

## Peer Review Examples #1

**Background:** In “Politics of Biology,” Wray Herbert concludes that the “harder we work to demonstrate the power of heredity, the harder it is to escape the potency of experience.” Increasingly, scientists are coming to the conclusion that genetics can only partially account for human behavior, and that what remains vitally important in determining self-identity is the effect of one’s environment—parenting, family dynamics, schooling, safe housing, and so on.

**Topic:** Write an essay in which you examine one element of the environment that shapes behavior. You should use specific information from the text to support your argument, and you should use specific examples from your own experience to illustrate the key points in your discussion.

### First Draft

The element of environment that is most interesting on a personal level is the issue of neighborhood violence. The article “Politics of Biology” seems to suggest that the cause of violence is from a person’s genetic structure but without a doubt, there hasn’t been a connection.

There are neighborhoods in which consists of stealing, shooting, and killing is an everyday thing. These neighborhoods are stricken with poverty and a large population of impressionable minds. Statistically, it is believed that if you grow up in these types of neighborhoods with all this going on you are eventually going to end up in the same situation. More or less in a cycle of violence.

The article also brings up the topic of having the violent gene but not being brought up in that environment or the other way around.

Personally, I’ve been through a lot of violence not only in my household but in my neighborhood. I had a lot of friends that grew up with me all coming from the same neighborhood and surprisingly the number that took the path of violence is almost equal to that of what I’ve become, “a student.” Some even surpassing their own expectations. This proves that the choices that are made are equal or even greater than the environment we are brought up in.

A way to disprove that genetics does not take a part in the choice process is the way many have changed their lives from being ruthless thugs to becoming a person with good morals and well-educated.

The choices that are made in life either make us better or worse but by no means are we doomed with no choice.

### First Draft

In “Politics of Biology, by Wray Herbert, it said that scientists are coming to the conclusion that genetics can only partially account for human behavior, and that what remains vitally important in determining self-identity is the effect of one’s environment. This is definitely true. In this essay, I’m going to focus on a violent environment and how it can play a serious role in one’s life.

Let’s take my cousin for example. His father (my uncle) used to be in a gang once himself. Sure he did time in prison, more than once, and for what reason? I don’t even know. What I do know is that his son grew up to be just like him—always getting into trouble. Well, one day his actions caught up with him and someone shot him. Unfortunately, he didn’t make it.

Now his sister, on the other hand, had the same environment, had the same father, and had to live around the same things. Yet she has nothing to do with gangs or violence. She’s a good person, polite, and well-mannered. I can’t say that she has an excellent future ahead of her, but I know that if she takes the right path, it’s possible.

So why did she turn out the total opposite of her brother? Well, it’s not because she got a different gene than he did. It’s simply because she “chose” not to lead that kind of life.

You see, the environment doesn’t always determine what your behavior is like. Sometimes when the conditions aren’t too bad, you have the opportunity to make the right choices. Sadly enough, there are those who have no choice about the kind of life they want to live. For example, financial hardships may make it almost impossible to move out of a bad neighborhood. Therefore, in order to fit in or survive, one must have to do the wrong things whether they want to or not.

It’s terribly sad that people have to live this way. For some, things may be easy, for some, impossible. All in all, if it’s true that genes control your behavior, then it’s true to say that whatever kind of gene you have depends on what kind of environment you live in.