1831 – 2003

Put the Events in Order

Name _____ Date _____

These 10 events from the Evolution & Natural Selection timeline are out of order. Write a number from 1 to 10 in each box, from the earliest event (1) to the latest (10).

☐ **On the Origin of Species Published**

Darwin publishes On the Origin of Species, laying out the evidence for evolution by natural selection in exhaustive detail — the first edition of 1,250 copies sells out on the day of publication, November 24, 1859.

☐ **Watson, Crick, and Franklin Discover DNA's Structure**

James Watson and Francis Crick, building critically on X-ray crystallography data produced by Rosalind Franklin, discover that DNA is a double helix — two strands wound around each other, explaining exactly how genetic information is stored and copied during cell division.

☐ **Punctuated Equilibrium Proposed**

Stephen Jay Gould and Niles Eldredge propose punctuated equilibrium — the idea that evolution happens in bursts of relatively rapid change separated by long periods of stability — based on patterns they observe in the fossil record.

☐ **Mendel's Work Rediscovered**

Three European scientists independently rediscover Mendel's forgotten 1865 papers; his laws of genetics are quickly recognized as the explanation for how inherited variation — the raw material of natural selection — is transmitted between generations.

☐ **Mendel Discovers the Rules of Inheritance**

Gregor Mendel, an Augustinian friar in what is now the Czech Republic, presents and publishes the results of his experiments breeding pea plants — discovering that traits are passed down in predictable ratios through discrete units (what we now call genes).

Human Genome Project Completed

The Human Genome Project completes the first full sequence of human DNA — three billion base pairs — providing the reference genome that allowed scientists to later confirm humans share roughly 98-99% of their DNA with chimpanzees, and revealing the molecular blueprint shared by all human beings.

Darwin's Voyage on the Beagle

Charles Darwin, aged 22, joins the HMS Beagle as a naturalist on a five-year voyage around the world — collecting thousands of specimens and observing subtle variations in animals across different locations, including the famous finches of the Galápagos Islands.

Wallace and Darwin Present Natural Selection

Alfred Russel Wallace, working in the Malay Archipelago, independently develops the same theory as Darwin; their ideas are jointly presented to the Linnean Society in London on July 1, 1858 — the formal birth of the theory of evolution by natural selection.

Darwin Develops His Theory

Darwin writes out his theory of natural selection fully in 1844 but holds back from publishing for fifteen more years — aware of the controversy it will cause — while quietly gathering more evidence and corresponding with scientists around the world.

The Scopes Trial

Tennessee teacher John Scopes is tried for teaching evolution in violation of a state law banning it; the 'Scopes Monkey Trial' becomes a national sensation, pitting attorney Clarence Darrow against former presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan in a debate followed across the country.

1831 – 2003

Put the Events in Order: Answer Key

1831–36 — 1. Darwin's Voyage on the Beagle

1844–58 — 2. Darwin Develops His Theory

1858 — 3. Wallace and Darwin Present Natural Selection

1859 — 4. On the Origin of Species Published

1865–66 — 5. Mendel Discovers the Rules of Inheritance

1900 — 6. Mendel's Work Rediscovered

1925 — 7. The Scopes Trial

1953 — 8. Watson, Crick, and Franklin Discover DNA's Structure

1972 — 9. Punctuated Equilibrium Proposed

2003 — 10. Human Genome Project Completed