

Chapter 2 Evolutionary Theory

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Does "survival of the fittest" mean that the strongest, most powerful members of a group will be most likely to reproduce? If yes, why? If no, what does "survival of the fittest" mean?
2. What might be the adaptive value of differences in infant temperament, e.g. easy, difficult, and slow to warm-up?
3. What might be some implications for adaptation and future evolution of humans of the widespread use of social media for impression management and communication?
4. Projects are underway to colonize Mars. What aspects of human evolution have led to this new direction in exploration? What aspects of our human minds are well-prepared and ill-prepared for life on a new planet?
5. Ask students to make a list of essential childrearing practices. In class, summarize the lists, noting the most common and frequently mentioned practices. Discuss the evolutionary basis of these practices. How do these practices contribute to species fitness? What might happen if certain groups no longer continued these practices?
6. Ask students to collect evidence of gender-related qualities of attractiveness from online match-making sources. In class, summarize the features or attributes that appear to be important for men and women. What is the evolutionary basis of differences in perceptions of attractiveness for men and women in the mate selection process? How do these ideas hold up in the context of modern match-making strategies? Ask students to rate the importance of these features for their own mate choices and for survival of the species.