

Innate vs. Learned

38A

How does a bird know how to build a nest? How does a dog know that fetching a ball will earn it a treat? The answers lie in two different kinds of animal behaviour: **innate behaviour** and **learned behaviour**.

Birds' nest building is an example of innate behaviour. Another word for this type of behaviour is **instinct**. Innate behaviour is something an animal was born knowing how to do. Birds do not need to be taught how to build a nest. Certain conditions in the environment, such as the arrival of spring, prompt them to act in a particular way.

A dog performing for a prize, on the other hand, is an example of learned behaviour. The dog was not born knowing that if it completed a task, it would get a treat. It learned through experience that a certain

behaviour (fetching a ball) would earn it a certain reward (getting a treat).

Behaviour is often a complex mix of innate and learned behaviours. Dogs are born with a strong instinct to chase moving objects. A dog's trainer might build on this instinct by teaching the dog to fetch a ball. Even some birds' nest-building behaviour is partially learned. These birds are born with the nesting instinct, but learn specific nest-building **techniques** through experience.



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Behaviour is often a complex mix of innate and learned behaviours. Dogs are born with a strong instinct to chase moving objects. A dog's trainer might build on this instinct by teaching the dog to fetch a ball. Even some birds' nest-building behaviour is partially learned. These birds are born with the nesting instinct, but learn specific nest-building **techniques** through experience.



LO: Comprehension

Retrieval:

1. Why does a dog chase moving objects?
 - a. because of learned behavior
 - b. because of innate behavior
 - c. there is no known reason

Vocabulary:

2. Techniques are
 - a. ways of doing something
 - b. instructions
 - c. locations

Inference:

3. You can conclude that most birds will not build a nest until
 - a. they have been taught how to do so by their parents
 - b. the weather becomes warmer
 - c. they are ready to raise a family
4. Based on what you have learned, barking in dogs is an example of
 - a. bad behavior
 - b. learned behavior
 - c. innate behaviour

Text:

What is the main idea of the passage?

- a. Most animal behavior is a result of instinct
- b. It is difficult for animals to learn new behaviours
- c. Animals have both innate and learned behaviours

LO: Comprehension

Retrieval:

2. Why does a dog chase moving objects?
 - d. because of learned behavior
 - e. because of innate behavior
 - f. there is no known reason

Vocabulary:

2. Techniques are
 - d. ways of doing something
 - e. instructions
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Inference:

3. You can conclude that most birds will not build a nest until
 - d. they have been taught how to do so by their parents
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4. Based on what you have learned, barking in dogs is an example of
 - d. bad behavior
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 - f. innate behaviour

Text:

What is the main idea of the passage?

- d. Most animal behavior is a result of instinct
- e. It is difficult for animals to learn new behaviours

Animals have both innate and learned behaviours