

Name: _____ Date: _____

Tracking Traits

In “Is This Monster Real?” (pp. 14-15), you learned that different animals have distinctive DNA. DNA is inherited from parents and determines some of an organism’s traits, or characteristics. Other traits are determined by the organism’s environment. Read the two stories below. Then make a claim about whether the organism’s traits are inherited from its parents or shaped by its environment. Support your claim with evidence and reasoning.

STORY A

A mother pig gives birth to a litter of six piglets. When they are born, two of the piglets are pale pink like their mother. Two of them are pink with black splotches, and two of them are mostly black like their father.

1. Make a claim about the piglets’ traits. Are they inherited or acquired?

2. What evidence supports your claim?

STORY B

You plant two sunflower seeds from the same plant in two separate flower pots. You place one pot on your kitchen’s windowsill and the other on a coffee table in your basement. You water each plant regularly. Over the next few months, the plant in the kitchen grows tall and sprouts bright-green leaves. The one in the basement is short and has pale green leaves.

3. Make a claim about the plants’ traits. Are they inherited or acquired?

4. What evidence supports your claim?

5. Some acquired traits are learned. Can you think of a trait in yourself that you acquired through learning?
