

In an attempt to understand how individuals obtained their knowledge, debates between scientists, behaviorists, and naturalists regarding nature vs. nurture started in the mid-1800s. Francis Galton envisioned eugenics as a scientifically-guided social program that would encourage more intelligent and lawful people to marry and breed, leading to experimentation with twin studies. Scientists are still searching for better understanding, as the debate is continuous today. We did our History Day project on the Nature vs. Nurture Debate. It is a debate about whether nature (your genes) or nurture (your environment) has a greater effect on your behavior and personality. We chose this topic because we are twins and we thought it was interesting how they studied twins to understand if nature or nurture is stronger. We think that this topic is important because with the knowledge that we gain from this debate, we can understand people better and help them by even teaching young kids better.

Most of the research that we got was from articles and books. Most of the books we used are from the Delano Public Library and the Minneapolis Hennepin County Library. We also got some information from videos about our topic. We interviewed Christopher Mason, a geneticist professor, who does Nature vs. Nurture experiments, through an email to get more information. He told us about his current project where they are studying two identical twins and how they change and begin to differ from each other when one (an astronaut) goes to outer space and the other twin stays on Earth. We were more focused on the debate itself in the beginning, and as we went on, we found some very important and interesting information on the “before and after” of the topic. We now understand that Nature vs. Nurture itself is still ongoing today and how most people have concluded that both Nature and Nurture are equally important and needed.

We picked our topic by scrolling online through different topic ideas and we found the Nature vs. Nurture Debate. We then asked our parents if they knew anything about it and they gave us enough information on it to find out that we wanted to do the Nature vs. Nurture Debate as our topic. We decided to do a website for our project using the National History Day platform to create it. We chose to do a website because we like to do digital things and a website is one of the only choices that you can work on at home. We learned some skills about how to make a website, time management, priorities, and organization. Our topic relates to this year's theme, Debate and Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, and Consequences, because it is about two sides, Nature and Nurture, and people are debating whether nature or nurture has a greater influence on your behavior and personality. Our topic is important because it can lead us to a new understanding of ourselves, twins, and how our genes shape us to become who we are.