Caroline Haslett Primary School Science Topic: Evolution and Inheritance Year 6

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**

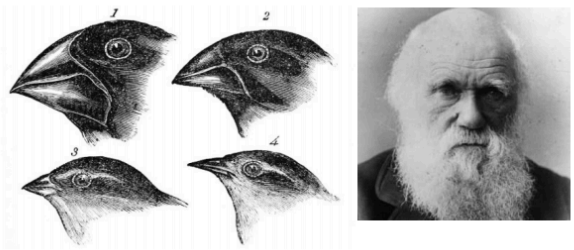
What will I know by the end of the unit?

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**.

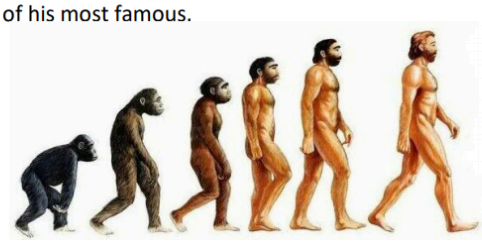
Investigate!

- 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 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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