

A THING OR TWO ABOUT TWINS

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxOiegGJdJw>

They have the same piercing eyes. The same color hair. One may be



shy, while the other loves meeting new people. Discovering why **identical** twins differ—despite having the same **DNA**—could **reveal** a great deal about all

of us.

EVERY SUMMER, ON the first weekend in August, thousands of twins **converge** on Twinsburg, Ohio, a small town southeast of Cleveland named by identical twin brothers nearly two **centuries** ago.

They come, two by two, for the Twins Days Festival, a three-day marathon of picnics, talent shows, and look-alike **contests** that has grown into one of the world's largest **gatherings** of twins.

Dave and Don Wolf of Fenton, Michigan, have been coming to the festival for years. Like most twins who **attend**, they enjoy spending time with each other. In fact, during the past 18 years, the 53-year-old truckers, whose **identical beards** reach down to their chests, have driven more than three million miles together, **hauling** everything from **diapers** to canned soup from places like Seattle, Washington, to Camden, New Jersey. While one sits at the wheel of their diesel Freightliner, the other **snoozes** in the **bunk** behind him. They listen to the same country gospel stations on satellite radio, share the same Tea Party gripes about big government, and **munch** on the same road diet of pepperoni, apples, and mild cheddar cheese. On their days off they go hunting or fishing together. It's a way of life that suits them.

"Must be a twins thing, we're **wired the same**" Don says of his twin, Dave, explaining how they've gotten along as truck-driving partners for 18 years. "He's **messier** than I am," Don says. "But we like the same music and share the same sense of humor.

This afternoon at the festival the brothers have stopped by a research tent sponsored by the FBI, the University of Notre Dame, and West Virginia University. Inside the big white tent technicians are photographing sets of twins with high-resolution cameras, collecting

their fingerprints, and scanning their **irises** to find out if the latest face-**recognition** software can tell them apart.

"Although **identical** twins may look the same to you and me, a digital imaging system can spot minute differences in **freckles**, skin pores, or the curve of their eyebrows," says Patrick Flynn, a computer scientist from Notre Dame. But so far, he says, even the most advanced commercial systems can be tripped up by changes in lighting, facial expressions, and other **complications**, whether imaging twins or others.

Because their **beards** cover half of their faces, the Wolf brothers pose a particular **challenge**. This seems to **amuse** them. "After they took my picture," Dave says, "I asked one guy if I went out and **committed** a crime and then went home and **shaved**, would they be able to tell it was me? He kind of looked at me and said, 'Probably not. But don't go out and **commit** a crime.'"

Vocabulary words:

shy - *adj.* wary and distrustful; disposed to avoid persons or things; easily startled or frightened; short; lacking self-confidence.

identical - *adj.* (of twins) derived from a single egg or ovum; exactly alike; incapable of being perceived as different; being the exact same one; not any other.

reveal - *verb* make clear and visible.

DNA - *noun* (biochemistry); the map to growing a person, as passed down from parent to child; a long linear polymer found in the nucleus of a cell and formed from nucleotides and shaped like a double helix; associated with the transmission of genetic information.

converge - *verb* come together so as to form a single group.

century - *noun* a period of 100 years

contest - *noun* a struggle between rivals; an occasion on which a winner is selected from among two or more contestants.

gathering - *noun* a group of persons together in one place.

attend - be present at (meetings, church services, university), etc; to go to something.

beard - *noun* hairy growth on or near the face of certain mammals; the hair growing on the lower part of a man's face.

haul - *verb* transport in a vehicle; draw slowly or heavily

diaper - *noun* garment consisting of a folded cloth drawn up between the legs and fastened at the waist; worn by infants to catch excrement; a fabric (usually cotton or linen) with a distinctive woven pattern of small repeated figures

snooze - *noun* sleeping for a short period of time (usually not in bed); *verb* sleep lightly or for a short period of time.

bunk - *noun* a rough bed (as at a campsite).

munch - *noun* a large bite; *verb* chew noisily

messy - *adj.* dirty and disorderly

iris - muscular diaphragm that controls the size of the pupil; it forms the colored portion of the eye.

recognition - the process of recognizing something or someone by remembering; an acceptance (as of a claim) as true and valid; approval; the explicit and formal acknowledgement of a government or of the national independence of a country.

freckle - *noun* a small brownish spot (of the pigment melanin) on the skin; *verb* mark with freckles; become freckled

complication - *noun* the act or process of complicating; a development that complicates a situation; a situation or condition that is complex or confused; any disease or disorder that occurs during the course of (or because of) another disease; puzzling complexity

challenge - *noun* a demand by a sentry for a password or identification; questioning a statement and demanding an explanation; a formal objection to the selection of a particular person as a juror; a call to engage in a contest or fight; a demanding or stimulating situation; *verb* raise a formal objection in a court of law; ask for identification; issue a challenge to; take exception to

amuse - *verb* make (somebody) laugh; occupy in an agreeable, entertaining or pleasant fashion

commit - *verb* cause to be admitted; of persons to an institution; give entirely to a specific person, activity, or cause; make an investment; confer a trust upon; perform an act, usually with a negative connotation

shave - *noun* the act of removing hair with a razor; *verb* remove body hair with a razor; touch the surface of lightly; cut closely; make shavings of or reduce to shavings; cut the price of; cut or remove with or as if with a plane