

B1-B2 English Worksheet

Designer Babies: Should Parents Be Allowed to Choose Their Children's Genes?

29 October 2026

Article

The idea of a 'designer baby' once sounded like science fiction. But a Guardian article published on 27 October describes companies offering parents more information about embryos created through IVF. Some families can look into genetic risks before deciding which embryo to use. They may find out whether an embryo has a particular gene change linked to an inherited condition and pick out one less likely to be affected. Testing for certain single-gene disorders is established, but newer companies claim they can also estimate the chances of future illnesses or characteristics such as height and intelligence.

These newer predictions do not let parents design a child. Many characteristics depend on hundreds of genes, as well as upbringing and environment. Screening compares existing embryos; it does not change their DNA. A test can help rule out some known genetic conditions, but it cannot guarantee a healthy baby or promise a future talent. Parents may pass on characteristics that no test can predict reliably. Medical experts have raised concerns about using uncertain scores as though they were facts. An American medical organisation says this newer screening is not ready for routine care and should not yet be offered to patients.

Supporters bring up the hope of preventing suffering and giving families more choices. Critics ask whether those choices might come down to money, allowing wealthier parents to buy services others cannot afford. Families must weigh up unclear medical information while feeling pressure to make the 'best' decision. Scientists set out the limits of these predictions, yet advertising can make them seem more precise than they are. Society must decide where to draw the line between preventing serious disease and selecting preferred traits. The question is not whether parents want the best for their children, but what science can genuinely promise.

Sources: The Guardian (27 October 2026); American Society for Reproductive Medicine (2025).

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

No.	Statement	T / F
1	The article says companies are now offering information about embryos created through IVF.	
2	The new tests can guarantee that a child will grow up to be intelligent.	
3	Embryo screening and changing an embryo's DNA are described as the same process.	
4	A child's characteristics may be influenced by both genes and environment.	
5	Medical experts have expressed doubts about newer screening for complex conditions.	
6	The article says all families can easily afford these services.	
7	The writer raises the question of whether choosing traits is different from preventing disease.	
8	The article concludes that parents can already control their children's future abilities.	

Phrase Match

Match the phrases (1-10) to the correct definitions (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. look into	A. consider advantages and disadvantages carefully
2. find out	B. introduce a subject for discussion
3. pick out	C. decide what is acceptable and what goes too far
4. rule out	D. discover information that was previously unknown
5. pass on	E. depend mainly on one important factor
6. bring up	F. explain information clearly and in order
7. come down to	G. select one option from several
8. weigh up	H. transmit something to the next generation
9. set out	I. investigate something more carefully
10. draw the line	J. exclude something as a possibility

Synonym Match

Match the words (1-10) to the correct synonyms (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. inherited	A. traits
2. particular	B. ensure
3. characteristics	C. hereditary
4. established	D. richer
5. guarantee	E. worries
6. concerns	F. truly
7. routine	G. accepted
8. wealthier	H. specific
9. precise	I. standard
10. genuinely	J. exact

Use the New Language

Choose 5 words or phrases from the worksheet and write your own sentences.

No.	Your sentence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Discussion Questions

Student A - Personal experience	Student B - Deeper discussion
1. What do you think makes someone a good parent?	1. Should parents be allowed to screen embryos for serious inherited conditions?
2. Which qualities do children learn from their families rather than inherit?	2. Where should society draw the line between preventing illness and choosing preferred traits?
3. Have you seen an advert promising to improve people's health or appearance?	3. Could expensive genetic screening increase inequality between families?
4. How comfortable are you with medical tests that predict future health problems?	4. Can companies responsibly advertise predictions about intelligence when the science is uncertain?
5. If you could learn one thing about a child's future health, what would it be?	5. Might pressure to have a "perfect" child harm parents and children?
6. How do parents in your culture make important decisions about children's education?	6. Who should regulate new reproductive technologies: doctors, governments or families?
7. Which matters more for success: natural ability or opportunities?	7. Is it fair to make decisions based on health risks that may never become real?
8. When have you had to weigh up a difficult choice without enough information?	8. Should society invest more in screening technology or support for people living with disabilities?

Answer Key

True/False	1=T 2=F 3=F 4=T 5=T 6=F 7=T 8=F
Phrase Match	1=I 2=D 3=G 4=J 5=H 6=B 7=E 8=A 9=F 10=C
Synonym Match	1=C 2=H 3=A 4=G 5=B 6=E 7=I 8=D 9=J 10=F

Example Sentences With the Phrases

No.	Example sentence
1	Parents may look into family health risks before starting treatment.
2	Patients should find out what a genetic test can and cannot predict.
3	Some parents may pick out an embryo after receiving medical advice.
4	A test can rule out certain inherited conditions, but not every health risk.
5	Parents can pass on genetic characteristics to their children.
6	The new services bring up difficult questions about fairness.
7	Access to expensive screening could come down to family income.
8	Couples may need to weigh up uncertain information before deciding.
9	Doctors should set out the limits of each test clearly.
10	Society must draw the line between medical care and choosing preferred traits.