**Evolution Vocab**

1. **Theory:** an explanation for an event in nature supported by evidence
2. **Adaptation:** a characteristic that improves an individual’s ability to survive and reproduce in a particular environment
3. **Species:** a group of organisms that are closely related and can mate to produce fertile offspring
4. **Evolution:** the process in which inherited characteristics within a population change over generations (time) so that new species sometimes arise
5. **Fossil:** the trace or remains of an organism that lived long ago, most commonly preserved in sedimentary rock
6. **Fossil Record:** the history of life in the geologic past as indicated by the traces of remains of living things
7. **Natural Selection:** the process by which individuals that are better adapted to their environment survive and reproduce more successfully than less well adapted individuals do; a theory to explain the mechanism of evolution
8. **Overproduction:** each species produces more offspring that can survive or the environment can support, some will make it to adulthood and some will not
9. **Variation:** the occurrence of hereditary or nonhereditary differences between different individuals of a population
10. **Survival:** continued existence, endurance, and living long enough to reproduce;only some organisms will survive to adulthood due to competition for limited resources such as food, water, space, and mates
11. **Population:** a group of organisms of the same species that live in a specific geographical area
12. **Speciation:** the formation of new species as a result of physical or geographical barriers that prevent interbreeding
13. **Homologous Structures:** a structure (organ or bone) or trait that is similar between species but may be used in different ways
14. **Embryo:** a developing individual organism from the first division after fertilization
15. **Competition:** an ecological relationship in which two or more organisms depend on the same limited resource