Evolution and Inheritance

Vocabulary	Definition
offspring	The young animal or plant that is produced by the reproduction of that species.
inheritance	This is when characteristics are passed on to offspring from their parents.
variations	The differences between individuals within a species.
characteristics	The distinguishing features or qualities that are specific to a species.
adaptation	An adaptation is when an organism changes to increase its chances of surviving and reproducing.
evolution	Adaptation over a very long time.
natural selection	The process where organisms that are better adapted to their environment tend to survive and produce more offspring.
fossil	The remains or imprint of a prehistoric plant or animal, embedded in rock and preserved.

Variation

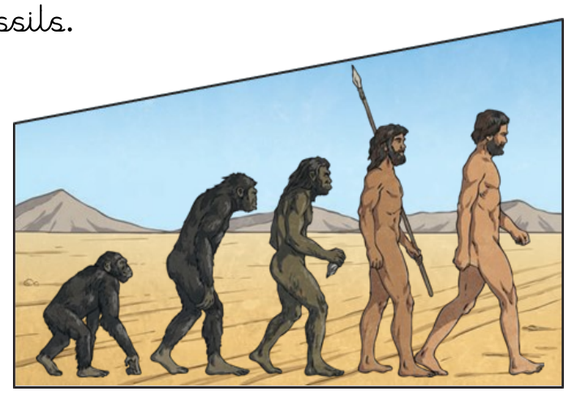
Offspring often look similar to their parents because of the genes that they share. However, due to variation, they are not identical. Variation arises due to the differences in the traits inherited.

Adaptation

Offspring can change over time to survive better in their environment. These changes can happen due to climate, food source or occur by chance. The table below shows examples of some adaptations.

Evolution

Organisms change over long periods of time to better adapt to the environment that they live in. Natural selection means that the organisms with the best adaptations are more likely to survive. Scientists have proof for this process, for example in fossils.



Living Thing		Habitat		Adaptive Traits
polar bear		arctic		Its white fur enables it to camouflage in the snow.
camel		desert		It has wide feet to make it easier to walk in the sand.
cactus		desert		It stores water in its stem.
toucan		rainforest		Its narrow tongue allows it to eat small fruit and insects.