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**Level 4 – 4th August 2025**

## **Jeans video sparks race and genetics debate**

**FREE online quizzes, mp3 listening and more for this lesson here:**

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2508/250804-jeans-genes-wordplay-4.html>

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**Please try Levels 5 and 6. They are (a little) harder.**

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# THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2508/250804-jeans-genes-wordplay-4.html>

A video from the jeans maker American Eagle has created a storm. Social media users say the company's use of the words "jeans" and "genes" in a video is racist. The company's new jeans video stars actress Sydney Sweeney. She tells the camera: "Genes are passed down from parents to offspring, often determining traits like hair colour, personality and even eye colour. My jeans are blue." The video closes with the line: "Sydney Sweeney has great jeans."

Critics of the say the wordplay is eugenic. Eugenics is a theory that suggests humanity can be improved by focusing on "desirable" genes. The critics say Ms Sweeney is white, blue-eyed, and blonde. A former Fox News host called the criticism a "leftist meltdown". The White House called it an overreaction, and that attacking the ad was "cancel culture run amok". American Eagle says its ad "is and always was about the jeans."

Sources: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/celebrities/2025/08/01/jd-vance-sydney-sweeney-jeans-ad-controversy/85474100007/>  
<https://apnews.com/article/american-eagle-sydney-sweeney-jeans-dunkin-e4d0cfade207d3b1e1b4e93531bfc082>  
<https://www.vox.com/culture/422121/sydney-sweeneys-american-eagle-ad-jeans-genes-eugenics-trump>

# PHRASE MATCHING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2508/250804-jeans-genes-wordplay-4.html>

## PARAGRAPH ONE:

- |                               |                     |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. A video from               | a. of the words     |
| 2. American Eagle has created | b. like hair colour |
| 3. the company's use          | c. jeans video      |
| 4. The company's new          | d. line             |
| 5. Genes are passed           | e. to offspring     |
| 6. from parents               | f. a storm          |
| 7. determining traits         | g. the jeans maker  |
| 8. The video closes with the  | h. down             |

## PARAGRAPH TWO:

- |                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Critics of             | a. meltdown            |
| 2. Eugenics is a          | b. culture             |
| 3. white, blue-eyed, and  | c. was about the jeans |
| 4. a leftist              | d. theory              |
| 5. The White House called | e. the ad              |
| 6. cancel                 | f. it an overreaction  |
| 7. run                    | g. blonde              |
| 8. its ad "is and always  | h. amok                |

# LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2508/250804-jeans-genes-wordplay-4.html>

A video from (1) \_\_\_\_\_ American Eagle has  
(2) \_\_\_\_\_. Social media users say the company's  
use of the words "jeans" and "genes" in a  
(3) \_\_\_\_\_. The company's new jeans video stars  
actress Sydney Sweeney. She tells the camera:  
"(4) \_\_\_\_\_ down from parents to offspring, often  
(5) \_\_\_\_\_ hair colour, personality and even eye  
colour. My jeans are blue." The video closes  
(6) \_\_\_\_\_: "Sydney Sweeney has great jeans."

Critics of the say (7) \_\_\_\_\_ eugenic. Eugenics is a  
theory that (8) \_\_\_\_\_ be improved by focusing on  
"desirable" genes. (9) \_\_\_\_\_ Ms Sweeney is white,  
blue-eyed, and blonde. A former Fox News host  
(10) \_\_\_\_\_ a "leftist meltdown". The White House  
called (11) \_\_\_\_\_, and that attacking the ad was  
"cancel culture run amok". American Eagle says its ad "is  
(12) \_\_\_\_\_ about the jeans."

# PUT A SLASH ( / ) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2508/250804-jeans-genes-wordplay-4.html>

A video from the jeans maker American Eagle has created a storm. Social media users say the company's use of the words "jeans" and "genes" in a video is racist. The company's new jeans video stars actress Sydney Sweeney. She tells the camera: "Genes are passed down from parents to offspring, often determining traits like hair colour, personality and even eye colour. My jeans are blue." The video closes with the line: "Sydney Sweeney has great jeans." Critics of the wordplay say it is eugenic. Eugenics is a theory that suggests humanity can be improved by focusing on "desirable" genes. The critics say Ms Sweeney is white, blue-eyed, and blonde. A former Fox News host called the criticism a "leftist meltdown". The White House called it an overreaction, and that attacking the ad was "cancel culture run amok". American Eagle says its ad "is and always was about the jeans."

# JEANS AND GENES SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2508/250804-jeans-genes-wordplay-4.html>

Write five GOOD questions about jeans and genes in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

## WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student A: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_
- f) \_\_\_\_\_

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## WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student B: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_
- f) \_\_\_\_\_

## WRITING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2508/250804-jeans-genes-wordplay-4.html>

Write about **jeans and genes** for 10 minutes. Read and talk about your partner's paper.