Inherited Traits

Grade 3

Name _____ Date _____

Remember: Plants and animals pass **inherited traits** to their young. Young look **similar** to their parents, but small differences, called **variation**, make each one unique.

Look at a family: what traits do the young share with the parents? What is a little different?

Like Parent, Like Young



Have you ever noticed that puppies look a lot like their parents? That is because parents pass **inherited traits** to their young.

Animals inherit traits such as fur colour, the shape of their ears, the number of legs and the shape of their beak or nose. A baby zebra has stripes like its parents.

Plants inherit traits too. Seeds from a red tulip often grow into red tulips. Traits like flower colour, leaf shape and the size of fruit come from the parent plants.

But young are not exact copies. Kittens in the same litter can have different colours and patterns. These small differences are called **variation**. Variation is why no two people, not even siblings, are exactly alike.

1. Check your understanding

Circle the best answer.

1. Why do puppies look like their parents?

(a) They inherit traits from them. (b) They eat the same food.
(c) They live in the same house.

2. Which is an inherited trait in a plant?

(a) Being watered (b) Flower colour (c) Being picked

3. What is variation?

(a) Exact copies (b) A kind of seed (c) Small differences between young

4. Why can kittens in one litter look different?

(a) Because of variation (b) Because of the weather (c) They are not related.

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2. Plant or animal trait?

Circle whether each inherited trait belongs to a plant or an animal.

1	flower colour	plant trait	animal trait
2	fur pattern	plant trait	animal trait
3	leaf shape	plant trait	animal trait
4	beak shape	plant trait	animal trait
5	seed size	plant trait	animal trait
6	number of legs	plant trait	animal trait

3. Think like a scientist

Answer in a complete sentence.

1. **Two black dogs have puppies. Most are black, but one is brown. What is this an example of?**

Answer Key

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1. Check your understanding

1. Why do puppies look like their parents?

(a) **They inherit traits from them.** (b) They eat the same food. (c) They live in the same house.

2. Which is an inherited trait in a plant?

(a) Being watered (b) **Flower colour** (c) Being picked

3. What is variation?

(a) Exact copies (b) A kind of seed (c) **Small differences between young**

4. Why can kittens in one litter look different?

(a) **Because of variation** (b) Because of the weather (c) They are not related.

2. Plant or animal trait?

		plant trait	animal trait
1	flower colour	●	○
2	fur pattern	○	●
3	leaf shape	●	○
4	beak shape	○	●
5	seed size	●	○
6	number of legs	○	●

3. Think like a scientist

Sample answer.

1. **Two black dogs have puppies. Most are black, but one is brown. What is this an example of?**
   Variation: young inherit traits from their parents but can still be a little different.