

EVOLVE LEVEL 6, FINAL TEST A

LISTENING 2

- Manuel** On today's show we are looking at whether human development is influenced by genetic factors or by the environment. In support of genetics, we have biologist Dr. Brenda Lee and on the environmental side, psychologist Dr. Francis Evans. Welcome to you both.
- Brenda/Francis** Thank you. / Thanks.
- Brenda** Before we start, I would say the majority of experts today agree that both genes and the environment influence development. Would you agree, Francis?
- Francis** Yes Brenda, I would. The real question is around the degree of influence and how they interact.
- Manuel** What's your opinion, Francis?
- Francis** If we look at children who have musical parents, it is often claimed that their children will also have musical ability, but studies have shown that if those children receive no musical training then they will not develop musically.
- Brenda** But, if they are given training, then they will become gifted musicians, and that's the point. That genetics sets you on your path and the environment may push you off it. But without a musical gene, I will never be a musical genius.
- Francis** I would say that with training you could do anything you wanted. Another example is height. A child might come from a tall family, but if they are not given a wholesome, nutritious diet, they simply will not grow in the same way.
- Manuel** Are there any characteristics that are completely determined by nature, Brenda?
- Brenda** Of course. Hair color, skin color, and some genetic diseases. Studies also show that children are born with an innate capacity for language. Experiments with newborn babies looked at their brain reactions when hearing sound combinations from their native language compared with those from another language. Even though they had not yet learned any words, they reacted differently to common and uncommon sounds at the beginning of words.
- Manuel** Fascinating. Let's continue after the break.