

Frequently Asked Questions

If you believe in Natural Selection, doesn't this mean that you believe in Evolution?

The short answer is: No, it doesn't. This confusion arises due to a misunderstanding of both what Natural Selection is capable of and what the Theory of Evolution actually says. Let's consider Natural Selection first.

We are all familiar with *Artificial* Selection. If we want to have a cow that is a good dairy cow we choose a Jersey cow. Over the years farmers have selectively bred for the milk producing capability inherent in the cow kind, to produce this particular breed of cow. If we want a cow that is good for beef then we could choose an Angus cow – a breed that has been specifically developed to produce good steaks. Dog breeders experiment all the time trying to get specific characteristics in dogs. Each time a breed is developed the genetic information of the creature is *reduced*. Certain genes have been selected for, others have been selected out. Human breeders are adept at doing this selection though it takes a number of generations to perfect a particular characteristic. Natural Selection is simply the natural form of selection for some genes to produce certain characteristics. Whereas with Artificial Selection, the agent doing the selecting is intelligent and knows what it wishes to produce, in Natural Selection, the agent(s) doing the selecting are environmental pressures, geographical changes, food limitations etc. There is no 'mind' behind the selecting. As with artificial selection, natural selection decreases the genetic information in the creature, it cannot originate new life forms or new structures in existing life forms. It cannot and does not increase or provide new genetic information. Consider Darwin's finches, on the islands of the Galapagos. He observed that different islands had finches with different shaped beaks eating different foods. This is simply variation within a kind. The birds started as finches and remained finches. They developed no new structures. The availability of different foods on different islands meant that the birds with the beaks able to access the appropriate foods prospered and resulted in different beak shapes as a result. This is not evidence of evolution at work. It is adaptation which is not evolution.

Natural Selection is a conservative force; it works to preserve the genetic viability of the original created kinds by removing from the population those with severely deleterious or lethal characteristics. This is 'survival of the fittest' in action. It does not permit severely unfit organisms to survive so that they reproduce and continue to build on the mutations. Natural Selection over the generations has acted to help to conserve the genetic pool.

So what does the Theory of Evolution say? In essence, the theory says that life started as a simple, single-celled organism that developed by gradual steps into all the complexity that we have today. The means of development of each stage of complexity is supposed beneficial mutations acted on by Natural Selection. However, Natural Selection has no means of predicting that a particular feature in a cell will be needed in a few generations to join up with another developing feature to make a new function that will increase the complexity of the organism. Natural Selection selects out harmful mutations and thus preserves what will be helpful – but it has to be immediately useful to the organism, not some small step in its evolutionary journey. This introduces the concept of Irreducible Complexity, a term coined by Michael Behe in his book 'Darwin's Black Box'. Wherever we look we see complex organisms, from the humble trilobite with its incredibly complex eyes, to the beautiful humming bird with its ability to fly backwards and hover. There is no fossil evidence that one creature has led to a different creature via numerous small steps in intermediary stages. This is what is required for Darwin's Theory of Evolution to work. Natural Selection is an observed phenomenon and is no help in the grand scheme of supposed evolutionary progress.

For further reading go to 'Is Natural Selection the same as Evolution' by Dr Georgia Purdom, available on <http://www.answersingenesis.org> and 'Darwin's Black Box' by Michael Behe, available on Amazon.