

Face development in the womb



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1 Before watching the video discuss the following statement.

All newborn babies look the same. It is very difficult to recognise one from another.

2 Watch the video and find the answer to Activity 1.

3 Watch the video again and choose the best option for each question.

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| <p>a. Everything takes place in the groove ... our nose</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. underneath2. between3. beneath <p>b. The groove is called ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. filter.2. philtrum.3. filtrum. <p>c. Data comes from ... of developing embryos.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. photos2. scans3. parts | <p>d. The features of our face ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. grow independently.2. are predetermined before birth.3. fit together like in a puzzle. <p>e. The ... main sections meet in the groove.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. four2. two3. three <p>f. The process takes place ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. after 3 or 4 weeks.2. between the 2nd and the 3rd month.3. after the 3rd month. |
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4 Discuss in pairs.

- Do you look like your father or your mother?
- What features do you have in common?



FACIAL EXPRESSIONS DEVELOP IN THE WOMB

Before he or she is born, a foetus begins to move his or her face, e.g. **parting** lips, **wrinkling** a nose or lowering a **brow**. These movements, when combined, will one day assemble expressions we all recognize in one another. A new study has shown that, as the foetus develops, these facial motions become increasingly complex. They used 4-D ultrasound images, which resemble video, to track the facial motions of two female foetuses.

At 24 weeks, foetuses were more likely to make a single movement, like a widening of the lips for example, all by itself. Then, as the weeks passed, they began combining the movements, putting, say, a lip widening movement with a nose wrinkle. By about 35 weeks, combinations of three and four movements associated with the two

expressions had surpassed single or double movements. These motions are likely a form of practice, as the foetuses prepare to enter the social world, where they must form **bonds** with others. Foetuses also **suck** their **thumbs** in the womb and make breathing motions, both precursors for important activities once they are born.

(Adapted from Wynne Parry. Live Science, <http://www.livescience.com/15939-fetus-facial-expressions.html>)

bond: *legame*
brow: *sopracciglio*
to part: *separare*
to suck: *succhiare*
thumb: *pollice*
to wrinkle: *(qui) arricciare*