.: Go to the gym.

10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.: Lead school groups and conduct safety training sessions in the community.

3:30-5:00 p.m.: Clean the station and answer public questions.

6 Add a root, prefix, or suffix to each word given in capitals to form a word that fits in the blank.

- 1 Firefighters are absolutely essential to public
 safety . **SAFE**
- 2 Some departments hire dispatchers to help field calls **DISPATCH**
 and forward information to the appropriate person.
- 3 It is very important to make sure all the equipment is in
 good operational order. **OPERATE**
- 4 Some emergencies are very dangerous and put **DANGER**
 firefighters' lives in jeopardy.
- 5 The only way to succeed in this job is to be flexible **FLEX**
 and have the ability to quickly change priorities when
 necessary.

Score: / 5

7 Write the word in each sentence that describes the author's point of view.

- 1 Firefighters are essential to public safety, and fortunately, most towns have a fire
 station.
 fortunately
- 2 They bravely put out fires and pull people from burning cars, buildings, and other
 dangerous situations.
 bravely
- 3 But thankfully, they don't always have to rush off to a catastrophe—there is plenty of
 downtime, too.
 thankfully
- 4 Waiting for that call is understandably difficult, especially when all they want to do is
 help a person in need.
 understandably
- 5 Luckily, though, a firefighter is part of a team and not working alone, which helps
 with camaraderie and morale.
 Luckily

Score: / 5

Orangutans, whose name means "person of the forest," are large, solitary members of the ape family. Sadly, they are now classified as critically endangered, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources' (IUCN) *Red List of Threatened Species*. A century ago, there were more than 230,000 orangutans living throughout Southeast Asia. Today, that number has fallen to about 41,000 Bornean orangutans and about 7,500 Sumatran orangutans in the wild. It is likely that these animals will face extinction in the next ten years, which needs to be a wake-up call for all of us. We simply must do everything we can to save these beautiful creatures.

In order to save these animals, we need to understand their natural habitat. Orangutans live among the trees of tropical rain forests in Borneo and Sumatra. The islands have vast mountain ranges, although orangutans rarely venture higher than 500 meters. They swing gloriously through the trees, looking for fruits and water sources. Incredibly, orangutans build a new nest each day since they're always on the move. Trees are their lifeline.

These rain forest habitats are disappearing at an alarming rate due to deforestation. Loggers are cutting down trees and setting fire to large areas to clear land for palm oil plantations and agricultural development. Not only does this destroy vast amounts of orangutan habitat, but the smoke from fires can confuse them, and some have even burned to death because they can't escape the flames.

There are many organizations that help to protect orangutans and their habitats. Governments should be urged to support efforts to create sustainable forests and to encourage loggers to plant a tree for every tree they fell. We should boycott products that are made by companies that contribute to deforestation and avoid products that contain palm oil. If we educate our family and friends about what we can do to save the orangutan, we just might make a difference.

8 Write the paragraph number (1–4) to match the research questions with the paragraphs in the text. You will need to use one paragraph more than once.

How significantly has the orangutan population been in decline? Paragraph 1

What type of habitat do orangutans need? Paragraph 2

Why are orangutans losing their habitats? Paragraph 3

How is habitat loss affecting orangutans? Paragraph 3

What can be done to protect orangutans' habitats? Paragraph 4

Score: / 5

9 Check (✓) the sentences that support the writer's opinion.

The writer ...

- 1 cares deeply about orangutans and is appealing for help. ☒
- 2 thinks orangutans are unique and special animals. ☒
- 3 feels that deforestation is happening too quickly. ☒
- 4 doesn't want anyone to buy any products from Sumatra or Borneo. ☐
- 5 thinks loggers should not be allowed to work in rain forests. ☐

Score: / 5