

Ten questions to ask your biology teacher about design

- 1. DESIGN DETECTION.** If the universe, or some aspect of it, is intelligently designed, how could we know it? Do reliable methods for detecting design exist? What are they? Are such methods employed in forensics, archeology, and data fraud analysis? Could they conceivably detect design in biological systems?
- 2. RELEVANCE OF SETI.** The search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) is a scientific research program that searches for signs of non-human intelligence from distant space. Should biologists likewise search for signs of non-human intelligence in biological systems? Why or why not?
- 3. BIOLOGY'S INFORMATION PROBLEM.** What explains the origin of complex information-rich patterns in biological systems? Could biological systems exhibit informational patterns that cannot be adequately explained by natural selection and other material mechanisms? What would such patterns look like?
- 4. MOLECULAR MACHINES.** Can you give examples of structures in the cell that resemble machines designed by humans? Does the complexity of these molecular machines rival artifactual machines made by humans? Is there any solid evidence that such machines could have arisen apart from actual design?
- 5. IRREDUCIBLE COMPLEXITY.** Are there complex biological systems whose parts are all indispensable for the systems to perform their functions? If so, are such "irreducibly complex" systems evidence of intelligent design? If not, why not?
- 6. REUSABLE PARTS.** Human designers reuse designs that work well. Life forms likewise reuse of structures that work well (the camera eye, for example). Is this evidence for common descent, evolutionary convergence, common design, or a combination of these? How do we decide among these options?
- 7. REVERSE ENGINEERING.** In trying to understand biological systems, molecular biologists need to "reverse engineer" them. In other words, they start with functional biological systems and then use their knowledge of engineering to determine how the systems could have been designed and built. Is this evidence that the systems were engineered to begin with?
- 8. PREDICTIONS.** Do intelligent design theory and neo-Darwinian theory make different predictions? Consider, for instance, junk DNA. For which of the two theories would the idea that large stretches of DNA are junk be more plausible? Which theory is more likely to look for unknown uses of seemingly useless biological structures?
- 9. FOLLOWING THE EVIDENCE.** What evidence would convince you that intelligent design is true and that neo-Darwinism is false? Could such evidence even exist? What would it look like? If no such evidence exists or indeed can exist, how can neo-Darwinism be a testable scientific theory?
- 10. IDENTIFYING THE DESIGNER.** Can we determine whether an object is designed without knowing anything about its designer? If an unidentified intelligence was responsible for designing biological systems, how could we know it?

See *The Design Revolution* by William A. Dembski for detailed background regarding these questions. To order this book or read other articles by William Dembski, visit the Access Research Network website at www.arn.org.