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Romantic love lasts only a year

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Contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading	7
Discussion	8
Speaking	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

29 November, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Romantic love lasts only a year

Italian scientists have discovered that a chemical in the brain responsible for romantic love fades in intensity over the course of a year. This perhaps explains why that giddy, euphoric, head-over-heels-in-love feeling that takes our breath away at the start of a relationship diminishes over time. Researchers from the University of Pavia determined that levels of a protein called Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) greatly increase when a person first falls in love. Raised NGF levels spring from the rush of adrenalin, renewed vigor and confidence and lust for life that occur when new love blossoms. Levels of NGF greatly decrease over a year or so as security within the relationship sets in. There is then less urgency to constantly woo a potential partner to ensure they are yours.

Research leader Dr. Enzo Emanuele reported: "We have demonstrated for the first time that circulating levels of NGF are elevated among subjects in love, suggesting an important role for this molecule in the social chemistry of human beings." His research team analyzed the protein balance in the bloodstream of 58 volunteers aged between 18 and 31. All of the participants had recently started a new relationship and had that starry look in their eyes. The researchers compared the levels of NGF in the starry-eyed group with those in 58 people who were single or in steady relationships. The increased prevalence of the molecule in the new romantics caused sweaty palms and butterflies in stomachs. It may also induce young men to buy red roses and candlelit dinners.

WARM-UPS

1. WONDERFUL WORLD: You are very, very, very happy today. Walk around the class and tell other students why you are happy and why you think the world is wonderful. Ask each other why you are so happy. Ask what wonderful thing or things have happened recently. Change partners often.

2. DATES: In pairs / groups, discuss whether the following things are important when going on a romantic date. What experience(s) have you had with them?

- Red roses
- Candlelit dinners
- Movie theaters
- Moonlight
- Love poems / Love letters
- Holding hands
- Goodnight kisses
- Your idea _____

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Italians / scientists / the brain / romantic love / euphoria / our breath / adrenalin / lust / social chemistry / bloodstream / starry eyes / steady relationships / red roses

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. ROMANCE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "romance". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. WORDS OF LOVE: Look at these collocates for the word 'love'. Walk around the class and ask other students questions using these words. Write down any new 'love words' you learn. Change partners often.

- puppy love
- true love
- love at first sight
- madly in love
- first love
- fall out of love
- head over heels in love
- secret love
- deep love

6. ROMANCE OPINIONS: What do you think of these opinions on romance? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. Scientists can never use chemistry to explain love and romance.
- b. I want to know why my relationships become a bit boring after a year.
- c. Some races or nationalities are a lot more romantic than others.
- d. Being head over heels in love is the best feeling in the world.
- e. Romance is highly over-rated.
- f. The best part of being with a new boyfriend / girlfriend is the first few weeks.
- g. Who needs romance? It's way too expensive.
- h. Being in love makes us too irrational.
- i. Red roses and candlelit dinners make the world go round.
- j. I wish people were more romantic.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Scientists say a romance-inducing chemical in the brain lasts a year. T / F
- b. The chemical also makes us short of breath and prone to falling over. T / F
- c. Levels of the chemical greatly increase when people first fall in love. T / F
- d. The chemical intensifies the more secure we become with a partner. T / F
- e. People who study chemistry are much more successful social animals. T / F
- f. All of the volunteers in a study had a starry look in their eyes. T / F
- g. People who have just fallen in love get butterflies in their stomach. T / F
- h. The chemical may be the reason why some young men buy red roses. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| a. fades | predominance |
| b. giddy | chase |
| c. euphoric | established |
| d. vigor | dizzy |
| e. woo | function |
| f. elevated | get-up-and-go |
| g. role | diminishes |
| h. steady | increased |
| i. prevalence | motivate |
| j. induce | blissful |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. romantic love fades in | our breath away |
| b. ...feeling that takes | in their eyes |
| c. rush | a partner |
| d. lust | in the bloodstream |
| e. woo | intensity over the course of a year |
| f. the social | for life |
| g. the protein balance | or in steady relationships |
| h. had that starry look | of adrenalin |
| i. people who were single | to buy red roses |
| j. induce young men | chemistry of human beings |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Romantic love lasts only a year

Italian scientists have discovered that a chemical in the brain _____ for romantic love fades in _____ over the course of a year. This perhaps explains why that giddy, euphoric, head-over-_____ -in-love feeling that takes our _____ away at the start of a relationship diminishes over time. Researchers from the University of Pavia determined that levels of a protein called Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) greatly increase when a person first falls in love. Raised NGF levels spring from the _____ of adrenalin, renewed _____ and confidence and lust for life that occur when new love _____. Levels of NGF greatly decrease over a year or so as security within the relationship sets in. There is then less urgency to constantly _____ a potential partner to ensure they are yours.

Research leader Dr. Enzo Emanuele reported: "We have demonstrated for the first time that circulating levels of NGF are _____ among subjects in love, suggesting an important role for this molecule in the _____ chemistry of human beings." His research team analyzed the protein balance in the _____ of 58 volunteers aged between 18 and 31. All of the participants had recently started a new relationship and had that _____ look in their eyes. The researchers compared the levels of NGF in the starry-eyed group with those in 58 people who were single or in _____ relationships. The increased prevalence of the molecule in the new romantics caused sweaty _____ and _____ in stomachs. It may also _____ young men to buy red roses and candlelit dinners.

vigor
heels
responsible
rush
woo
intensity
breath
blossoms
steady
bloodstream
butterflies
elevated
induce
social
starry
palms

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Romantic love lasts only a year

Italian scientists have discovered that a chemical in the brain responsible for romantic love fades in _____ over the course of a year. This perhaps explains why that giddy, _____, head-over-heels-in-love feeling that takes our breath away at the start of a relationship _____ over time. Researchers from the University of Pavia determined that levels of a protein called Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) greatly increase when a person first falls in love. Raised NGF levels spring from the rush of adrenalin, _____ vigor and confidence and lust for life that occur when new love _____. Levels of NGF greatly decrease over a year or so as security within the relationship sets in. There is then less _____ to constantly woo a potential partner to ensure they are yours.

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AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'romantic' and 'love'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "ROMANCE" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about romance and being in love.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| • fades | • elevated |
| • breath | • chemistry |
| • falls | • bloodstream |
| • rush | • steady |
| • security | • butterflies |
| • woo | • roses |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Do you agree with the headline?
- c. How much of a romantic are you?
- d. How many times have you been head over heels in love?
- e. When was the last time you had feelings of euphoria?
- f. Are you happy now that you know the scientific reason why romantic love fades after a year?
- g. Would you like scientists to make a drug that keeps NGF at very high levels in the brain for as many years as you want?
- h. Do you wine and dine your partner / Do you like to be wined and dined?
- i. What is the most romantic action you can think of?
- j. Do you have a lust for life?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Are you interested in social chemistry?
- d. Does your behavior change when you are in love?
- e. What kinds of things cause you to have butterflies in your stomach?
- f. What do you think is the biological reason for NGF creating feelings of romantic love in us?
- g. Do you think some races or nationalities have higher NGF levels than others?
- h. Is it fair that young men buy the red roses and candlelit dinners and not young women?
- i. Do people usually fall out of love after the NGF wears off?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

SOCIAL CHEMISTRY: You are an expert in social chemistry. You must make a presentation about what happens in the minds of men and women during the early part of a relationship. Think of reasons why there might be differences between the sexes. In pairs / groups, talk about ideas for your presentations.

	MEN'S MINDS	WOMEN'S MINDS	REASONS FOR DIFFERENCES
The first eye contact			
The first conversation			
The three hours before the first date			
The very end of the first date			
The day after the first date			
After one week of dating			
After one year of dating			

- Change partners and compare and share your ideas.
- Give each other feedback on how to improve on the ideas.
- Give your presentations.
- In pairs / groups, discuss the content and quality of the presentations and vote on the one you thought was best.
- Talk about whether the presentations were accurate as far as your experience of romantic love is concerned.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on what people in different countries do when they go on dates. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. ROMANTIC ENGLISH: You are head over heels in love with English. Just thinking in English makes you giddy and takes your breath away. You are starry-eyed when you read English and get butterflies in your stomach when you hear English. Write a love letter to the English language. Show what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar ideas? Who was most in love with English?

4. EUPHORIA: You are head over heels in love. Your new love has given you a lust for life and renewed vigor. Write your diary / journal entry for one day in your romantic life. Explain how love changes the world and makes everything different. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. T d. F e. F f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| a. fades | diminishes |
| b. giddy | dizzy |
| c. euphoric | blissful |
| d. vigor | get-up-and-go |
| e. woo | chase |
| f. elevated | increased |
| g. role | function |
| h. steady | established |
| i. prevalence | predominance |
| j. induce | motivate |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. romantic love fades in | intensity over the course of a year |
| b. ...feeling that takes | our breath away |
| c. rush | of adrenalin |
| d. lust | for life |
| e. woo | a potential partner |
| f. the social | chemistry of human beings |
| g. the protein balance | in the bloodstream |
| h. had that starry look | in their eyes |
| i. people who were single | or in steady relationships |
| j. induce young men | to buy red roses |

GAP FILL:

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Italian scientists have discovered that a chemical in the brain **responsible** for romantic love fades in **intensity** over the course of a year. This perhaps explains why that giddy, euphoric, head-over-**heels**-in-love feeling that takes our **breath** away at the start of a relationship diminishes over time. Researchers from the University of Pavia determined that levels of a protein called Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) greatly increase when a person first falls in love. Raised NGF levels spring from the **rush** of adrenalin, renewed **vigor** and confidence and lust for life that occur when new love **blossoms**. Levels of NGF greatly decrease over a year or so as security within the relationship sets in. There is then less urgency to constantly **woo** a potential partner to ensure they are yours.

Research leader Dr. Enzo Emanuele reported: "We have demonstrated for the first time that circulating levels of NGF are **elevated** among subjects in love, suggesting an important role for this molecule in the **social** chemistry of human beings." His research team analyzed the protein balance in the **bloodstream** of 58 volunteers aged between 18 and 31. All of the participants had recently started a new relationship and had that **starry** look in their eyes. The researchers compared the levels of NGF in the starry-eyed group with those in 58 people who were single or in **steady** relationships. The increased prevalence of the molecule in the new romantics caused sweaty **palms** and **butterflies** in stomachs. It may also **induce** young men to buy red roses and candlelit dinners.