



Evolution and inheritance

The Darwinian theory of natural selection is based on 'survival of the fittest' where adaptation occurs because a particular plant or animal type had some advantage over others and therefore survived.

An incorrect view held by some children (and adults) is that animals change over a short period and changes on to the next generation e.g. giraffes developed longer and longer necks trying to reach leaves. Darwin's theory suggests there would have been a range of giraffes with long and short necks, those with the longest necks survived because they could reach leaves in trees, which were not overgrazed unlike grass.

In inheritance children can hold misconceptions around what characteristics can be inherited, e.g. environmental variation, hair that has been dyed pink, big muscles.

Working scientifically

At Key Stage 2 children should develop an understanding that scientific ideas change and develop over time, evolution is one of these areas where scientific understanding has changed. Engaging children in research on Darwin will help them to appreciate this.

Key scientific vocabulary

Adaptation, changes, characteristics, Darwin, differences, environment, evolution, generations, genes, inherit, inheritance, parents, similarities, survival of the fittest, variation

Link to resource packages

Year 6 Evolution and inheritance: www.nationalstemcentre.org.uk/elibrary/list/7269/year-6-evolution-and-inheritance

Was this resource useful?

Try our others on:

- Fossils
- Identifying and naming common plants, animals
- Classification of plants and animals
- Digestive system in humans
- Forces – that motion can be transferred using gears and pulleys