

Are Viruses Living Things?

Key Terms

- requirements
- viruses
- DNA
- reproduce
- mutate
- taxonomy

Making Connections

Scientists agree that living things can be classified. This system of classification is known as **taxonomy** and was started by scientist Carl Linnaeus.

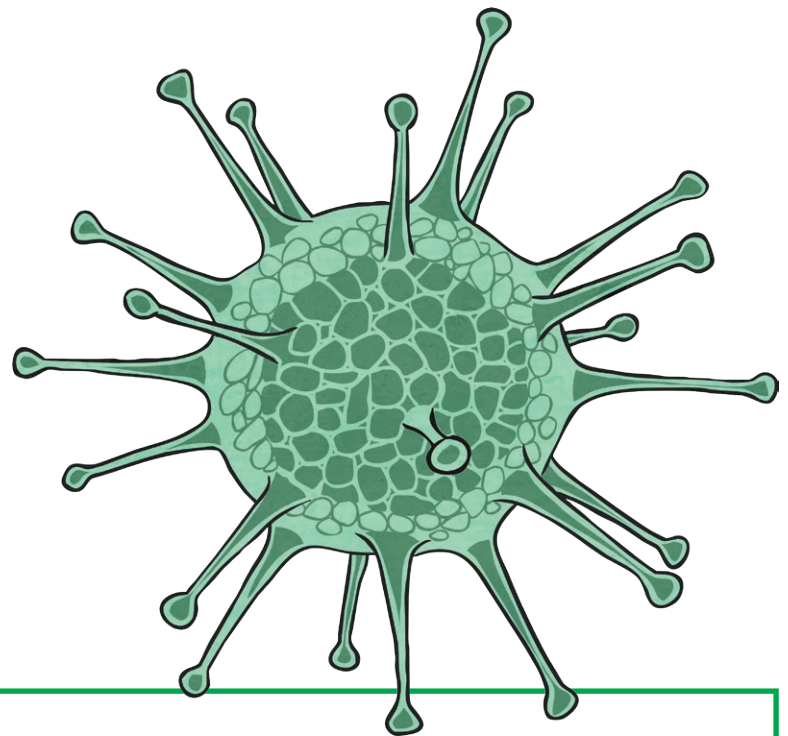


All living things meet certain **requirements** including moving, **reproducing**, responding to stimuli, taking on nutrients, excreting waste, respiring, and growing. **Viruses** are particles that can make living things sick. Many scientists disagree about whether viruses should be considered living things.



Viruses are particles that contain a genetic code such as **DNA**. They are only able to reproduce if they enter the cell of a plant or animal. So, they can reproduce, but not on their own. Viruses respond to stimuli when they **mutate** to better survive. They do not take on nutrients, nor do they excrete waste, respire, or grow.

Do you think viruses should be considered living things?



Interesting Facts:

1. Viruses cause the common cold, also known as the Rhinovirus.
2. Influenza, also known as the flu, is caused by a virus.
3. Scientists have invented vaccines that help prevent humans from being infected by certain viruses.