



Glossary

Acquired trait: An **acquired trait** is a feature gained by an organism during its lifetime that it doesn't get from its parents. A scar is an acquired trait.

Adapt: To **adapt** is to change. When a population adapts to a new environment, the inherited traits that improve the population's ability to survive and reproduce are passed on to new generations.

Adapted: When a population evolves over many generations, it is becoming better **adapted** to the environment.

Adaptation: **Adaptation** is the change over many generations of inherited traits that improves a population's ability to survive and reproduce.

Ancestor: An **ancestor** is a parent, grandparent, and so on, going back through many generations.

Annual: An **annual** plant completes its life cycle in one season. Corn and marigolds are both examples of annuals. Mystery Plants are also annual plants.

Breed: A **breed** is a group within a species with common features. Beagles and German shepherds are breeds of dogs.

Common ancestor: A **common ancestor** is an ancestor that is shared by different organisms. Cousins share a grandparent as a common ancestor.

Data: **Data** are facts or information collected by scientists. Scientists can graph number data to see the information in a different way.

Desert: A **desert** is a region where there is very little rainfall.

Ecosystem: An **ecosystem** is a group of different kinds of organisms living in a particular environment.

Environment: An **environment** is a place with certain features, such as type of soil, climate, amount of rainfall, or amount of sunshine.

Evolution: **Evolution** is the process by which populations of organisms change their features over many generations.



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Evolve: When populations of organisms change their features over many generations, we say they have **evolved**.

Extinct: **Extinct** means that a species has died out. Dinosaurs are extinct because there are none living today.

Extinction: **Extinction** is the complete disappearance of a species.

Genes: **Genes** are the material that give an organism all of its inherited characteristics.

Generation: A **generation** is a group of organisms living at the same time. Parents belong to one generation and children are in the next generation.

Inherit: **Inherit** means to receive traits from parents. Children inherit eye color from their parents.

Inherited trait: An **inherited trait** is a feature that is passed on to an organism from the parents. The leaf size of Mystery Plants is an inherited trait.

Life cycle: **Life cycle** is the series of stages through which an organism grows – from a beginning stage in one individual to the same stage in its offspring.

Litter: A **litter** is the set of babies born of the same parents at the same time.

Mass extinction: **Mass extinction** is an event where very many different plants and animals go extinct around the same time.

Offspring: **Offspring** are the children of a parent.

Perennial: **Perennial** plants live for several years. Apple trees and banana trees are both perennials.

Population: A **population** is a group of organisms living in the same area that have babies with one another.

Predator: A **predator** is an animal that eats other animals.

Reproduction: **Reproduction** is the process by which plants and animals produce offspring.



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Seedling: A **seedling** is a baby plant.

Species: A **species** is a group of plants or animals that share features, live in the same environment, and can have babies together.

Trait: A **trait** is a characteristic or feature of a plant or animal. Traits, like eye color, can be inherited from parents or acquired during a lifetime, like a scar.

Variation: **Variation** means the genetic differences from parents to children and between members of the same species. A child can be taller or shorter than his or her parents, and humans are all different heights.

Variety: A **variety** is a group of plants within the same species with common features. There are many different varieties of tomatoes.