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People have wondered for a long time how their personalities and behaviors are formed. It is not easy to explain why one person is intelligent and another is not , or why one is cooperative and another is competitive. Social scientists are , of course , extremely interested in these types of questions. ( 61 ) They want to explain why we possess certain characteristics and exhibit certain behaviors. There are no clear answers yet , but two distinct schools of thought on the matter have developed. As one might expect , the two approaches are very different from each other. The controversy is often conveniently referred to as “ nature vs. nurture. ” ( 62 ) Those who support the “ nature ” side of the conflict believe that our personalities and behavior patterns are largely determined by biological factors. ( 63 ) That our environment has little , if anything , to do with our abilities , characteristics and behavior is central to this theory. Taken to an extreme , this theory maintains that our behavior is pre-determined to such a great degree that we are almost completely governed by our instincts. Those who support the “ nurture ” theory , that is , they advocate education , are often called behaviorists. They claim that our environment is more important than our biologically based instincts in determining how we will act. A behaviorist , B. F. Skinner , sees humans as beings whose behavior is almost completely shaped by their surroundings.

( 64 ) The behaviorists maintain that , like machines , humans respond to environmental stimuli as the basis of their behavior. Let us examine the different explanations about one human characteristic , intelligence , offered by the two theories. ( 65 ) Supporters of the “ nature ” theory insist that we are born with a certain capacity for learning that is biologically determined. Needless to say : They dont believe that factors in the environment have much influence on what is basically a predetermined characteristic. On the other hand , behaviorists argue that our intelligence levels are the product of our experiences. ( 66 ) Behaviorists suggest that the child who is raised in an environment where there are many stimuli which develop his or her capacity for appropriate responses will experience greater intellectual development. The social and political implications of these two theories are profound. ( 67 ) In the United States , blacks often score below whites on standardized intelligence tests. This leads some “ nature ” proponents to conclude that blacks are biologically inferior to whites. ( 68 ) Behaviorists , in contrast , say that differences in scores are due to the fact that blacks are often deprived of many of the educational and other environmental advantages that whites enjoy. Most people think neither of these theories can yet fully explain human behavior.

61.他们想要说明，为什么我们具有某些性格特征和表现出某些行为。 62.在这场争论中，赞成“天性”一方的那些人认为，我们的性格特征和行为模式大多是由生物因素所决定的。 63.这种理论的核心是，我们的环境同我们的才能、性格特征和行为即使有什么关系的话，也是微不足道的。 64.行为主义

者坚信，人象机器一样，对环境的刺激作出反应，这是他们行为的基础。 65.支持“天性”论的人坚持说，我们生来就具有一定的学习才能，这是由生物因素决定的。 66.行为主义者的看法是，如果一个儿童在有許多刺激物的环境里成长，而这些刺激物能够发展其作出适当反应的能力，那么，这个儿童将会有更高的智力发展。 67.在美国，黑人在标准化智力测试中的成绩常常低于白人。 68.相反，行为主义者认为，成绩的差异是由于黑人往往被剥夺了白人在教育及其它环境方面所享有的许多有利条件。 100Test 下载频道开通，各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 [www.100test.com](http://www.100test.com)