

# Movie: GATTACA

## Synopsis of Movie

One man defies a system obsessed with genetic perfection. Ethan Hawke stars as Vincent, an "In-Valid," who assumes the identity of a member of the genetic elite to pursue his goal of traveling into space with the Gattaca Aerospace Corporation. However, a week before his mission, a murder marks Vincent as a suspect. With a relentless investigator in pursuit and the colleague he has fallen in love with beginning to suspect his deception, Vincent's dreams steadily unravel. (Rating PG-13)

## Biology Principles

*Nature vs Nurture*

*Pre-implantation genetic diagnosis*

*Genetic Screening*



*DNA profiling*

*Human rights*

*Genetic modification (recombinant DNA)*

# GATTACA

1. At Vincent's birth, doctors already knew how he would die. What was Vincent's life expectancy and what would he likely die from?
2. Compare how Vincent's brother was brought into the world to how Vincent was brought into the world. Did the doctor feel that some traits should be left to chance? Why or why not.
3. The doctor stated: "The child is you, simply the best of you". What does this mean?
4. Scenes of the two brothers childhood imply certain differences in the physique. List some obvious differences between Vincent and his brother.
5. "My real resume' was in my cells." What does this statement mean? What kind of job did Vincent end up with? What was his real goal?
6. Describe the process by which Vincent became Jerome?

7. How was Vincent treated differently as Jerome?

8. What procedures did Vincent go through to prevent his DNA from being discovered (and his ruse being discovered)

9. Did the doctor at Gattaca know all along that Jerome wasn't who he was? What gave him away at the end?

10. Why did the real Jerome go along with Vincent's scheme?

**Essay:** Choose one of the following (Essay should be approximately 5 paragraphs long, and use language specific to genetics and biotechnology)

1. The caption of the movie reads: "There Is No Gene for The Human Spirit". Describe what this means in the context of Vincent's struggle to overcome his perceived genetic disadvantages. Is nature (DNA) more important than nurture (home environment) in determining whether a person will be successful or not. Defend your answer.

2. Genetic screening for some diseases already exists - children are tested for PKU at birth. It is conceivable that the number and scope of testing of newborns may broaden in the future. Do you think that newborns should be tested for other traits, such as alcoholism, heart problems, or even intelligence? If tests can be performed on a newborn or even an adult, who has the right to your genetic information - do employers, do spouses, and do insurance companies have the right to your profile. Defend your position.