

# Topic 5: Evolution

## 5.1 Evidence for evolution

- U1 Evolution occurs when heritable characteristics of a species change
- U2 The fossil record provides evidence for evolution
- U3 Selective breeding of domesticated animals shows that artificial selection can cause evolution
- U4 Evolution of homologous structures by adaptive radiation explains similarities in structure when there are differences in function
- U5 Populations of a species can gradually diverge into separate species by evolution
- U6 Continuous variation across the geographical range of related populations matches the concept of gradual divergence
- A1 Development of melanistic insects in polluted areas
- A2 Comparison of the pentadactyl limb of mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles with different methods of locomotion

### Evolution

- Evolution: The cumulative change in the heritable characteristics of a population
  - Cumulative change: Small change over many generations
  - Heritable characteristics: Gene-controlled factors
  - Population: Not an individual
- These traits cannot be acquired over a lifetime, they are heritable traits or alleles in an organism's DNA



### Evidence for Evolution

- There is various evidence to support the theory of evolution:

#### The Fossil Record

- Fossils are the preserved remains or traces of animals, plants and other organisms from the past
- They can either be direct (body fossils such as bones, teeth and shells) or indirect (trace fossils such as footprints)
- The fossil record is the sum of all discovered and undiscovered fossils and their relative placement in rock. Simply the deeper the fossil is the older it is.
- Fossils are important evidence for evolution because they show that life on earth was once different from life found on earth today. Therefore the fossil record shows a gradual change of a species over time
- However, not all organisms are fossilized and there may be undiscovered organisms hidden therefore there are gaps in the fossil record. But fossils are really helpful to show organisms from a long time ago and compare it to that organism now

#### Selective Breeding

- Selective breeding of domesticated animals shows that artificial selection can cause evolution
- Selective breeding (also called artificial selection) is the process where humans breed animals or plants for particular traits
- Individuals which show the most desirable traits are chosen to breed together, therefore the next generation will have an increased frequency of the desired trait. This process is repeated for many generations until the entire population shows the desired trait
- Selective breeding provides evidence of evolution as targeted breeds can show significant variation in a relatively short period
  - Selective breeding of plant crops has allowed for the generation of new types of foods from the same ancestral plant source. This includes broccoli (modified flower buds), cabbage (modified leaf buds), and kale (modified leaves)

# Living Environment Topic 5 Evolution Answer Key

**Joacim Rocklöv**



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