

# Innate vs learnt behaviour

Psychology, Behaviorism



In your own words, detail for' and 'against' arguments with regard to innate and learned behavior. Feel free to include your own opinion, but be sure to Justify It. Try to Include equal amount of Information for both sides. Use at least 500 words for your answer. Answer: The innate verses learnt or nature verses nurture argument is a subject that has been theorized and debated by scientists, psychologists and philosophers for hundreds of years. It Is a question that can be dated back as early as 350 BC where philosophers Plato and Aristotle had different views on whether it was nature or nurture which shaped individual behaviors.

Plato believed knowledge and behavior to be innate. He theorized that all knowledge was present at birth and the environment played a unique part in shaping us. In his opinion the environment did not teach us anything we weren't born with and that Its purpose was merely to remind us of Information we already knew. Aristotle on the other hand theorized that behavior and knowledge had to be learnt and that we were born as tabular Rasa' or blank slate and our behavior, thoughts and actions were learnt and acquired through experiences.

Although nether Plato or Aristotle theories are supported today It Is still debated hat shapes us In the people we become. Is nature or is it nurture? What is innate behavior or viewed as nature? Innate behavior is a fixed, unchangeable, untaught-of, natural behavior, which is instinctive and are born with. Behavior that is inherited or passed on through genes. Things such as reflexes are Innate behavior; a reflex Is an involuntary automatic response to a certain stimulus.

Those who believe we are shaped by nature are known as nativites.

Examples of innate behavior are the moor or falling reflex, the moor reflex is any sudden movement that affect the baby's neck, giving them the feeling of falling or Ewing dropped. The baby's innate reaction to this is to open their arms out wide, opening up their hands before bringing them back In to their chest almost as if to catch an object. The grasp reflex, whenever an object or fingers touches the palm of a baby's hand they will automatically grasp or grab It.

The swallowing and sucking reflex, if you place something, even a finger in to the baby's mouth they will automatically suck and swallow, babies are also known to sometimes suck their fingers or thumbs whilst still in the womb, this is an instinctive reflex, something needed to survive. There are many other reflexes including blinking, breathing, sneezing and coughing. With the ability to instinctively know how to make nests, what is needed to do this and to carry the materials required to do this in their beaks.

Sea turtles despite hatching on land instinctively know to head straight for the water and have the ability to swim. A very complex innate behavior can be seen in chickens. Having kept chickens since a child myself vast differences can be seen in battery hens and free range hens. Imagine this battery hens never get the opportunity to see daylight, stretch their inns, take a dust bath or forage in the dirt for worms and bugs, unlike free range hens. Yet on removing hens from the battery and giving them the gift and opportunity of a free range lifestyle, all of the natural instincts return immediately.

They have always been there just merely suppressed. Other more complex innate or instinctive behavior in animals can include hibernation and migration. Learnt behavior on the other hand or nurture is something we are not born with but which we are taught by parents, peers, teachers and can be influenced by social and environmental factors we are exposed to. These behaviors unlike innate behavior are not fixed, but flexible and can be changed at any time. Those who believe it is learnt behavior that shapes us are known as empiricists.

Learnt behavior is very complex and can display itself in so many guises and can also vary diversely from one culture to another. Take for example the Europeans and the primitive mammal tribes of Africa. In Europe hunting is considered a sport whereas to the mammal tribes hunting is a necessity and way of life. Without hunting they would not be able to feed, clothe or provide for their families. To them hunting is learnt at a very young age unlike the Europeans who have the convenience of shops and no longer require learning this skill.

Learnt behavior can be both good and bad, in the respect that with children a lot of learning is through copying, what they see and listen to and what they are being told about what is going on in their environment surrounding them. The good thing with learnt behavior that if it is bad such as swearing or answering back it can be rectified and changed unlike innate behavior. The body and brain combined are an amazing combination as to how it coordinates, and throughout our lives we will never stop learning. Examples

of learnt behavior in children include, walking, talking, listening, potty training to mention just a few.

Babies usually makes attempts to walk from around 12 - 14 months although prior to this they have already mastered the art to get from one place to another or where they want to be. From 6 months babies may start to shuffle across the room on their bums, or lay on their front with their legs in the air trying to work out how to crawl. From 9 months babies are able to wriggle along the floor on their tummies or even rail, and by 12 months they are making attempts to walk and may even be able to when holding someone's hand. Sounds are said and pronounced around them. The path to talking begins as early as 2 - 4 months when babies start to make ooh and ah sounds of pleasure. Between months 4 and 9 babies start cooing and babbling, then from 9 months they begin to point to things and vocalism with some meaning although the pronunciations is not quite there yet, by 12 - 18 months single words begin to emerge with some clarity words such as mama or dada. Then from 18 - 24 months basic phrases and sentences start to develop with sayings like teddy gone'?

From 24 months sentences begin to emerge with real meaning instead of teddy gone' it becomes Where's teddy gone'. Finally from 4 years onwards children have the same language comprehension as an adult although with basic and limited vocabulary. Some children by this age are also bilingual having parents of a different nationality are able to speak English and a foreign language having been used to hearing it during the formative years.

Hearing is developmental milestone that begins whilst babies are still in the womb.

From around 24 weeks gestation babies have the ability to hear sounds in the outside world, by 32 weeks they will have the ability to recognize a piece of music and move around to the beat, they are also likely to recognize the piece of music after birth. This is how we learn to listen by hearing things over and over again and through listening to noises and people talking. Many learnt skills as a child are achieved by repetition. Although this all looks quite simple and clear cut there are problems with viewing behavior as either innate or learnt.

It is relatively easy to view a singular aspect of a person's behavior as either innate or learnt for example, hearing is innate and listening is learnt, but it would be impossible to categorize a person as a whole as either innate or learnt. The main problem with trying to view behavior as either one or the other is that there are no specific scientific tests which can be carried out, and it would be practically impossible to set up such tests as people's perceptions of things are different.

This would create different test results with one person viewing one thing and in the others professional opinion it could be completely different. There is also the fact that it would be seen as unethical to test such things. It has in previous years been attempted to research identical twins, although being identical and having the same upbringing, they are unable to account for environmental and social factors, as these may be different for both of them.

One spending time with one group of people going to one set of places and areas.

Whilst the other twin who has a completely different group of friends, going to other places. You would also have to bear in mind the media factors the people are exposed to such as television, radio, gaming stations, the internet. It would therefore make it ritually impossible to agree whether it was nature or nurture that shaped them as individuals. Shapes us in our development from infant to adulthood along with environmental and social factors all playing a part.

Social factors may include one parent families, adopters, or where you are brought up. It is also my belief that many media factors also have a hand in what we learn things as mentioned earlier like television, internet, gaming machines, mobile phones, music, and mobile phones. I also think the social dynamics of the family also play a part too depending on what sort of upbringing you have, and who or what you learning from.