

Pencil 2 Paper

Super Gene

Grade Level 5

Discover how two people can have the same looks and behavior by writing about the child of your favorite superheroes!



Overview

Students will learn about basic genetics and how genes can affect someone's behavior. They will write their own narrative about a character they create as a class in order to illustrate the effects of inherited traits and learned behaviors.

Essential Question

Why do people look like their parents, and why might they act similarly or differently to their parents?

Step-by-step

1. Ask any students who have dark hair to raise their hands. Then repeat this step for students with glasses and students with brown eyes. Use this as a lead-in to discuss inherited traits.
2. Ask the students if they think they have anything in common with their family: parents, siblings, even aunts/uncles. Then ask if any of them have learned specific things from their family that they do all the time, or that they at least do somewhat regularly. Use this to differentiate learned behaviors from inherited traits.

Key Words

- Foreshadowing
- Basic Plot
- Fiction Writing for Kids

Georgia Performance Standards

ELA

- ELAGSEW3

Science

- S5L2

3. Give the class a visual example of a DNA strand and use it to explain the basics of genetics. Hand out colored beads and colored string to the students and have them each choose a minimum of four colors: two for inherited traits, and two for learned behaviors.
4. Have them make bracelets out of these.
5. When the students are finished, have them look for other students who might have used the same colors as a way to point out that you might be related to someone without knowing it. This could also be a lead in to an example about ancestors.
6. Ask the students to pick out a male superhero. Then ask them to pick out a female superhero from the lists provided in the full handout.*
7. Once two superheroes have been chosen, tell the class that the superhero they are making is going to be the child of whomever the class agreed on. Feel free to ask the class what they think this superhero's name would be.
8. Help the children figure out what inherited traits their superhero would have using the list in the full handout as a guide.*
9. Now help to guide the students into figuring out what learned behaviors their superhero might have picked up from their parents using the list in the full handout as a guide.*
10. Once this is complete, allow the students to draw their superhero.
11. When this is complete, ask the student if their character is a good guy or a bad guy (the class should say "good guy" but it is okay if they decided to make their superhero a villain). Introduce them to the terms antagonist and protagonist.
11. Ask the students what a good guy, or protagonist is supposed to do (answer should be to stop the antagonist/fight crime/etc.). Help the students come up with their own antagonist. This does not need to be as detailed or referenced. Just help them come up with a character that might not like the superhero they have created.
12. Tell the students that they are going to write a story about their superhero.*

* Note that more information can be found in the full lesson plan