

## Summer transition work - Psychology

### Produce a report on the nature nurture debate

To do this you need to:

research what the nature nurture debate in psychology is and watch 3 Identical Strangers [on Netflix or alternatively read the summary sheet below if you do not have access to Netflix]

### In the report you need to include:

- What is the nature / nurture debate?
- Summarise 3 Identical Strangers in your own words
- Discuss whether **you** think behaviour is mainly due to nature or nurture or both –use examples from 3 Identical Strangers to support your discussion.
- Conclusion [how far do you think the nature /nurture debate is relevant? are behaviours strictly due to nature or due to nurture or a combination]

## Three Identical Strangers Summary

The documentary describes how Robert Shafran discovered that he had a twin brother when he arrived on the campus of a New York community college and was constantly greeted by students and staff who incorrectly recognized him as Eddy Galland. The two eventually met and, finding out both had been adopted, quickly concluded that they were twins. Months later, the publicity of this human-interest story reached David Kellman, whose resemblance and matching adoption circumstances indicated that the three were actually identical triplets.

The triplet brothers found themselves alike in many ways and celebrated their newfound brotherhood. They had the same taste in food, smoked the same brand of cigarettes, all wrestled in high school, and showed signs of separation anxiety as children. They quickly became a minor media sensation, appearing on talk shows such as the popular *Phil Donahue Show*. They moved in together and opened a restaurant named Triplets, which they operated together.

The triplet brothers had been involved as children in a study by psychiatrists Peter B. Neubauer and Viola W. Bernard, which involved periodic visits and evaluations of the boys, the full intent of which never was explained to the adoptive parents. Following the revelation that the boys were triplets, the parents sought more information from the Louise Wise adoption agency, which claimed that they had separated the boys because of the difficulty of placing triplets in a single household. However, upon further investigation, it was revealed that the infants had been intentionally separated and placed with families having different parenting styles and economic levels – one blue-collar, one middle-class, and one affluent – as an experiment on human subjects. During the documentary, the question is asked by the siblings if perhaps they, and other sets of twins involved in the study, were chosen because their parents had reported signs of mental illness before having children, but one researcher interviewed denied this flatly, saying the research was simply about parenting.

Over time, however, differences among the three men became apparent, and their relationships with others experienced difficulties. All three had struggled with mental health problems for years, and Galland died by suicide in 1995 following a diagnosis with manic depressive disorder.

The results of the experiment never have been disclosed by the adoption agency or the psychiatric team. At the end of the documentary, text explains that David and Bobby had both been granted access to heavily redacted records of the experiment as a result of the documentary.

