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Evolution: Selection, Drift & Speciation

Printable Flashcards — Pre-Med Biology

Natural selection, genetic drift, gene flow, speciation, reproductive isolation, and phylogeny.

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213 cards — Printable Flashcards

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1

Evolution (in biology) is best defined as...

2

Trap: 'An individual evolves to survive.' True or false?

3

If evolution is happening, what must be changing?

4

Natural selection is NOT random because...

5

Genetic drift IS random because...

6

Quick comparison: selection vs drift.

7

Fitness (evolutionary fitness) means...

8

Trap: The 'fittest' always means strongest. True or false?



2

False.

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1

A change in allele frequencies in a population over generations.

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4

Traits that help survival/reproduction become more common.

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3

The genetic makeup (allele frequencies) of the population.

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6

Selection = non-random (fitness differences). Drift = random (chance).

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5

Allele frequencies change due to chance events, not because a trait is better.

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8

False.

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7

How many viable offspring you leave compared to others.

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9

Natural selection acts on...
but evolution happens in...

10

If a trait is beneficial, does it always spread?

11

Adaptation (noun) in evolution means...

12

Acclimation is... (and why it's a trap word)

13

Mutation is important because it...

14

Recombination (during
meiosis) matters because it...

15

Evolution is not 'goal-oriented'.
What does that mean?

16

Trap: 'Species evolve traits for the
good of the species.' True or false?



10

Not always (drift, small population, trade-offs, environment changes).

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9

Individuals' phenotypes;
populations' allele frequencies.

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12

A non-genetic adjustment
within an individual's lifetime.

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11

A heritable trait shaped by selection that
increases fitness in a specific environment.

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14

Shuffles existing alleles into new combinations.

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13

Creates new alleles (new genetic variation).

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16

Usually false.

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15

Populations don't evolve because they 'need to'.

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17

If the environment changes,
what happens to 'best' traits?

18

Microevolution vs macroevolution (simple):

19

A population is...

20

Gene pool means...

21

Evolution = change in $\{\{c1::\text{allele frequencies}\}\}$
in a $\{\{c2::\text{population}\}\}$ over generations.

22

Selection is $\{\{c1::\text{non-random}\}\}$;
drift is $\{\{c2::\text{random}\}\}$.

23

Evolution happens in _____, not individuals.

24

Fitness (evolution) is measured by number of...



18

Micro = small changes within populations; macro = big patterns over long time (like speciation).

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17

It can change too.

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20

All the alleles in a population.

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19

A group of the same species living and breeding in the same area.

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22

Selection is non-random; drift is random.

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21

Evolution = change in allele frequencies in a population over generations.

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24

Offspring (that survive and reproduce)

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23

Populations

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25

Natural selection needs 3 things.
Name them (conceptually).

26

If a trait varies but is NOT heritable,
can natural selection make it common?

27

Heritable means...

28

Trap: muscles from training are an
adaptation passed to offspring. True or false?

29

Natural selection chooses the 'best'
organism. But 'best' means...

30

Selection acts on phenotype, but it changes...

31

Can selection act on a trait if it
doesn't affect survival or reproduction?

32

Directional selection means...



26

No (not across generations).

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25

Variation, heritability, and differential reproductive success.

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28

False.

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27

The trait differences are due to genes and can be passed to offspring.

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30

Allele frequencies.

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29

Best for that environment at that time.

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32

One extreme phenotype is favored, shifting the average.

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31

Not strongly (it may be neutral).

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33

Stabilizing selection means...

34

Disruptive selection means...

35

Sexual selection is selection for traits that increase...

36

Trap: sexual selection is 'not real selection' because it's about looks. True or false?

37

Artificial selection means...

38

Antibiotic resistance is a classic selection example because...

39

Trap: antibiotics cause bacteria to mutate into resistance on purpose. True or false?

40

If a beneficial mutation appears in ONE individual, does it instantly become common?



34

Both extremes are favored;
the middle is selected against.

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33

The middle phenotype is favored;
extremes are selected against.

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36

False.

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35

Mating success (even if survival cost exists).

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38

Antibiotics kill susceptible bacteria,
leaving resistant ones to reproduce.

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37

Humans choose which individuals
reproduce (selective breeding).

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40

No. It must be passed on and
can still be lost by chance.

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39

False.

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41

Why do we say selection works on 'existing variation'?

42

Is natural selection always about survival?

43

If two traits give the same fitness, what happens?

44

Balancing selection (high-level) means...

45

Heterozygote advantage means...

46

Frequency-dependent selection means...

47

Selection does NOT create perfect organisms because...

48

Trait trade-off example (concept):



42

No. It's about reproduction (survival matters only if it helps reproduction).

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41

Because selection can't favor a trait that doesn't exist yet.

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44

Selection maintains multiple alleles in the population.

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43

Selection can't strongly favor one; drift can move frequencies.

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46

Fitness depends on how common a trait is.

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45

Heterozygotes have higher fitness than either homozygote.

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48

A trait can increase mating success but increase predation risk.

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47

It works with trade-offs, constraints, and current variation.

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49

If a trait increases survival but decreases reproduction, what happens?

50

Natural selection requires $\{\{c1::\text{variation}\}\}$, $\{\{c2::\text{heritability}\}\}$, and $\{\{c3::\text{differential reproduction}\}\}$.

51

Selection acts on $\{\{c1::\text{phenotype}\}\}$ but changes $\{\{c2::\text{allele frequencies}\}\}$.

52

Name one type of selection where the average shifts toward one extreme:

53

Genetic drift is basically...

54

Drift is strongest when population size is...

55

Selection vs drift: which one can make harmful alleles more common?

56

Drift tends to do what to genetic variation inside a population over time?



50

Natural selection requires variation, heritability, and differential reproduction.

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49

It depends on the net effect on fitness.

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52

Directional selection

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51

Selection acts on phenotype but changes allele frequencies.

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54

Small.

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53

Random changes in allele frequencies due to chance (sampling).

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56

Reduce it (more fixation/loss of alleles).

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55

Drift (by chance).

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57

Fixation means...

58

Loss means...

59

Bottleneck effect is...

60

Founder effect is...

61

Bottleneck vs founder effect (one-line difference):

62

If a rare allele becomes common in an island population founded by a few individuals, that's...

63

If a population survives a disaster and genetic diversity drops, that's...

64

Trap: drift is 'survival of the luckiest'. True?



58

An allele goes to 0% frequency
(disappears from the population).

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57

An allele reaches 100% frequency in the population.

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60

Drift when a small group starts a new population.

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59

Drift caused by a sudden,
large drop in population size.

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62

Founder effect (genetic drift).

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61

Bottleneck = population shrinks; founder
= population starts from a small group.

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64

Basically yes (conceptually).

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63

Bottleneck effect (genetic drift).

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65

Does drift need a trait to be beneficial/harmful?

66

In huge populations, does drift disappear completely?

67

Which force is more likely to cause a population to become genetically different just by chance?

68

Drift can contribute to speciation because...

69

If a trait's frequency changes because the environment favors it, that's...

70

If allele frequencies change after a random storm kills organisms regardless of trait, that's...

71

Drift tends to be stronger in... (small/large) isolated populations.

72

If a population is isolated and small, it is most likely to show...



66

No, but it's weaker.

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65

No.

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68

Isolated populations can diverge genetically over time.

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67

Genetic drift.

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70

Genetic drift.

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69

Natural selection, not drift.

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72

Founder/bottleneck effects and rapid allele frequency shifts.

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71

Small isolated populations.

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73

Drift does NOT necessarily produce adaptation because...

74

Which force is more likely to produce organisms that look 'well-suited' to their environment?

75

Genetic drift is strongest in {{c1::small}} populations.

76

Bottleneck effect = drift after a sudden {{c1::population size drop}}.

77

Founder effect = drift when a new population is started by a {{c1::small group}}.

78

Random changes in allele frequencies due to chance is called:

79

Gene flow is basically...

80

Gene flow usually makes populations...

74

Natural selection.

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73

Random changes don't guarantee higher fitness.

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76

Bottleneck effect = drift after a sudden population size drop.

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75

Genetic drift is strongest in small populations.

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78

Genetic drift

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77

Founder effect = drift when a new population is started by a small group.

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80

More similar genetically.

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79

Movement of alleles between populations (via migration + breeding).

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81

So gene flow can slow down speciation because...

82

Trap: gene flow increases differences between populations. True or false?

83

If two populations become separated by a mountain and stop interbreeding, gene flow...

84

Mutation is...

85

Are mutations directed toward what the organism needs?

86

Most mutations are... (beneficial/neutral/harmful?)

87

If mutation rate increases, what happens to variation?

88

Mutation alone doesn't guarantee adaptation because...

82

False.

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81

It keeps populations genetically connected.

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84

A change in DNA sequence
that creates a new allele.

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83

Drops a lot or stops.

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86

Neutral or harmful; beneficial are rare.

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85

No.

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88

New mutations are random;
selection must filter them.

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87

More new variation appears (but it can be harmful).

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89

Recombination creates variation by...

90

Why is sexual reproduction good for evolution? (simple)

91

Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium is used as a...

92

Hardy-Weinberg assumptions include (high-level):

93

If a population is very small, which Hardy-Weinberg assumption is broken?

94

If individuals frequently move between populations, which assumption is broken?

95

If the best survivors reproduce more, which assumption is broken?

96

Gene flow usually makes populations more `{{c1::similar}}` genetically.



90

It increases genetic variation in offspring.

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89

Shuffling existing alleles into new combinations.

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92

Large population, random mating, no mutation, no migration, no selection.

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91

Baseline: what a population looks like with no evolution forces acting.

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94

No migration (no gene flow).

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93

Large population (drift becomes important).

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96

Gene flow usually makes populations more similar genetically.

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95

No selection.

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97

Mutation creates new `{{c1::alleles}}`;
selection changes their `{{c2::frequencies}}`.

98

Movement of alleles between populations is called:

99

Speciation means...

100

Biological species concept
(classic pre-med definition):

101

Trap: two animals look similar, so they
must be the same species. True or false?

102

Reproductive isolation means...

103

Prezygotic barriers are barriers that happen...

104

Postzygotic barriers happen...



98

Gene flow

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97

Mutation creates new alleles;
selection changes their frequencies.

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100

A species is a group that can
interbreed and produce fertile offspring.

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99

Formation of new species (one lineage splits
into two reproductively isolated groups).

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102

Barriers that stop gene flow between populations.

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101

False.

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104

After fertilization (after a zygote forms).

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103

Before fertilization (before a zygote forms).

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105

Name a common prezygotic barrier:

106

Temporal isolation means...

107

Behavioral isolation means...

108

Mechanical isolation means...

109

Gametic isolation means...

110

Hybrid inviability means...

111

Hybrid sterility means...

112

Allopatric speciation is speciation caused by...



106

They reproduce at different times (day/season/year).

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105

Temporal, behavioral, mechanical, gametic, or habitat isolation.

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108

Body parts don't fit / flowers don't match pollinators.

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107

Different courtship behaviors prevent mating.

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110

Hybrid embryo doesn't develop well or dies.

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109

Sperm/pollen can't fertilize the egg (biochemical mismatch).

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112

Geographic separation (physical barrier).

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111

Hybrid survives but is infertile.

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113

Sympatric speciation is speciation that happens...

114

Fast sympatric speciation example (plants):

115

If the barrier is 'a river formed and split the population', the speciation type is...

116

If two populations live in the same area but mate at different times, that's...

117

If hybrids form but are sterile, gene flow between the populations is...

118

What is the key step for speciation to 'finish'?

119

Why does gene flow usually prevent speciation?

120

Adaptive radiation means...



114

Polyploidy (extra chromosome sets) can instantly create reproductive isolation.

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113

Without a geographic barrier (same area).

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116

Prezygotic isolation (temporal) -> can lead to sympatric speciation.

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115

Allopatric.

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118

Reproductive isolation becomes strong enough that gene flow is effectively zero.

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117

Basically blocked.

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120

Rapid diversification into many species from a common ancestor (often after new habitats open).

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119

It keeps populations genetically similar.

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121

Ring species (concept) show that...

122

Trap: speciation requires natural selection. True or false?

123

If two populations are separated, drift is likely to be strong when...

124

In animals, sympatric speciation is less common because...

125

Allopatric speciation = new species form due to {{c1::geographic separation}}.

126

Prezygotic barriers happen {{c1::before}} fertilization; postzygotic barriers happen {{c2::after}} fertilization.

127

Speciation with a geographic barrier is called:

128

Hybrid that survives but can't reproduce shows _____ isolation.



122

False.

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121

Speciation can be gradual, with neighboring populations interbreeding but ends not interbreeding.

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124

Gene flow is hard to stop without a physical barrier.

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123

They are small.

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126

Prezygotic barriers happen before fertilization; postzygotic barriers happen after fertilization.

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125

Allopatric speciation = new species form due to geographic separation.

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128

Postzygotic

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127

Allopatric speciation

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129

Why is the biological species concept tricky for bacteria?

130

Why is it tricky for fossils?

131

Trap: dogs and wolves can have fertile offspring, so they are... (by biological species concept)

132

Reinforcement means...

133

If hybrids are unhealthy/sterile, selection may favor...

134

Hybrid zone means...

135

Homologous structures are similar because of...

136

Analogous structures are similar because of...



130

We can't test if they could interbreed.

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129

Because they reproduce asexually
(interbreeding isn't the main thing).

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132

Selection favors stronger prezygotic
barriers when hybrids have low fitness.

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131

The same species (or very
closely related populations).

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134

An area where two populations/species
meet and hybridize.

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133

Behaviors/timing differences that
reduce hybrid mating (reinforcement).

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136

Convergent evolution (similar selection
pressures), not shared ancestry.

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135

Common ancestry.

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137

Convergent evolution means...

138

Divergent evolution means...

139

Trap: if two traits look similar, they must be homologous. True or false?

140

Vestigial structures are...

141

Molecular evidence idea: if two species have more similar DNA, they are usually...

142

Phylogenetic tree tip: the 'closest relatives' are the ones that share the...

143

Trap: humans evolved from modern monkeys. True or false?

144

If a tree shows two species share a recent branching point, it means...



138

Related lineages become more different over time (often adapting to different niches).

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137

Unrelated lineages evolve similar traits because they face similar environments.

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140

Reduced/unused features inherited from ancestors.

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139

False.

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142

Most recent common ancestor.

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141

More closely related (shared a more recent common ancestor).

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144

They share a recent common ancestor (they're closely related).

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143

False.

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145

Natural selection can produce similar traits in unrelated species. That's why...

146

Homologous = similar due to {{c1::common ancestry}}. Analogous = similar due to {{c2::convergent evolution}}.

147

Similar traits in unrelated lineages due to similar environments is called:

148

Allele is...

149

Allele frequency is...

150

Genotype is...

151

Phenotype is...

152

Trap: phenotype is ONLY determined by genotype. True or false?



146

Homologous = similar due to common ancestry.
Analogous = similar due to convergent evolution.

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145

Similarity doesn't always mean close relatedness.

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148

A version of a gene.

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147

Convergent evolution

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150

The genetic combination
you have (like AA, Aa, aa).

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149

How common an allele is in a population.

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152

False.

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151

The trait you can observe (influenced
by genes + environment).

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153

Variation in a population is important because...

154

Where does heritable variation come from (big sources)?

155

If an environment suddenly changes, a population with more genetic variation is more likely to...

156

A trait is an adaptation only if it...

157

If a population changes because many individuals move in, that's...

158

If allele frequencies change, but there's no fitness difference, that's likely...

159

Scenario: A drought hits. Plants with deeper roots leave more offspring. Over generations, deeper roots become more common. Mechanism?

160

Scenario: A storm randomly kills 70% of a small island lizard population, no matter the traits. Allele frequencies shift. Mechanism?

154

Mutation and recombination.

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153

Without variation, selection can't change anything.

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156

Increases fitness and is heritable.

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155

Have some individuals that can survive and reproduce.

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158

Genetic drift.

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157

Gene flow, not selection.

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160

Genetic drift (bottleneck).

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159

Natural selection.

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161

Scenario: A few birds are blown to a new island and start a new population with different allele frequencies. Mechanism?

162

Scenario: Two fish populations are separated by a dam. Over time they diverge genetically. What process stopped?

163

Scenario: Fish from one population start migrating through a canal and mating with another population. Result?

164

Scenario: In a big population, a trait rises because it gives a survival advantage. Drift or selection is the better explanation?

165

Scenario: In a small population, a neutral allele becomes fixed. Best explanation?

166

Scenario: A beneficial allele appears but disappears a few generations later just by chance. Is that possible?

167

Scenario: A new mutation appears. Does selection 'cause' it?

168

Scenario: A trait becomes common because it helps individuals attract mates, even though predators notice them more. Mechanism?

162

Gene flow.

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161

Genetic drift (founder effect).

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164

Selection.

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163

Gene flow increases, populations become more similar.

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166

Yes, especially in small populations.

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165

Genetic drift.

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168

Sexual selection.

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167

No. Mutation creates it; selection changes how common it becomes.

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169

Scenario: Two populations live in the same area, but one mates in spring and the other in autumn. Barrier type?

170

Scenario: A horse and a donkey mate and produce a mule that is infertile. Barrier type?

171

Scenario: Two bird populations develop different songs and stop mating with each other. Barrier type?

172

Scenario: Two plant populations are in the same place, but pollen can't fertilize the other group's flowers. Barrier type?

173

Scenario: A population splits geographically. After many generations, they reunite but still don't interbreed. What has formed?

174

Scenario: Two populations interbreed a little when they meet (hybrid zone). Does that mean speciation is impossible?

175

Scenario: A plant becomes polyploid and can no longer successfully breed with the original diploid population. What happened?

176

Scenario: A trait is common because it used to be useful, but now the environment changed and it's slightly harmful. Why might it still exist?



170

Postzygotic (hybrid sterility).

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169

Prezygotic (temporal isolation).

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172

Prezygotic (gametic isolation).

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171

Prezygotic (behavioral isolation).

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174

No.

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173

Reproductive isolation -> likely speciation.

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176

It can persist due to slow selection, drift, or trade-offs.

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175

Sympatric speciation (via polyploidy).

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177

Which force creates brand-new alleles?

178

Which force mixes alleles between populations?

179

Which force is most likely to REDUCE genetic variation within a small population quickly?

180

Which force usually makes two populations MORE different over time (if isolated)?

181

Gene flow usually makes two populations...

182

Mutation generally increases variation...

183

Directional selection usually does what to variation for that trait?

184

Stabilizing selection usually does what to variation?



178

Gene flow.

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177

Mutation.

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180

Genetic drift (and selection if environments differ).

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179

Genetic drift (especially
bottlenecks/founder effects).

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182

Within a population.

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181

Less different (more similar).

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184

Reduces it (extremes removed).

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183

Reduces it (one direction gets favored).

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185

Disruptive selection can do what to variation?

186

Balancing selection usually does what to variation?

187

Drift vs selection in one clue: if the question mentions 'small population' and 'random', think...

188

If the question mentions 'better survival/reproduction because of trait', think...

189

If the question mentions 'migration between populations', think...

190

If the question mentions 'new allele appears', think...

191

Trap: 'Evolution is just a theory' (in science) means...

192

Trap: 'Mutations are always bad.' True or false?

186

Maintains it.

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185

Increase it (both extremes favored).

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188

Natural selection.

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187

Genetic drift.

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190

Mutation (source) then selection/drift (fate).

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189

Gene flow.

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192

False.

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191

A theory is a well-supported explanation, not a guess.

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193

Trap: 'Evolution always makes organisms more complex.' True or false?

194

Trap: 'Natural selection gives organisms what they need.' True or false?

195

Trap: 'The strongest survive.' Better version is...

196

Trap: 'Individuals evolve resistance during antibiotic treatment.' Better version is...

197

Trap: 'Drift only happens when there's a disaster.' True or false?

198

Trap: 'If a trait is common, it must be adaptive.' True or false?

199

Hitchhiking (high-level) means...

200

Trap: 'Selection always decreases variation.' True or false?



194

False.

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193

False.

entermedschool.org

196

Resistant bacteria already exist (or arise) and are selected for.

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195

The ones with higher reproductive success leave more offspring.

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198

False.

entermedschool.org

197

False.

entermedschool.org

200

False.

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199

A neutral allele increases because it's linked to a beneficial allele.

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201

If two diverging populations meet again and hybrids are very fit, the populations may...

202

If two populations meet again and hybrids have low fitness, selection tends to...

203

If hybrids have intermediate fitness and keep forming in one region, you might see...

204

Trap: Geographic isolation automatically means two populations are different species. True or false?

205

If two populations look different but still interbreed freely, the safest statement is...

206

When speciation is described as a 'process', the key idea is...

207

Non-random increase of beneficial traits over generations is called:

208

A sudden drop in population size causing drift is called the _____ effect.



202

Strengthen prezygotic barriers (reinforcement).

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201

Fuse back into one (gene flow resumes).

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204

False.

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203

A stable hybrid zone.

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206

Reproductive isolation builds gradually (often).

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205

They are not reproductively isolated
(so speciation isn't complete).

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208

Bottleneck

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207

Natural selection

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209

A new population started by a few individuals shows the _____ effect.

210

Speciation in the same geographic area (no barrier) is called:

211

Fitness = relative {{c1::reproductive success}} (not strength).

212

Gene flow = movement of {{c1::alleles}} between populations via {{c2::migration}} + breeding.

213

Speciation requires {{c1::reproductive isolation}} (blocked gene flow).

210

Sympatric speciation

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209

Founder

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212

Gene flow = movement of alleles between populations via migration + breeding.

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211

Fitness = relative reproductive success (not strength).

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213

Speciation requires reproductive isolation (blocked gene flow).

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