1.3: History of Evolutionary Thought

Contrary to popular opinion, evolutionary thought does not start with Charles Darwin. The history of evolutionary thought is a fascinating story spanning hundreds of years of both speculation and scientific discovery. Using the links below, explore the story from early studies of earth sciences, through 20th-century discoveries that enrich our understanding of life on earth. As you read each person’s contribution, pay particular attention as to what exactly is the key contribution for evolutionary theory. Sometimes this will be clear, while other times it might be a bit more murky.

When navigating US Berkeley's Understanding Evolution: The History of Evolutionary Thought web-site, make sure you click on "next page" when you see it. All of the links below go to different pages on the Understanding Evolution web site. They are provided here so that you do not have to continually go the first page should you decide to read these pages in different sittings.

- **Pre-1800s**
  - Comparative Anatomy: Vesalius
  - Observation: Harvey & Palin
  - Fossils & Paleontology: Steno
  - Nested Hierarchies: Linneaus
  - Ancient Life: Leclerc & Buffon
  - Human Ecology: Malthus

- **1800-1900**
  - Extinction: Cuvier
  - Evolution Happens: Lamarck
  - Developmental Similarities: von Baer
  - Biostratigraphy: Smith
Uniformitarianism: Lyell
Discrete Genes: Mendel
Early Evolution and Development: Haeckel
Biogeography: Wallace & Wegener
Fossil Hominids: Huxley & Dubois
Chromosomes and Mutations: Morgan

1900-Present
Random Mutation: Fisher, Haldane & Wright
The Modern Synthesis: Dobzhansky
Speciation: Mayr
DNA: Crick & Watson
Radiometric Dating: Clair Patterson
Endosymbiosis: Lynn Margulis
Evolution and Development for the 21st Century: Gould
Genetic Similarities: Wilson, Sarich, Sibley & Ahlquist

You may notice that Darwin is absent from the list above although you may have read about him if you followed the links on the Understanding Evolution website. That is because there is a special page devoted to Darwin. Even if you read the Understanding Evolution page you need to read the page included on this textmap.