

Trying to define life can be a daunting task. No set definition has been determined, since the word itself has multiple components that make up a living thing. Therefore, existing definitions prove to be abstract or vague. Some might describe life as a self-sustaining entity. Others describe things that are alive to be capable of Darwinian evolution. Children might describe something that is alive as something that moves. But then, couldn't the wind be alive? Or a blender? If a cell divides to self-sustain, is it alive? Is a virus considered to be alive? Is the sky a living thing since it changes color throughout the day?

However, this brings up the issue of whether or not there is a difference between life and being alive. For example, is someone on life support considered alive if machines have to push air into and out of that individual's lungs to keep a heartbeat? Or is a cell considered life itself if it is only part of a whole being? Therefore living and life can be considered parts in a whole. Thousands of living components make up the human body, for instance. A human can be considered "life" since we are self-sustaining beings capable of evolution and change, with the ability to reproduce and create new life. However, the cells that make up this "life" may not be self-sustaining. The systems within our body, such as the cardiovascular system, limbic system, pulmonary system and others are coincide and work together to allow our bodies to thrive and adapt to changing environments. However, a single blood vessel could not be considered "life" by itself.

Life is a combination of a theory, a definition, and what we observe. We have a clear understanding of what living is: we see it every day and have a general understanding of what it means to be alive. It is the definition and theory components that become more difficult to pinpoint. The theory of life is not completely understood. Think about how weird it is that we all came from a single cell that multiplied into the complex being we are today. And if the theory of life is that something alive creates another thing, then couldn't a computer virus theoretically be considered alive if a person "created" it?

Life is a complex term to define. With no concise message to sum it up, it is left up to interpretation from anyone who chooses to define it. In my opinion, I think life is anything that can survive on its own for any given duration. This definition encompasses wildlife, trees, insects, human beings, a beating heart, bacteria, etc. I'm still not sure whether I consider technology to be alive. I think this will become a puzzle to be discussed as technology and our dependence on machines becomes greater in the future. But for now, I stick to my brief definition as an encompassing term in what I believe to be considered life.