

Natural Selection

According to **Charles Darwin**, no individual is exactly the same as another, even within the same species. The **variations** between them are the result of chance. It might be a change in the colour of their coat or the disappearance or development of a leg or a wing.

In a changing environment, any variations that are a disadvantage mean that, sooner or later, the species will become **extinct**. On the other hand, if a new variation gives the animal an advantage – making it stronger or faster – it will improve its chances of survival. Darwin called this “natural selection”. This means that the environment selects what is useful and gets rid of what is not.

These three foxes have variations which depend on where each lives.



The European fox, which lives in the forest, has medium-sized ears.



The Fennec fox, which lives in the hot Saharan desert, has large ears to keep it cool.



The Arctic fox, which lives in cold areas, has tiny rounded ears which won't get frostbite.

Drawing Inferences

Before reading

- Read the title.
- With your learning partner(s), discuss what you predict this text will be about.
- Skim and scan the text.

During reading

- Read the text aloud or listen to the audio.
- Using clues from the text, discuss what you can infer about Charles Darwin.
- Place the transparency over the text. Take turns using the marker to circle parts of the text where you can draw inferences. What can you infer about why the foxes are different colours?

After reading

- Discuss how drawing inferences helped you to understand this text better.

Writing activity

- Work on your own to fill out the graphic organiser on page 67 of the Reflection Journal.



Determining Important Ideas

Before reading

- Read the title and the subheadings.
- With your learning partner(s), discuss what you predict this text will be about.
- Skim and scan the text.

During reading

- Read the text or listen to the audio.
- Discuss the main idea in the first paragraph (look at the subheading).
- The last section contains another important (main) idea. Discuss what it is.
- Place the transparency over the page. With the marker, take turns to circle the supporting details in the text.

After reading

- Discuss how determining important ideas helped you to understand this text.

Writing activity

- Work with your partner(s) to fill out the graphic organiser on page 68 of the Reflection Journal.



Good Chimp

Study says chimps want to help

Everyone knows helping others is a good thing – maybe even chimps! Scientists have studied chimps from **Uganda**. The scientists did tests that show that chimps often help people or other chimps, even if they get nothing in return.

A helping hand

In one test, a person dropped a stick near a group of chimps. In most cases, a chimp handed the stick back to the person. Chimps care about other chimps, too. In another test, a chimp handed over the stick when another chimp dropped it. The **animals** did not receive food or praise for their actions in either test.

Born to be helpful?

The results surprised the scientists. They had long thought that humans are the only animals that help others. “We’ve never seen this level ... of **cooperation** in any other animals except humans”, says chimp scientist Alicia Melis. Scientists say the study suggests that chimps and humans may be born with the ability to be helpful.

So the saying “Kindness is its own reward” may not be true just for humans.



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