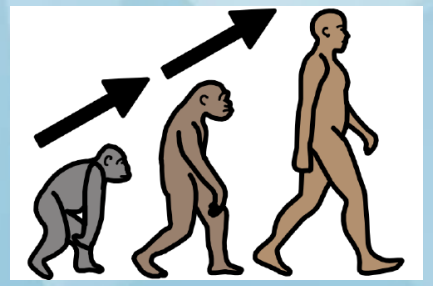
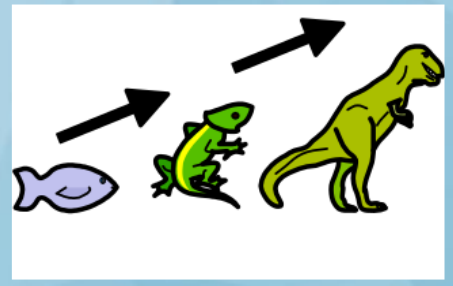
What makes the Galápagos Islands a unique place in the world?

Key Vocabulary

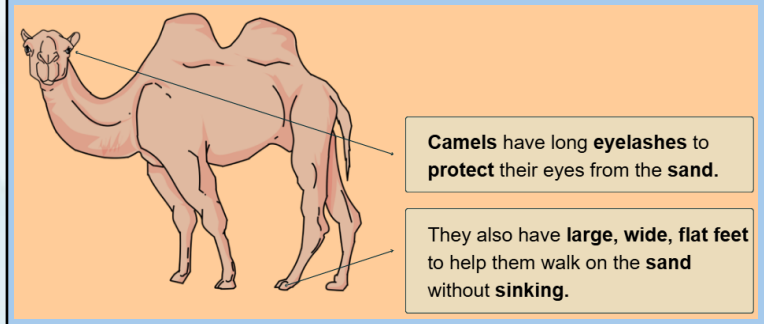
Climate zones	Areas with distinct climates, typically classified by temperature, humidity, and precipitation patterns.
Biomes	Large naturally occurring communities of flora and fauna occupying a major habitat, e.g., forest or tundra.
Environmental Conservation	The practice of protecting and preserving natural resources and the environment.
Evolution	Evolution is the gradual change in living things over time. It happens because of differences in traits that can be inherited. This can lead to the development of new species.
Adaptation	Adaptation is when an organism changes to better survive in its environment. This can happen over many generations through natural selection.
Inheritance	Inheritance is the passing down of traits (like eye colour or beak shape) from parents to their offspring.
Fossils	Fossils are the preserved remains or traces of ancient living things, like plants and animals. They can show how life has changed over time and help scientists learn about past environments.
Natural Selection	Natural selection is the process where organisms that are better adapted to their environment tend to survive and produce more offspring. Those offspring are more likely to inherit the helpful traits.



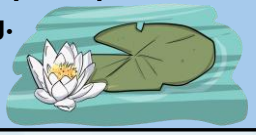


Adaptation

Adaption is when a plant or animal has changed in some way over a long period to be better suited to the environment in which they live.

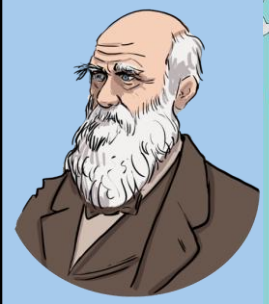


Pond lilies have large leaves that help them to float on top of the water. The large leaves also mean that they absorb as much sunlight as they can. The leaves have a waxy layer that helps them stay dry and prevents them from sinking.



Charles Darwin

When Darwin was younger, he went on a research voyage to the Galapagos Islands. When he was there, he studied a particular type of bird called a finch. It is believed by scientists that some finches were blown over from the mainland to the islands many years ago. The distance between the islands was too far for the birds to travel, so they lived and multiplied on different islands.





Natural selection

Natural selection is when organisms that are best suited to their environment survive and pass on their genetic traits. At the same time, organisms that are less likely to survive tend to be eliminated from the ecosystem.



The fittest, most adapted organisms survive and multiply whilst the least adapted die out. This was shown with the moths. The light-coloured moths were no longer adapted to their environment, so started to die out, whilst dark coloured moths were adapted to the environment, so multiplied. Natural selection is key to explaining evolution.