**Natural Selection Notes**

**Vocabulary**

* **Competition:** Living things striving in each species compete for food, living space, mates, and other resources.
* **Adaptation―**A change in an organism over time that helps it to survive in its environment.
* **Structural**―body structure (e.g., a porcupine’s quills).
* **Functional**―the way body functions are carried out (e.g., how we use our lungs to breathe).
* **Behavioral**―how living things react to the environment (e.g., how wolves hunt in packs).
* **Natural selection:** Living things that are best suited to their environment are most likely to survive and reproduce. They pass their traits to their offspring. This causes species to change over time.

Species that are alive today descended, with changes in their traits, from species that lived in the past.

**Basic Concepts of Natural Selection**

* Individual living things are different from each other. This is called *variation*.
* Variation is important because without it, populations cannot evolve over time.
* Living things produce more offspring than can survive, and many that survive do not reproduce.
* Living things compete for limited resources, such as food and shelter.