

Gattaca Activity

Choose one of the following questions and write a paragraph (at least 5 sentences) response. Use information we learned in class, as well as the movie to support your decisions. You are welcome to answer a second question (with another paragraph) for extra credit. Please identify which question number you have chosen to answer.

1. During a scene in Gattaca, Vincent's parents visited a doctor who specialized in child conception to select for the best traits for his future brother. They hoped that his brother would have the best possible chances for a successful life. Some of the traits mentioned in GATTACA included intelligence, height and any possibility of inheritable diseases.

If you decide to have a child one day and are given the opportunity to select for special traits, would you do so? Why or why not?

2. Molecular biology scientists have developed a technique which enables parents to select the sex of their future child. This technique simply separates the X carrying sperms from the Y carrying sperms, and then inseminating females with the preferred sex chromosomes. Potential parents with sex-linked diseases may choose to have a girl, avoiding the possibility of having a boy with hemophilia, for example. The U.S. is one of the few countries in the world where this is legal.

Do you feel that sex selection for medical and non-medical reasons should remain legal in the U.S.? In the rest of the world? What do you think are some implications of this technique?

3. During a gala party scene in GATTACA, a woman submits a saliva sample from a recent kiss to screen her potential boyfriend/husband's DNA. Is she violating his rights by doing this without his knowledge? Is this in anyway similar to performing a background check? How much would a DNA screen reveal about someone's personality and intelligence?