SERP

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 <u>evolve</u>. 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 <u>creationism</u> could be threatened. So such people are asking schools to teach intelligent <u>design</u> along with evolution. The central <u>concept</u> 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 <u>perspective</u>, but a religious one.

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

TEACHER

Reading Comprehension/Discussion Questions:

▸ What is the relationship between creationism and "Intelligent Design"?

▸ What is the difference between evolution and creationism?

▸ Why are scientists against teaching "Intelligent Design"?

▸ Do you think that what a student learns in school might threaten his/her religious beliefs?

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

Word	Meaning	Forms		
		Inflectional	Basic Word Classes	Prefixes/ Suffixes
design	(n.) - a plan	designs (pl.) design (v.)designed designing designs		designer designable designate
creationism	(n.) - the belief that the world was made by an intelligent force	create creates created creating	creation	creationist
concept	(n.) - an idea	concepts (pl.)	conceive (v.)	conceptual conception conceptual misconception
evolve	(v.) - to change over time	evolves evolved evolving		evolvement evolvable evolution evolutionary
perspective	(n.) - a point of view	perspectives (pl.)		perspectival perspectiveless

Unit 2.17 -
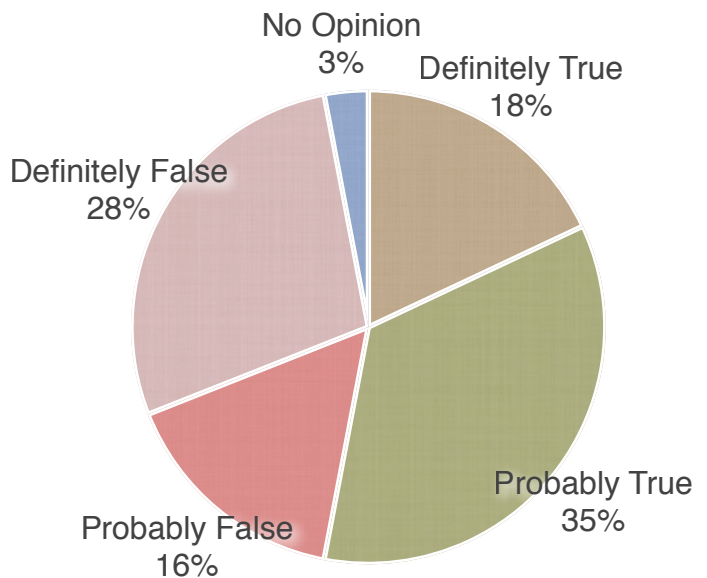# Should intelligent design be taught in school?
Problem of the Week

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?*

No Opinion
3%
Definitely True
18%
Definitely False
28%
Probably True
35%
Probably False
16%

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?

Answer: .53 x .53, or about 28%

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

1. 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:

_____
_____
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TEACHER
Whatever the debate format, ask students to use academically productive talk when arguing their positions. In particular, students should provide reasons and evidence to back up their assertions. It may be helpful to read these sample positions to illustrate some possibilities, but students should be encouraged to take their own positions about the issue at hand.

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

This activity is designed to help you practice thinking like a scientist and to use this week's focus words. Sometimes the data are based on real research, but they should never be considered true or factual.

This data is taken from a Gallup poll conducted on December 10-12, 2010 that is published online at the following two sites:

http://www.gallup.com/poll/145286/four-americans-believe-strict-creationism.aspx

http://www.gallup.com/poll/21814/Evolution-Creationism-Intelligent-Design.aspx

This description of data collection for the poll can be found at the first site: "Results for this Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted Dec. 10-12, 2010, with a random sample of 1,019 adults, aged 18 and older, living in the continental U.S., selected using random-digit-dial sampling."

The exact wording of the questions asked in the survey is as follows:

Human beings have developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God guided this process (38% agreeing)

Human beings have developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God had no part in this process (16% agreeing)
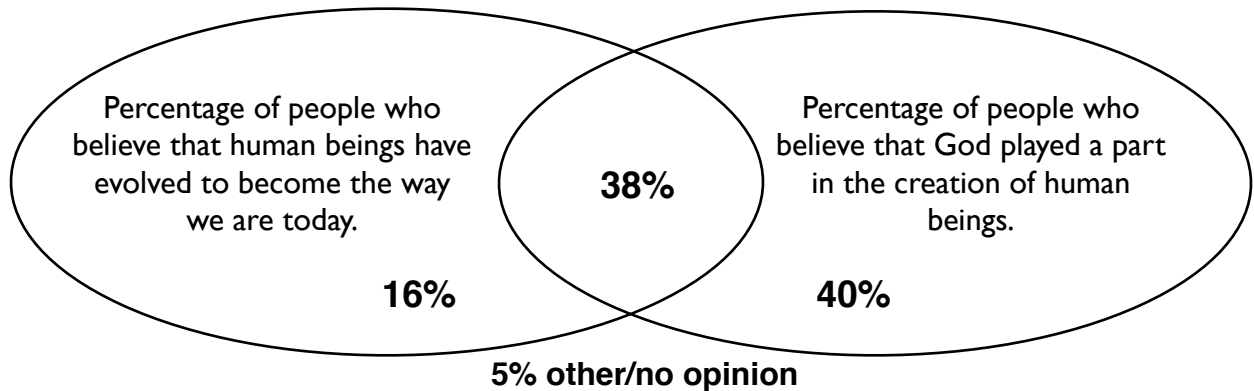
God created human beings pretty much in their present form at one time within the last 10,000 years or so (40% agreeing)

Other/ No opinion (6%)

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:

Percentage of people who believe that human beings have evolved to become the way we are today.

38%

Percentage of people who believe that God played a part in the creation of human beings.

16%

40%

5% other/no opinion

Conclusion:

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

Not supported

What evidence supports your conclusion?

38% of people surveyed believe both that humans evolved and that God was involved in human creation (i.e. by guiding evolution), a percentage that is much higher than 5%.

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.

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TEACHER

Ask students to write a response in which they argue a position on the weekly topic.

Put the writing prompt on the overhead projector (or the board) so that everyone can see it. Remind students to refer to the word lists in their Word Generation books as needed.

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