

Join the national conversation!

SHOULD INTELLIGENT DESIGN BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOL?

Word Generation - Unit 2.17

Focus Words

design | creationism | concept | evolve | perspective



Weekly Passage

Bethany Collchay's parents want Bethany to believe exactly what it says in the Christian Bible. The Bible says that God created human beings and all the plants and animals. At Bethany's school, however, the science teacher says that living things evolve. This idea was first written about in a book by Charles Darwin that came out in 1859. Darwin's theory of evolution says that humans and other animals developed from common ancestors over millions of years. This theory explains similarities and differences among species. It also explains why some species survived while others became extinct. When scientists study fossils from millions of years ago, they find evidence that supports what Darwin said. Changes in flu viruses and in color patterns on birds and fishes show that evolution is going on right now.

While scientists argue that evolution is undeniable, people like Bethany's parents have the right to their religious beliefs. Bethany's parents don't want anything to threaten their child's religious beliefs. When schools teach about evolution, some people fear a child's

belief in creationism could be threatened. So such people are asking schools to teach intelligent design along with evolution. The central concept behind intelligent design is that living things must have been designed by an intelligent being. Supporters ask us to think about the eye. An eye has to be created all at once with all its parts, they say, or it won't work. Even though the law in America does not allow public schools to teach religion, intelligent design doesn't name the designer or use the word "God," so many argue that teaching about it would not break the law.

Scientists, however, are against teaching intelligent design. They say intelligent design is not science. It doesn't explain how living things came about or why some are like each other. It doesn't fit with evidence, and doesn't predict anything. Therefore, intelligent design is not a scientific perspective, but a religious one.

What do you think? Should schools teach intelligent design along with evolution?

**Unit 2.17 -
Should intelligent design be taught in school?
Focus Word Chart**

Word	Meaning	Forms	Examples of Use	Notes
design	(n.) - a plan			
creationism	(n.) - the belief that the world was made by an intelligent force			
concept	(n.) - an idea			
evolve	(v.) - to change over time			
perspective	(n.) - a point of view			

Unit 2.17 -

Should intelligent design be taught in school?

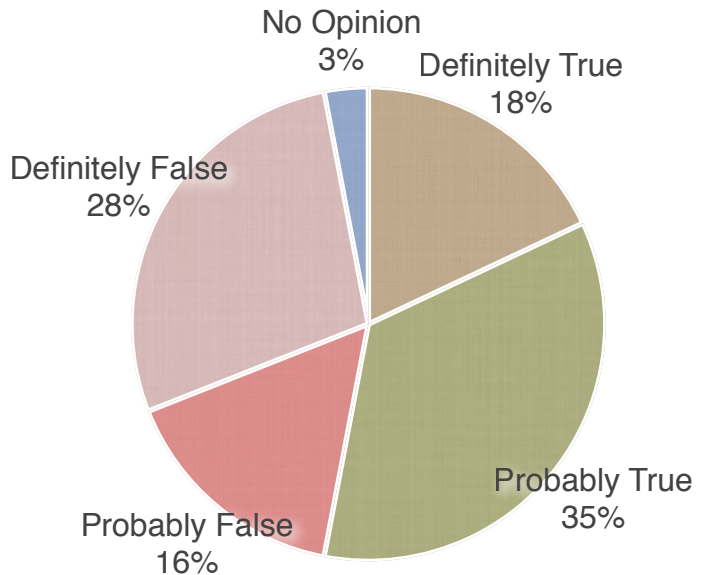
Problem of the Week



Scientists believe that humans and chimpanzees both **evolved** from an ancestor that lived 5-7 million years ago. Supporters of intelligent **design**, or **creationism**, disagree. In the poll below, people give their **perspectives** on the debate.

In June 2007, people were asked this question:

*What do you think about **evolution**, or the **concept** that humans and apes have a common ancestor?*



USA Today/Gallup

Option 1: Which of the following is true?

- A) Half of the people polled thought **evolution** was probably or definitely true.
- B) More than half of the people polled thought **evolution** was probably or definitely true.
- C) Less than half of the people polled thought **evolution** was probably or definitely true.
- D) None of the above.

Option 2: According to this poll, what is the probability that any two people chosen at random *both* think that **evolution** is probably or definitely true?

Discussion Question: Forty-four percent of the people polled think that **evolution** is probably or definitely false. Many of these people believe that **creationism** and/or intelligent **design** are better explanations for where human beings came from. However, 53% of people think that evolution is probably or definitely true. Why do people disagree so strongly about the **concept** of **evolution**? From your **perspective**, does this make sense? Do you have strong feelings about **evolution**?

Should intelligent design be taught in school?

Debating the Issue



I. Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A Because of the separation between church and state, schools shouldn't have to teach intelligent design or creationism.

B Intelligent design is not a religious view and should be taught along-side evolution in schools.

C Schools should teach all viewpoints to round out their students' education.

D Parents should decide what they want their children to be taught. If a parent objects to a class, that parent's child should be excused from the class.

E _____

GO!

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

...because...

I disagree with part of that...

An example might help convince me. Can you give me an example?

What part of the passage makes you think that?

2. Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

Unit 2.17 - Should intelligent design be taught in school?

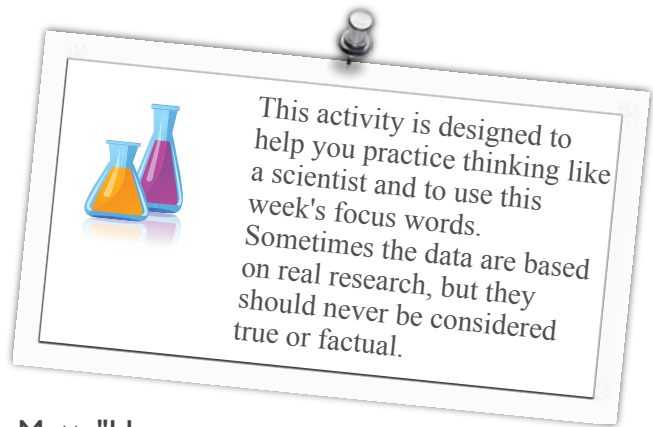
Science Activity

"I think that learning about **evolution** in science class conflicts with my religious **perspective**," says Matt. "How can I believe that God **designed** human beings, and also believe in the **concept** of evolution? I need to choose one or the other."

"Many Americans disagree with you, Matt," says Professor Seemy. "They would say that belief in God doesn't conflict at all with belief in evolution. A lot of people who believe in evolution, including scientists, also think that God played an important part in creating human beings. They believe that God started the process of evolution, or guided evolution as it happened."

"That's an interesting perspective to think about," Matt says, "but how do you know that 'many Americans' really disagree with me?"

"That's a great question, Matt. In science, we should support our opinions with evidence. Let's look at some data!" says Professor Seemy.



Question:

Can Americans believe in evolution and also believe that God helped create humans?

Hypothesis:

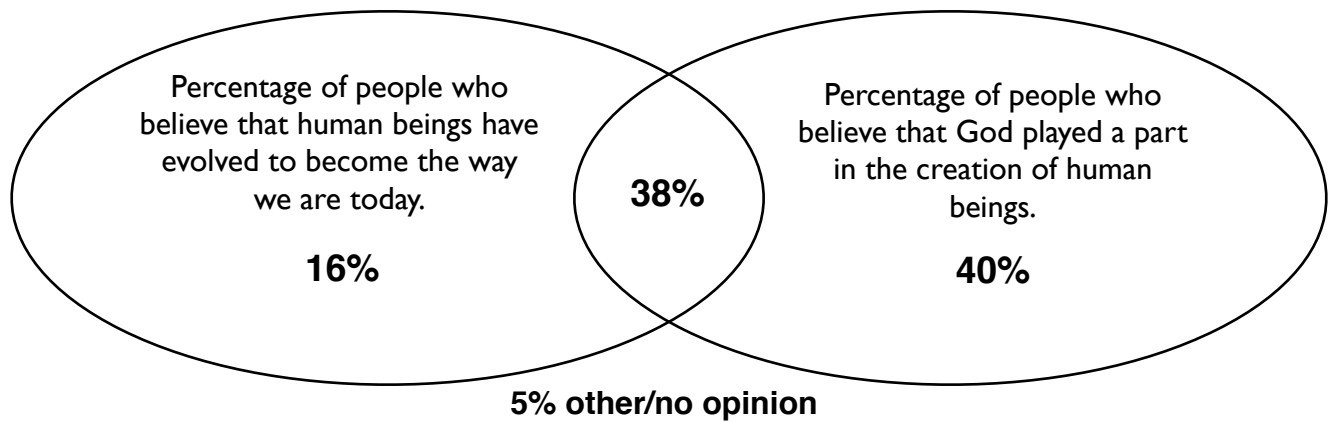
Less than 5% of Americans will agree that both evolution and God played a role in the origin of human beings.

Materials:

- ▶ Data from survey of 1,000 Americans that asks about beliefs on God and evolution

Procedure:

1. Review data from the national survey.
2. Count the number of people who believe that human beings evolved.
3. Count the number of people who believe that God helped create human beings.
4. Calculate the percentage of people who believed in only one of the ideas, and the percentage of people who believed in both ideas.

Data:**Conclusion:**

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

What evidence supports your conclusion?

How would you make this a better study?



Writing Prompt

Should intelligent design be taught in school?

Focus Words

design | creationism | concept | evolve | perspective

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

A tool to help you think about your own writing!

Remember you can use focus words from any of the WG Units.

Check off what you accomplished:

Good Start

- ☐ Stated my own position
- ☐ Included 1 focus word

Pretty Good

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1-2 focus words

Exemplary

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1 counterargument
- ☐ Used 2-5 focus words

[illegible]