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Level 5 – 4th August 2025

Jeans video sparks race and genetics debate

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<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2508/250804-jeans-genes-wordplay-5.html>

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Please try Levels 4 and 6. They are (a little) harder.

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THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2508/250804-jeans-genes-wordplay-5.html>

A video from the fashion retailer American Eagle has created controversy over its use of the words "jeans" and "genes". Social media users are claiming the video is racist. The company produced the video for its new jeans. The 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." American Eagle said the play on words was part of its ad campaign.

Many people criticized the wordplay for being eugenic. Eugenics is a debunked theory that posits that humanity can be improved by focusing on "desirable" racial traits. Critics of the ad highlight the fact that Ms Sweeney is white, blue-eyed, and blonde. They suggest her looks are really "great genes". A former Fox News host called the criticism a "leftist meltdown". The U.S. Vice President called it an overreaction. The White House communications director said 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-5.html>

PARAGRAPH ONE:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. A video from the fashion | a. offspring |
| 2. created | b. the line |
| 3. Genes are passed | c. campaign |
| 4. from parents to | d. on words |
| 5. determining traits like | e. controversy |
| 6. The video closes with | f. hair colour |
| 7. the play | g. retailer |
| 8. part of its ad | h. down |

PARAGRAPH TWO:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. people criticized the wordplay | a. director |
| 2. focusing on "desirable" racial | b. "great genes" |
| 3. Critics of the ad highlight | c. traits |
| 4. They suggest her looks are really | d. was about the jeans |
| 5. called the criticism a | e. for being eugenic |
| 6. The White House communications | f. amok |
| 7. cancel culture run | g. the fact |
| 8. its ad "is and always | h. "leftist meltdown" |

LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2508/250804-jeans-genes-wordplay-5.html>

A video from (1) _____ American Eagle has created controversy over its use of the words "jeans" and "genes". Social media (2) _____ the video is racist. The company produced the video for its new jeans. The (3) _____ Sydney Sweeney. She tells the camera: "Genes are passed down from (4) _____, often determining traits like hair colour, personality and even eye colour. My jeans are blue." The video closes with the line: "Sydney Sweeney (5) _____." American Eagle said the (6) _____ was part of its ad campaign.

Many people (7) _____ for being eugenic. Eugenics is a debunked theory that (8) _____ can be improved by focusing on "desirable" racial traits. Critics of the ad (9) _____ that Ms Sweeney is white, blue-eyed, and blonde. They suggest her looks are really "great genes". A former Fox News host (10) _____ a "leftist meltdown". The U.S. Vice President called (11) _____. The White House communications director said attacking the ad was "cancel culture run amok". American Eagle says its ad "(12) _____ was about the jeans."

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

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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-5.html>

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

[illegible]