

# What is life? (are viruses alive?)

Business



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What is life? Well first, what is life to, say, some random person on the street? Mother Teresa once said “ Life is an opportunity, benefit from it. Life is beauty, admire it. Life is a dream, realize it. Life is a challenge, meet it. Life is a duty, complete it. Life is a game, play it.

Life is a promise, fulfill it. Life is sorrow, overcome it. Life is a song, sing it. Life is a struggle, accept it. Life is a tragedy, confront it. Life is an adventure, dare it.

Life is luck, make it. Life is too precious, do not destroy it. Life is life, fight for it.” So what is the scientific definition of “ life”? The Random House Dictionary of the English Language states that life is “ the condition that distinguishes animals and plants from inorganic objects and dead organisms, being manifested by growth through metabolism, reproduction, and the power of adaptation to environment through changes originating internally”. In short, living things grow and develop, reproduce, and evolve in response to their environment. What about viruses? Are they alive? So what about viruses? Are they alive? Of course! “ Why,” you may ask? Well, take bacteriophages for example.

A bacteriophage is a type of virus that infects bacteria. They have evolved so that our immune systems have a harder time creating antibodies to destroy the virus. They have also developed a way to reproduce themselves. Living things do not necessarily have to be able to breath or even have a brain. All it has to have in order to be a living thing is the ability to grow and develop, reproduce, and evolve in response to their environment.