Year 6 - Evolution and Inheritance

Biology

Key vocabulary

adaptation	Animals and plants are adapted to their environment. Their bodies are suited to the way they live.
characteristic	A distinguishing trait, feature or quality.
environment	The conditions in which a living thing exists.
evolution	The way in which plants and animals have changed over millions of years.
fossil	The naturally preserved remains or traces of animals or plants that lived long ago.
inherited	The way a trait or characteristic is passed to offspring from their parents.
mutation	A mistake or a change in a living thing's DNA.
offspring	A person's child/children or an animal's young.
Palaentologist	Scientists that study the remains of plants or animals that lived millions of years ago.
species	A group of closely related organisms that are very similar to each other. We are the human species.
variation	A change or a small difference.

Evolutionary Pioneers

Charles Darwin (1809 - 1882)	Alfred Wallace (1823 - 1913)	Mary Anning (1799 - 1847)

Fossils

Fossils are the remains of living things which are found in sedimentary rocks. These rocks form in layers so animals and plants can get trapped between the layers. They provide information about living things that inhabited the Earth millions of years ago and can show the evolution of species over time.

Characteristics

Living things produce offspring of the same kind. The offspring are not normally identical to their parents and they can vary from each other too.

Evolution

Adaptation can lead to evolution if the environment changes. Animals and plants with variations that are the best suited survive in greater numbers to reproduce and pass their characteristics on to their young. This is called natural selection. Over time, these inherited characteristics become more dominant within the population.

Characteristics

Adaptive Trait	Inherited Trait
Characteristics that are influenced by the environment the living things live in.	Eye colour is an example of an inherited trait as well as hair colour and shape of ear lobes.