Topic: Evolution and inheritance | Year: 6 | Strand: Biology

What should I already know?

- Which things are living and which are not.
- Identifying animals (e.g. amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish, mammals, invertebrates) and plants using classification keys
- Animals that are carnivores, herbivores and omnivores.
- Animals have **offspring** which grow into adults.
- The basic needs of animals for **survival** (water, food, air)
- Some animals have skeletons for support, protection and movement.
- Food chains, food webs and the role of predators and prey.
- Features of habitats and the animals and plants that exist there (**biodiversity**) .
- Examples of different **biomes**
- The life cycle of some animals and plants
- Sometimes **environments** can change and this has an effect on the plants and animals that exist there
- Living things **breed** to produce **offspring** which grow into adults. This is called **reproduction**.
- The role of Mary Anning in **palaeontology** and the discovery of **fossils**.
- The features of some rocks and the role they play in the formation of **fossils**

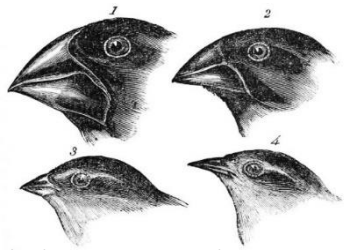
What will I know by the end of the unit?

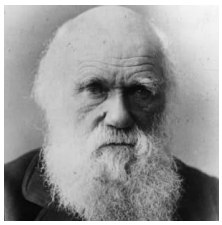
What is **evolution**?	• **Evolution** is a process of change that takes place over many **generations**, during which **species** of animals, plants, or insects slowly change some of their physical **characteristics.** This is because **offspring** are not identical to their parents. • It occurs when there is competition to **survive**. This is called **natural selection.** • Difference within a **species** (for example between parents and **offspring**) can be caused by **inheritance** and **mutations**. • Inheritance is when **characteristics** are passed on from generation to the next. • **Mutations** in **characteristics** are not **inherited** from the parents and appear as new **characteristics**.
How do we know about **evolution**?	• Evidence of **evolution** comes from **fossils** - when these are compared to living creatures from today, **palaeontologists** can compare similarities and differences. • Other evidence comes from living things - comparisons of some **species** may reveal common **ancestors**.
What is **adaptation**?	• **Adaptation** is when animals and plants have **evolved** so that they have **adapted** to **survive** in their **environments**. For example, polar bears have a thick layer of blubber under their fur to **survive** the cold, harsh **environment** of the Arctic while giraffes have long necks to reach the leaves on trees. • Some **environments** provide challenges yet some animals and plants have **adapted** to **survive** there • Sometimes **adaptations** can be disadvantageous. One example of this can be the dodo, which became **extinct** as it lost its ability to fly through **evolution**. Flying was unnecessary for the dodo as it had lived for so many years without predators, until its native island became inhabited. • When **adaptations** are more harmful than helpful, these are called **maladaptations**.

Investigate!

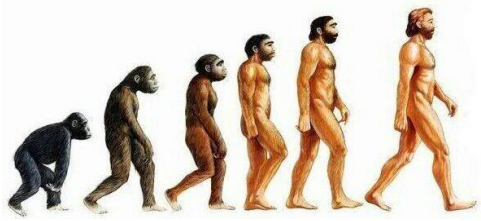
- Research the work of Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace.
- Create a fact file of an animal or plant identifying how it has **adapted** to its **environment** and how it has **evolved** to **survive**.
- Create a new planet and describe the **environmental** features. What animals and plants can live there? How have they **adapted** to survive?

Diagram





Charles Darwin, an evolutionary scientist, studied different animal and plant **species**, which allowed him to see how **adaptations** could come about. His work on the finches was some of his most famous.



Vocabulary

adaptation	a change in structure or function that improves the chance of **survival** for an animal or plant within a given **environment**
ancestor	an early type of animal or plant from which a later, usually dissimilar, type has **evolved**
biodiversity	a wide variety of plant and animal **species** living in their natural **environment**
biome	a large naturally occurring community of animals and plants occupying a major habitat
breeding	the process of producing plants or animals by **reproduction**
characteristics	the qualities or features that belong to them and make them recognisable
environment	all the circumstances, people, things, and events around them that influence their life
evolution	a process of change that takes place over many **generations**, during which **species** of animals, plants, or insects slowly change some of their physical **characteristics**
extinct	no longer has any living members, either in the world or in a particular place
fossil	the hard remains of a **prehistoric** animal or plant that are found inside a rock
generation	the act or process of bringing into being; through **reproduction**, especially of **offspring**
inherit	If you inherit a **characteristic** you are born with it, because your parents or **ancestors** also had it.
maladaptation	the failure to **adapt** properly to a new situation or **environment**
mutation	**characteristics** that are not **inherited** from the parents or **ancestors** and appear as new **characteristics**.
natural selection	a process by which **species** of animals and plants that are best **adapted** to their **environment** **survive** and **reproduce**, while those that are less well **adapted** die out
offspring	a person's children or an animal's young
palaeontology	the study of **fossils** as a guide to the history of life on Earth
reproduction	when an animal or plant produces one or more individuals similar to itself
species	a class of plants or animals whose members have the same main **characteristics** and are able to **breed** with each other
survive	continue to exist
theory	a formal idea or set of ideas that is intended to explain something
variation	a change or slight difference

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Question 1: A gradual change that takes place over many generations is called:	Start of unit:	End of unit:
inheritance		
mutations		
evolution		
reproduction		

Question 2: Evolution occurs when there is competition to survive. This is called…	Start of unit:	End of unit:
reproduction		
natural selection		
variation		
biodiverse		

Question 3: Evidence of evolution comes from…(tick two)	Start of unit:	End of unit:
fossils		
living things		
museums		
food chains		

Question 4: Animals adapt to survive in their environments. Write down an example of an animal that has adapted and the reason it can survive in its environment. For example, polar bears have a layer of blubber under their fur to keep them warm in the Arctic.	Start of unit:	End of unit:

Question 5: Charles Darwin…	Start of unit:	End of unit:
found the first fossil		
was made famous by his theory of evolution		
found remains of the dodo		

Question 6: When we have the same characteristic as our parents or ancestors, we _____that characteristic.	Start of unit:	End of unit:
have inherited		
have mutated to get		
have adapted to		
have maladapted to		

Question 7: Explain how a cactus has adapted to suit its natural environment.	Start of unit:	End of unit:

Question 8: Comparisons of some species may reveal common ancestors. Can you give an example of two species that may have a common ancestor?	Start of unit:	End of unit:

Question 9: The dodo was unable to adapt to its environment to survive. This means that the dodo is now…	Start of unit:	End of unit:
extinct		
endangered		
alive		
flying		

Question 10: When a characteristic is not inherited from a parent or ancestor, this is called…(tick two)	Start of unit:	End of unit:
an adaptation		
a mutation		
a generation		
variation		