

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 <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

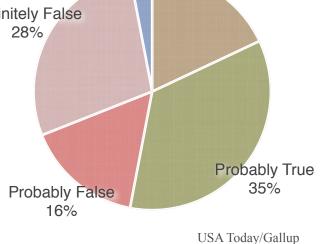
Reading Comprehension/Discussion Questions:

- 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 in	Unit 2.17 - Should intelligent design be taught in school?	sign be tau	ght in schoo	01?
Focus Word Chart	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.)		perspectiveless

Unit 2.17 -Should intelligent design be taught in school? **Problem of the Week** No Opinion 3% **Definitely True** Scientists believe that humans and 18% chimpanzees both **evolved** from an ancestor Definitely False that lived 5-7 million years ago. Supporters of 28% 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?



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?



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 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/fouramericans-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)

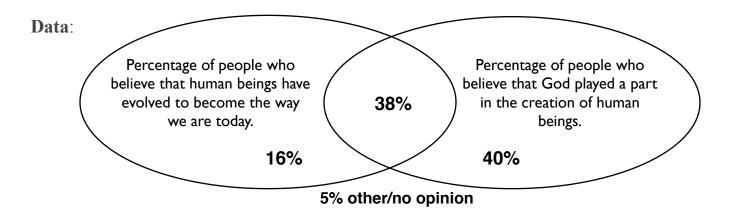
Other/ No opinion (6%)



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

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.



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?	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:
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.	Good Start 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

	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.	
