

Darwin and Evolution

Activity 3: The peppered moth

<http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/learning/7-11/darwin-and-evolution>

Suggested preparation

Presentation: Darwin and Evolution

<http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/learning/7-11/darwin-and-evolution>

Film: Darwin and Evolution.

Professor Jim Secord helps us to understand Darwin's ideas on evolution

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How long will activity take?

- 30 mins

What do I need?

- The Story of the Peppered Moth
- Cartoon template
- Pens

Learn about the evolution of a moth and then create a cartoon to share the story.

What do I do?

1. Read 'The Story of the Peppered Moth'.
2. Draw your own cartoon version of the story, without words.

Remember to include:

- The pale moths and the rarer darker ones and where they lived.
- What happened to the black peppered moth initially?
- How the industrial revolution changed the landscape.
- How the habitat of the moths changed.
- What happened to the white moths?
- What happened to the black moths?

3. Discuss how this shows us how evolution works.



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The Story of the Peppered Moth

<http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/schools-resources/evolution> (example url of pack)



The light and dark peppered moth. Images of moths by Olaf Leillinger (CC-BY-SA-2-5).

Darwin lived through a period of enormous mechanical and industrial change (including the introduction of the railways and increased mechanisation). This had an impact on the environments in which everything lived including people, plants, animals and even insects.

Before this time, peppered moths were to be found living amongst the pale trunks of birch trees. There were lots of pale moths and a few darker ones. The darker ones were more easily spotted against the pale background of the trees and were eaten by birds. The whitish moths were camouflaged by the pale trees so they were more likely to survive and to produce offspring.

Over time the air and the environment in which the trees lived became more polluted. The tree bark became covered with black soot. This meant that the darker moths were now camouflaged by the darker tree bark. They were not so likely to be spotted and eaten. But the paler moths now stood out against the darker tree trunks and were easier to catch so their numbers started to fall. The darker moths survived and produced darker offspring so that in time, in towns and cities where pollution was higher, there were more darker moths than pale ones.



My Story of the Peppered Moth

By
