

## Culminating Activity: What Happens Next? Poster

The activity begins with the question “What Happens Next?” Small groups of students create a poster that tells a *speciation* story: what could happen to a Lesson 1 “nowadays” population over many generations following an event that isolates a part of the population in a completely new environment? They imagine what existing trait variant(s) might be beneficial given the population’s new circumstances and imagine how this will affect survival, reproduction, and distribution of trait variants in future generations.

Students view other’s posters, then discuss new ideas about natural selection being an ongoing process.

By the end of this lesson, students will think of natural selection in terms of changes from many hundreds of years ago to nowadays AND changes from nowadays into the future.

### Learning Targets in this Lesson

- Natural selection is an ongoing process – the same process explains both changes from many, many years ago to nowadays and changes that will occur from nowadays into the future.
- There will always be new species.

| Sequence of Experiences                               |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Introduction                                       |  All class    |  3 Minutes  |
| 2. Create a “What Happens Next?” Storyboard or Poster |  Small groups |  25 Minutes |
| 3. Discussion and Wrap Up                             |  All class    |  15 Minutes |

### Materials

#### For the class

Slide deck for this lesson

#### For each small group of students

- Legal size or chart paper, pencils, markers, scissors, glue sticks, tape, etc. to create “What Happens Next?” posters
- 1 okapi handout

### Preparation

- Make sure you have 1 copy of the okapi handout for each small group of 2-3 students
- Gather materials for the *What Happens Next?* posters.

- Review poster activity directions in the slides.

## The Lesson

---

### 1. Introduction



All class



3 minutes

---

Explain to students that they wrapped up the unit in the previous lesson by reviewing what they did and what they learned. Today their task is to use their learning to create posters showing their ideas about how populations of animals “nowadays” might evolve into a new species in the future if there is a dramatic shift in their environment.

The investigation question is,

- *Could natural selection result in new species in the future?*

In conclusion, students view each other’s posters and consider the idea that change and the natural selection process is never ending.

---

### 2. Create a “What Happens Next?” Poster



Small groups



25 Minutes

---

To each group of 2-3 students, hand out

- A large sheet of paper and other materials to work with (e.g., pencils, markers, glue sticks, clear tape)
- New okapi handout.

Project the slides and review the “What Happened Next?” instructions:

**Step 1:** Use the drawing of the okapi population nowadays. Identify **3 traits and the trait variants**. (Use pen, pencil, marker, words, arrows and write on the handout.)

**Step 2:** Choose one of the options that explain how some of the animals **were separated** from the rest of the population and landed in a new environment.

**Step 3:** Think like a scientist and **imagine** how this population will evolve over many generations so that the animals are so different, they are considered a new species!

With your group decide:

- Which individuals will survive and reproduce
- What the population might look like many generations from now.

**Step 4:** Make a poster. Use drawings, words, arrows, graphs, cartoons to tell how these animals evolved into a new species.

Don't forget to give your new species a name!

Encourage students to combine their imagination and their understanding of the 6 key steps of natural selection. Encourage them to be creative and have fun!

Tell them they will have about 25 minutes for this activity.

---

### 3. Wrap Up

 All class  15 Minutes

---

After 25 minutes, explain to students that they will tape their posters up around the classroom. They will have 10 minutes to look at least 2 other posters.

After 10 minutes, gather the class in a group. Ask:

- *Now that you have created a poster and thought about a scenario where speciation could happen in the future, do you think that speciation could still be happening in the real world today?*
- *Do you think that there will always be new species?*

Listen for these ideas and record them on the Takeaways chart.

- Evolution is an ongoing process.
- There will always be new species.

If possible, keep the posters on display for a time to remind students of all that they learned in this unit and to motivate their continued thinking about the process of natural selection.