

Name:	Date:
Science Period:	

Directions: Read and Annotate. Answer all of the questions as you are reading. Then complete the experimental design in the end.

Researchers say a "YOLO" attitude is good for our brains

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela

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Grade Level 7 Word Count 652

Drake, a rapper, attends the 2016 American Music Awards at Microsoft Theater on November 20, 2016, in Los Angeles, California. Photo by: Christopher Polk/AMA2016/Getty Images



staff

You have probably seen it plastered all over hats, T-shirts and Instagram feeds: "YOLO," short for "You Only Live Once." The rapper Drake made the phrase go mainstream in his song "The Motto."

In other words, "YOLO" means life is short so we had better make the most of it. It's something humans seemingly have tried to remind each other since the dawn of time.

Scientists now say it might be more than just a trendy saying. A team of researchers from several universities, including Cambridge and Cal State, say that adopting a "YOLO" lifestyle is good for our brains.

Remember: What is YOLO? Why is it interesting to scientists?

Two Groups Chart Their "YOLO" Activities

For their experiment, the researchers gathered two groups of undergraduate students at an American university. They assigned them to one of two groups. They asked 70 students to imagine having only 30 days left before moving away. These students were told they should "intentionally engage in activities and spend time with people they will miss after they are gone." The idea was to activate that feeling that time is short, and to get the students to savor and appreciate their surroundings for a period of four weeks.

A second group of 69 students was simply asked to write a detailed journal of their activities over the same time period. This was the control group in the experiment.

At the end of the period, as well as for two weeks afterward, every student filled out the same survey. It was used to measure their satisfaction with life. A person could check a box that said "in most ways my life is close to ideal" or "the conditions of my life are excellent." This study did not measure fleeting, day-to-day happiness; rather, it asked about a deeper level of personal fulfillment.

At the beginning of the study period, the two groups of students rated themselves identically on this measure of fulfillment. But the students asked to imagine only 30 days left in their surroundings became "more motivated to plan, do and enjoy activities." They wanted to spend more time with friends or visiting special places, the researchers found.

The final assessment came six weeks after the start of the experiment. The students who were asked to focus on a scarcity of time rated themselves as significantly more satisfied with their lives than those who simply filled out time diaries.

Explain: Based on this section, what questions were the scientists trying to answer in the experiment? Describe their process in your own words.

Savoring Time Versus Just Doing Stuff

College students who were told to savor the next 30 days "showed steeper gains in well-being over time" than the other students, the authors write. The finding supports their prediction that framing time as short helps people get greater happiness from their surroundings.

Analyze: How did scientists arrive at this conclusion? What evidence supports their conclusion?

Why would this be? In the researchers' words, it's unclear whether the experimental condition "prompted people to engage in more pleasant activities or because it prompted the active appreciation and enjoyment of those activities." It could be that thinking of your time in a place as limited makes you go out and do more things to enjoy your time in that place. Research consistently shows that being active and forming close social bonds are keys to enjoying life.

But it could also be true that focusing on the limitations of time makes you more likely to appreciate and savor the things you're already doing.

Apply: How does this research apply to everyday life?

How Certain Are The Results?

This particular study comes with a few warnings one might expect. The subjects were all college students, and in this case overwhelmingly white and female. It is an open question how much these findings carry over to all people.

The researchers say their findings are "preliminary evidence" and call on others to replicate their work with other groups.

Still, the research adds some data to near-universal beliefs about "making hay while the sun shines." Even before Drake, other artists and musicians came to the same conclusion about the importance of this mentality. Now it appears that science might prove them right.

Investigate: What question do you have about this topic? What kind of information would you need to answer that question?

Design your Experiment for: Researchers say a "YOLO" attitude is good for our brains. Use the rubric to guide your writing.

Name:

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	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard	Total
Question:	Problem is given in the correct format: "How does (IV) affect (DV)?" (10 pts)		/10
Background:	2 paragraphs (5-7 sentences each). Clearly identifies & defines underlying scientific concepts for project. (16 pts)	2 paragraphs (5-7 sentences each). Clearly identifies & defines underlying scientific concepts for project. Improves your ability to understand their experiment. (20 pts)	/20
Background (citations): 1. 2. 3.	3 or more sources cited. (5 pts)		/5
Hypothesis:	Written in the correct format: "If (IV) then (DV change) because (explanation)". Relates back to original question. Contains an explanation. (8 pts)	Written in the correct format: "If (IV) then (DV change) because (explanation)". Relates back to original question. Contains an explanation that demonstrates knowledge gained during background research. (10 pts)	/10
Materials: ● . ● . ● . ● .	All necessary materials included in a bulleted list. (5 pts)		/5

<p>Procedure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 	<p>All necessary steps clearly written in a numbered list. Procedure could be repeated using only the instructions given. (16 pts)</p>	<p>All necessary steps clearly written in a numbered list. Procedure could be repeated using only the instructions given. Does not include repetitive instructions, but instead uses the "Repeat step #" format. (20 pts)</p>	<p>/20</p>
<p>Results: Data Table:</p>	<p>Appropriate data table design used. Clearly labeled sections with units of measurement. (12 pts)</p>	<p>Appropriate data table design used. Clearly labeled sections with units of measurement. Reader can clearly interpret data. (15 pts)</p>	<p>/15</p>
<p>Results: Graph:</p>	<p>Appropriate graph choice (bar or line). All axis labeled. (8 pts)</p>	<p>Appropriate graph choice (bar or line). All axis labeled. Graph has title. Data shown clearly, graph summarizes experiment. (10 pts)</p>	<p>/10</p>

Results: Summary Paragraph:	Full paragraph written that explains the data table OR graph OR observations. Does not attempt to draw conclusions. (12 pts)	Full paragraph written that explains the data table, graph, and any other observations. Does NOT attempt to draw conclusions. (15 pts)	/15
Conclusion:	Complete 4/5 conclusion elements. (20 pts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepts or reject hypothesis. • Support that claim with data from the experiment. • Uses background knowledge to draw further conclusions. • Identifies possible sources of error. • Poses further questions. (25 pts)	/25
Organization	Information is in the correct lab report order: Problem, Background, Hypothesis, Materials, Procedure, Results, & then Conclusion. (5 pts)		/5
Formatting	Title: 18pt, Times New Roman, Bold & Underlined. Section Headings: 14 pt, Times New Roman, Bold & Underlined. Font: 12pt, Times New Roman. Arial may be used. (5 pts)		/5
Grammar/ Mechanics	Lab report has 2-3 grammar or spelling mistakes (3 pts)	Lab report has no grammar or spelling mistakes. (5 pts)	/5
Total Points:			/150