

---

## Evolutionists

---

### Origins

Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, drawing on data collected during his five-year voyage on the *Beagle* in the 1830s. Previously he had published a joint paper with Alfred Wallace, who had independently arrived at the theory of natural selection. Evolutionary ideas were developing in the early nineteenth century. Jean-Baptiste Lamarck argued that new species could descend from other species, the *transmutation of species*. He asserted that new species developed as a consequence of an innate tendency to become more complex, the environment, crossbreeding and the extent to which biological parts are used or not used. He also believed in spontaneous generation resulting in separate lines of descent rather than one family tree. In 1826 an anonymous writer, praising Lamarck, was the first to use the word *evolve* with regard to the emergence of new species. The geologist Charles Lyell advocated uniformitarianism, and, although he did not believe in the transformation of species, his view that the earth had developed slowly over a long period of time provided an important basis for Darwin's theory. In 1844 the anonymous *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* advocated the evolution of species, by both sudden and gradual changes, brought about by an *impulse*. The controversy it aroused may have caused Darwin to delay publication, but, although Darwin did not rate its scientific explanation, it prepared the way for a more sympathetic response to his own work.

### Today

The traditional view of evolutionary history, whereby the relationships between species can be depicted as a 'family tree' (the so-called 'Tree of Life'), is being increasingly challenged. Many scientists now say that the interrelatedness between species and the supposed development of new species can be more accurately represented by a web. The 200th anniversary this year of Darwin's birth has provided an opportunity for renewed promotion of evolution by its supporters.

### What the mainstream says

- All life on Earth shares a common ancestor.
- Life has a history, seen in the fossil record, and it has changed over time.
- Biological evolution is descent with modification.
- Small-scale evolution is the changes in gene frequency in a population from one generation to the next.
- Large-scale evolution is the descent of different species from a common ancestor over many generations.
- Variation, differential reproduction and heredity lead to evolution by natural selection.
- Evolution produces a branching pattern of relationships between species that is treelike, where lineages evolve and split (but see above section, as this view is changing).
- Speciation occurs when a lineage splits on the family tree.

(Source: [http://evolution.berkeley.edu/evolibrary/article/evo\\_01](http://evolution.berkeley.edu/evolibrary/article/evo_01))

### Suggested initial Scriptural approach

The right attitude towards the marvel of life, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14), shown by David, should be advocated. The fact that the phrase in Genesis 1, "after his [or their] kind", remains a true principle, can be emphasised. The problem of suffering used by evolutionists and atheists to oppose the existence of God can be countered by the teaching from Job, a book written very early, as if to anticipate such arguments against Creation.