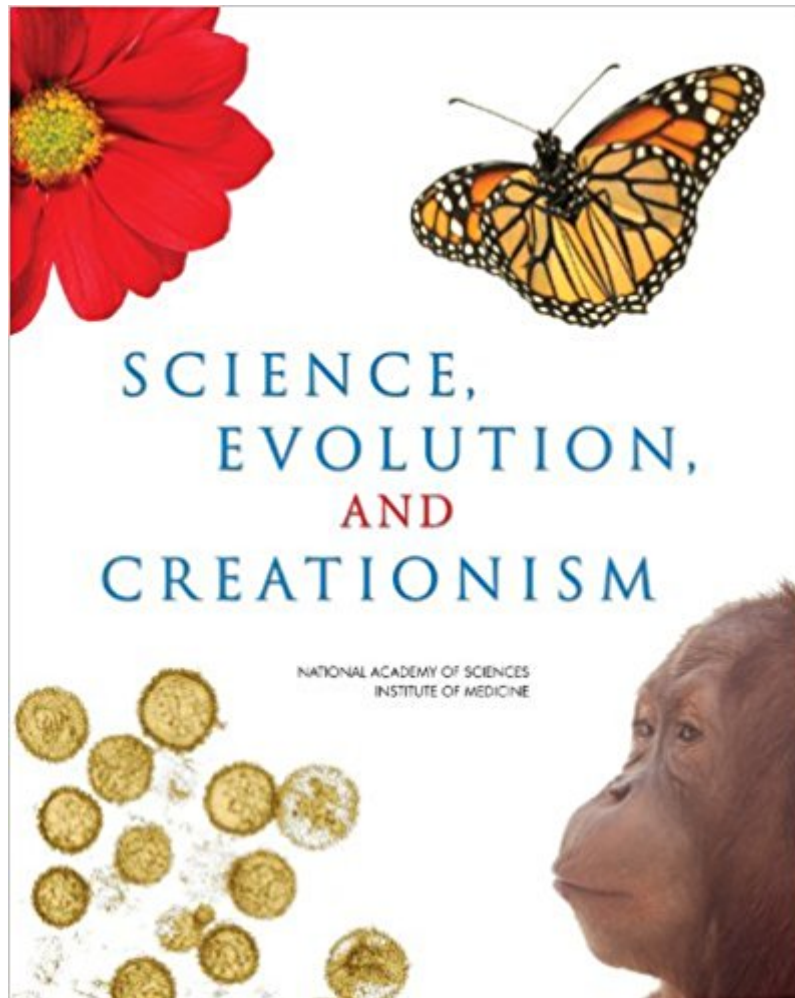




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Science, Evolution, And Creationism



Synopsis

How did life evolve on Earth? The answer to this question can help us understand our past and prepare for our future. Although evolution provides credible and reliable answers, polls show that many people turn away from science, seeking other explanations with which they are more comfortable. In the book *Science, Evolution, and Creationism*, a group of experts assembled by the National Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Medicine explain the fundamental methods of science, document the overwhelming evidence in support of biological evolution, and evaluate the alternative perspectives offered by advocates of various kinds of creationism, including "intelligent design." The book explores the many fascinating inquiries being pursued that put the science of evolution to work in preventing and treating human disease, developing new agricultural products, and fostering industrial innovations. The book also presents the scientific and legal reasons for not teaching creationist ideas in public school science classes. Mindful of school board battles and recent court decisions, *Science, Evolution, and Creationism* shows that science and religion should be viewed as different ways of understanding the world rather than as frameworks that are in conflict with each other and that the evidence for evolution can be fully compatible with religious faith. For educators, students, teachers, community leaders, legislators, policy makers, and parents who seek to understand the basis of evolutionary science, this publication will be an essential resource.

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Customer Reviews

Committee on Revising Science and Creationism: A View from the National Academy of Sciences,
National Academy of Sciences and Institute of Medicine of the National Academies

Despite its elementary level explanation of evolution and the ongoing yet tedious debate it has with creationism, this was probably one of the most helpful books I've ever purchased. No where does it go into great detail regarding evolution (and there is plenty of detail when it comes to evolution), the book's aim is very simple, and it succeeds: to establish, at its essence, what evolution is and why creationism is neither a science nor anywhere near on par with evolution. For those already familiar with the topic, there is little to be gained from this book. However, for me this book was exactly what I was looking for: a simple, easy-to-understand and succinct yet thorough explanation of what evolution is and what all the hoopla behind creationism vs. evolution is. This book is an amazing starting point for anyone who is not particularly science-minded but is intrigued by evolution, or (particularly) the creationism vs. evolution debate.

We are most fortunate that our nation's scientists and medical doctors, through their professional organizations, the National Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Medicine, have provided us with this succinct, comprehensive and authoritative account of evolution and its creationist critics. I do not wish to rehash any of the points made by the other reviewers. However there is one excerpt from the book's FAQ section, which is an excellent answer to the question "How can random biological changes lead to more adapted organisms?" I quote it here in the hope that it gives some young person a taste of science: Contrary to a widespread public impression, biological evolution is not random, even though the biological changes that provide the raw material for evolution are not directed toward predetermined, specific goals. When DNA is being copied, mistakes in the copying process generate novel DNA sequences. These new sequences act as evolutionary "experiments." Most mutations do not change traits or fitness. But some mutations give organisms traits that enhance their ability to survive and reproduce, while other mutations reduce the reproductive fitness of an organism. The process by which organisms with advantageous variations have greater reproductive success than other organisms with a population is known as "natural selection." Over multiple generations, some populations of organisms subjected to natural selection may change in ways that make them better able to survive and reproduce in a given environment. Others may be unable to adapt to a changing environment and will become extinct.

The book came quickly. Haven't used it a ton, but a good book for those who believe religion

contradicts evolution. Too common of a flaw in modern religious communities.

interesting!

Excellent, a beautiful and teaching issue from Nat.Acad.of Sci. (USA) to stop myths and crazy attitudes from anti-evolutionists and fundamentalists. should be proud of offering this book. Make it cheaper and world-wide distributed. Dr. George Swaneck, M.D. from Clínica Alemana-Universidad del Desarrollo, Santiago, CHILE.

Science, Evolution, and Creationism is a book written by the Council of The National Academy of Sciences and the Council of The Institute of Medicine. I read the third edition, which was released in 2008. The first edition was written and published in 1984 with the intent of manifesting the lack of biological evolution in public schools' curriculums. This book offers a descriptive explanation of the theory of evolution, details on current evidence supporting it, and an analysis of opposing creationist arguments. Although descriptive, this book is not highly complex. It can be read and understood by anyone with a basic knowledge of biology. The preface states the book was "written for those with questions." After reading it myself, I found this to be an accurate description of the book's content. Even with little scientific knowledge, the reader can easily find definitions for new vocabulary terms and visual aids along the borders of the page. This book also provides thorough citations of evidence, providing credibility to every concept introduced. Aside from the included information, the aspect of the book that I appreciated most was its complete respect and understanding of opposing arguments. The authors state in the preface that "evolution and (religious organizations' faith are not in opposition to each another." They made it clear that no matter what you believe, education on the topic of evolution is important for the growth of our society. Science, Evolution, and Creationism is overall a descriptive book that provides nearly unbiased information on both evolution and creationism. I recommend this book to anyone who wishes to expand his or her understanding of biological evolution. Chapter one, the evolution of nature and science, is the longest chapter and contains the most fundamental information required to understand biological evolution. The chapter begins with a brief overview of scientific history and an explanation of the scientific method. Even though this is common knowledge for some readers, the included graphics provide interesting aesthetics that help visualize the concepts. When the authors begin to delve into the central topic of evolution, they provide an extremely thorough description of how the theory of

evolution was created and how it works. Nearly every important topic is accompanied by factual evidence, an explanation for any gaps or unknown aspects of conclusion, and a modern day example of its use. The examples given in the first chapter intentionally show how Darwin's theory applies to areas of science other than biology. The examples given show how evolution and natural selection are currently being applied to physics, chemistry, astronomy, and psychology. This chapter goes on to explain the common misinterpretation of the phrase "scientific theory," since it is commonly, and falsely, used as an argument against evolution. In the final few pages, the chapter spends some time analyzing the differences between religious and scientific methods. This may, at first, seem like the authors are discrediting religious practices, but the conclusion makes it clear that this is not the case. The final paragraphs explain how religion and science can co-exist without hindering the progress of either. Excerpts from both scientists and religious leaders are included as evidence. Each included quote describes how a beneficial union between science and religion can be achieved by gaining an understanding for the opposing side.

Chapter 2, the evidence for biological evolution, goes into detail explaining the origin of the universe, life, animal species, and humans. The evidence used to make these conclusions is based on current scientific knowledge and is presented whenever a new topic is introduced. All of the evidence presented is cited and based on years of research, many of which are accompanied by detailed visual explanations. This chapter does an excellent job explaining current knowledge in a scientific way. The authors made sure to point out any uncertainty or gaps of knowledge their evidence, along with stating any alternative hypotheses that are plausible or untested. Although this chapter does little to explain any opposing views, this topic is thoroughly covered in the final chapter of the book. The purpose of this chapter is primarily to inform the reader of our current knowledge of evolution, and clarify any false rumors or pseudoscience that is commonly mistaken for facts. Because of the ample amount of information included, this chapter may be a challenge for an uneducated reader, but the thorough descriptions eliminate any need for additional research.

Chapter 3, creationist perspectives, is the final chapter of the book. The entire chapter focuses on responding to questions or arguments that are commonly used by creationists. This is done by presenting scientific evidence that factually disproves the argument, or identifies the most probable answer to the question. This may seem unfair to creationists because most, if not all of the authors are assumed to be skeptics on the topic of creationism. This makes it possible that the questions may be aimed at disproving creationism. This is possible, but the arguments chosen are all commonly referenced by modern media, justifying their presence in the book because of their impact on society. This chapter is particularly important to me because every counter-argument

made by the authors is factual, level-headed, and considers the possibility of errors. This helps an uninformed reader understand the views of either side, giving them an opportunity to create a well-informed opinion on the subject. The chapter concludes with excerpts from important court cases that changed the way evolution is taught in public school, showcasing science's historic fight for credibility. Science, Evolution, and Creationism is a book that I would recommend everyone read. It is not intended to convince the reader to believe in either evolution or creationism, but to convey the importance of education. The authors show no desire to remove creationism from schools' curriculums. They focus on the importance of schools teaching the facts and history of both sides, and this is precisely what this book will do for the reader. It presents current scientific knowledge and the creationists' point of view, allowing the reader a chance to form his or her own educated opinion.

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