

Evolution Script

Pupils should be taught to:

- recognise that living things have changed over time and that fossils provide information about living things that inhabited the Earth millions of years ago
- recognise that living things produce offspring of the same kind, but normally offspring vary and are not identical to their parents
- identify how animals and plants are adapted to suit their environment in different ways and that adaptation may lead to evolution.

Characters

Dad – [*regional*] a taxi driver, disorganised, hurried, clumsy

School receptionist (f)

Mrs Hargreaves – a science teacher; scary

Headteacher (f)

Charles Darwin – eccentric Victorian; Attenborough-cum-Holmes in a Tardis

Richard Owen (f) – obnoxious, Darwin's rival

In the kitchen

Narrator (f): You're sitting in your kitchen, slowly finishing off your cereal. With your spoon scrape up the last bits from your bowl. It's your first day at secondary school today and you're feeling too nervous to finish breakfast...

Rushed footsteps down the stairs

Narrator (f): That'll be Dad.

Dad: [*panicked*] Mum made a list of stuff for your school-bag... *where* did I put it?

Narrator (f): Shrug your shoulders – you don't know. Get your phone out your pocket. [*panic*] 8.10?! You were meant to leave 10 minutes ago. Show your Dad.

Dad: I swear I put it down over...

Crash and smashing crockery

Dad: OWWW!

Narrator (f): Your Dad's knocked over two plates. Stand up and help him pick up the broken china. Careful not to cut yourself.

Dad: Why am I so clumsy? *My* Dad was clumsy, you know...

Narrator (f): Put the china in the bin behind you. Point at the time again. You can't be late on your first day.

Dad: Right. What do you need for school? Have you got a pen?

Narrator (f): Yes, obviously. Show your Dad.

Dad: Great! Let's go. Car keys, car keys ...? I think I put them, err...

Narrator (f): Reach up and get the car keys off the fridge. You're tall like your Mum so it's not difficult to reach.

Dad: Of course! Come on, in the car. Quick!

Narrator (f): Leave your house and sit down in your Dad's taxi – that's his job: he's a taxi driver in the town of Plymouth.

Dad: Seatbelts in my cab, please.

Car starts and moves

Narrator (f): Look at your phone again... it's already 8.25. Does your Dad even know how to get to school? Open up maps on your phone.

Dad: I don't need that. I dropped someone here before.

Narrator (f): He may be clumsy, but he *does* have a good sense of direction. Check he's going the quickest way on your phone.

Dad: Left here. Round this bend...

Narrator (f): What will the other children be like? What if you're the tallest? You hate being so tall... just like your Mum. Your Dad's tiny – you wish you'd turned out like him! Shrink down in your seat: maybe if you hunch, you'll look smaller.

Car screeches to halt

Dad: We're here. Come on – quick! I won't charge you this time. Have a good day!

Narrator (f): Get out of the car. Look towards your school in the East. There are no children around. They must already be inside. Walk towards the East quickly.

Receptionist: Are you Year 7?

Narrator (m): Are you in the East? Turn and face the office receptionist. Nod at her.

Receptionist: And you're late? On your *first day* at Plymouth High?

Narrator (m): Look down. How can you explain? It's all Dad's fault...

Receptionist: Show me your name on the register please.

Narrator (m): Run your finger down the list til you see your name. Point at it.

Receptionist: Hmm. Science...Miss Hargreaves. Ha! Good luck with *her*. [*quickly*] It's left, through the double doors, second right, up the stairs. Got it?

Narrator (m): Nod, you've got a good memory for directions.

Receptionist: Hop to it kid. Maybe if you do good work she'll let you off!

Narrator (m): Walk down the corridor, turn left... push the double doors open... keep walking, then was it third or second right? *Second*. Then finally, the stairs. Was it up or down? Climb the stairs. You're there. Wipe the sweat off your forehead and push the door of the classroom open.

Door squeaks open.

Children: [*whispers*] Can't believe they're late / On the first day / Look how tall they are! / This must be the kid that was missing

Narrator (m): Hunch your shoulders. Twenty-nine children are staring at you.

Miss Hargreaves: [*cool, clipped, petrifying*] Get back to your tests, class. You will explain to me at the end why you're late. This is a test for your science level. Sit in that empty chair. Not a word.

Narrator (m): Take the test from Miss Hargreaves and go and sit in the spare seat. You're feeling very tall compared to the two children next to you. Look at the first question. You have no idea what the answer is... you're terrible at science. Sigh. Get out your pen from your pencil case....

Drops and rolls

Narrator (m): Oh no, you've dropped it! Why are you so clumsy?! It's rolled under a shelf behind you. You don't have any other pens! Quietly get down onto all fours, and crawl as slowly as you can to the shelf. Reach out for your pen and...

Sustained smashing and crashing...

Children: [*shocked – loud now*] Gasps / Oh my god! / Oh my days! / What was that? / What's all that glass? / Who on earth...?

Miss Hargreaves: [*shocked, though not hysterical yet*] My test-tubes!

Narrator (m): You've knocked the shelf, holding all Miss Hargreaves' glass test-tubes. Stand up carefully. You're crunching glass below your feet.

Miss Hargreaves: In fifteen years of teaching, I've never had a student turn up late and then vandalize my laboratory... *on their first day!*

Narrator (m): Show her that you were just...

Miss Hargreaves: [*very scary*] Headteacher's office now. Back where you came, right at the double doors.

Narrator (m): Pick up your bag and make your way out.

Miss Hargreaves: Back to your tests

Door squeaks shut

Narrator (m): How has this happened? Walk slowly back the way you came. Down the stairs. Drag your feet. Turn right... walk slower... you can almost feel your heart sinking down your body. You're at the double doors. There's the headteacher's office. "Mr Jones", it says on the door. Take a deep breath and knock.

Darwin: [*shouting, obviously taken by surprise*] Oh...err....*come!*

Narrator (f): Push open the door.

Darwin: Aha! Good day to you!

Narrator (f): Stop where you are. Mr Jones is climbing into his own office, through a smashed window. He has a long, greying beard, and he's wearing extremely old-fashioned clothes.

Darwin: Pleasure to make your acquaintance, I'm sure. Could you tell me who you think I am?

Narrator (f): What a bizarre question. Point to the sign on the open door.

Darwin: Yes, well as you may have divined, I am not Mr Jones. No, no. I am a scientist who is rather, ahhh, lost. I'm looking for someone with a good sense of direction. Now, is that *you*?

Narrator (f): You do have a good sense of direction.

Darwin: [*fast*] Excellent, you're hired – we leave immediately. The pay's not bad, the food's so-so...*but* we're proving the most important theory of the natural world.

Narrator (f): Show him that you're not coming with him. You're in enough trouble.

Darwin: Of course you are, I need a navigator. And, ah, listen!

Distant footsteps

Headteacher: A Year 7? Late on the first day...and then... *what?*

Narrator (f): Gulp nervously. Look at your options – the window or...

Darwin: Once I leave, it's going to look rather like *you* smashed this window.

Footsteps louder

Headteacher: [*louder*] Miss Hargreaves' test-tubes?

Narrator (f): You can't stay in here. Make your way over to the window, start climbing out...

Darwin: Knew you'd come round.

Headteacher: [*enters*] Oh my god! What on earth...? [*booming/echoing*] *WHERE'S THAT CHILD?!*

Darwin: [*whispering*] Shall we get out of here? Which way's the beach?

Narrator (f): Yes, that's in the South.

Darwin: Already doing your job! Let's go!

Narrator (f): Make your way to the South of Plymouth. [*Sound of beach*] You can't believe you're truanting from school on your first day. Stop the man. Show him you have to go back.

Darwin: Listen: maybe if you return with the best science project ever submitted, you can make amends.

Narrator (f): Yeah, *maybe*... Look around the beach. What if someone recognizes you?

Darwin: Take this stone. What do you see?

Narrator (f): He's handed you a stone. Turn it over. You see ... a stone.

Darwin: Look with the eyes of a *scientist*.

Narrator (f): There are some small dents in it. Trace them with your fingers.

Darwin: Exactly! That is the imprint of a pre-historic fish. About 500 million years ago, this fish died and then layers and layers of sand and mud squashed it onto this stone.

Narrator (f): He means it's a fossil... big deal, you did fossils in primary school. Toss the stone away.

Darwin: No, no, no, no! Don't throw away your great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather.

Narrator (f): What's he talking about? He's giving you back the fossil. Take it.

Darwin: Some of these fish crawled out the water and became amphibians. Some of those amphibians became mammals. And some of those mammals became... *you*. So, you see, [*beat*] this is your grandfather!

Narrator (f): Make a face at the man.

Darwin: That's the face they all make! But it's true. And you're going to help me prove it. I'm Charles Darwin, by the way.

Narrator (f): Shake his hand. Charles Darwin? You've heard of him.

[*THIS IS THE FIRST THIRD OF THE SCRIPT*]