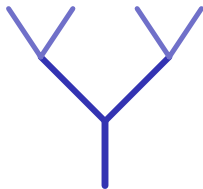


Selection & Evolution

A-Level Biology ■ Topic 17

A-Level Biology



What we will cover

- 1 Variation
- 2 Natural selection
- 3 Types of selection
- 4 Changing allele frequencies
- 5 Selective breeding
- 6 Speciation

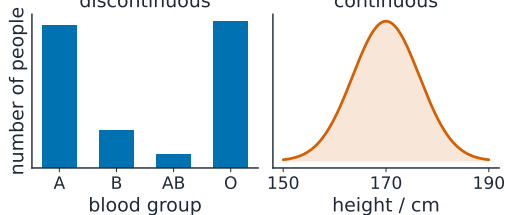


striking natural variation



Variation

discontinuous: discrete classes · continuous: smooth range (often polygenic)



Variation is the differences between individuals: genes only, **environmental factors** only (a scar), or a **combination** – height depends on both.

- **discontinuous** – separate groups (blood group)
- **continuous** – a smooth range (height)

The **t-test** ^t compares two sample means.

Two kinds of variation

Discontinuous variation

Discontinuous variation : clear, separate groups with nothing in between – blood group A, B, AB or O. Controlled by one or a few **genes** .

Continuous variation

Continuous variation : a smooth range from one extreme to the other, such as height. Controlled by **many genes together**, plus the environment.

Where it comes from

A chance **mutation** is the only source of a genuinely *new* allele; meiosis and fertilisation then shuffle what already exists.

The shape of the graph gives it away: separate bars for discontinuous, a bell-shaped curve for continuous.

Natural selection



Too many offspring **compete** ; the best **adapted** survive & **reproduce** , passing on their alleles.

Over generations, helpful alleles become common – **natural selection** . **Antibiotic resistance** is the same process.

Types of selection

- **stabilising** – favours the average
- **directional** – shifts the mean one way
- **disruptive** – favours both extremes

Selection pushes three different ways

stabilising

the middle is fittest, so
the extremes are trimmed
– birth mass in humans

directional

one extreme is fittest,
so the whole distribution shifts – the
peppered moth darkening on sooty bark

disruptive

both extremes beat the
middle, so the population splits in two

The peppered moth is the standard example because *both* forms are still there: the pale one hides on **lichen**, the dark one on soot, and which is commoner follows the bark.

The three types of selection

Stabilising selection

Stabilising selection favours the **average** and removes both extremes – the population stays as it is. Human birth weight is the standard example.

Directional selection

Directional selection favours **one** extreme, so the mean shifts that way – antibiotic resistance, beak size in a drought.

Disruptive selection

Disruptive selection favours **both** extremes and removes the average, which can split one population into two.

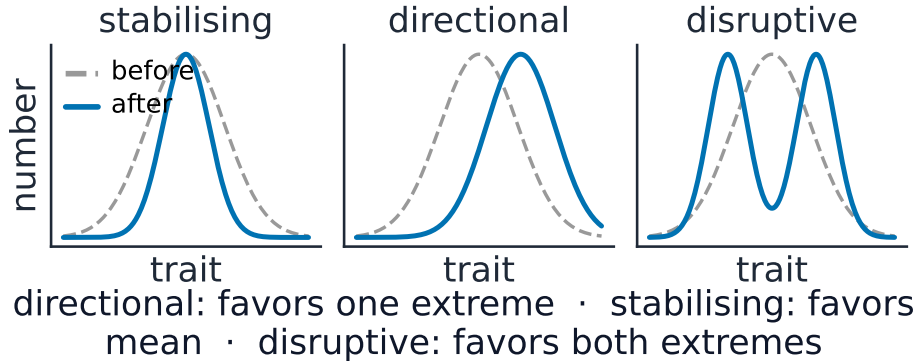
Sketch the curve before and after: stabilising narrows it, directional slides it, disruptive splits it in two.

Comparing samples, and comparing species

To compare the **means** of two samples – plant heights in sun and in shade – use the **t-test**: it says whether the difference is bigger than the scatter within each sample would explain.

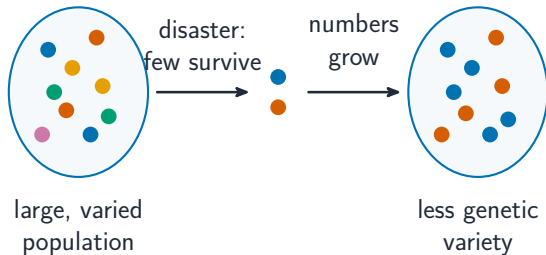
To compare two **species**, use DNA **sequence** data: the more alike the sequences, the more recently they shared a common ancestor. **Speciation** happens when two populations become genetically isolated and can no longer interbreed.

Types of selection, in detail



Stabilising narrows the range, directional shifts the mean, disruptive splits it in two

Changing allele frequencies



- **founder effect** – a few start a new population
- **genetic drift** – chance change in small populations
- **bottleneck** – a crash cuts variety

The **Hardy–Weinberg** - principle calculates allele frequencies.

When allele frequencies drift, and when they hold still

The bottleneck effect

The **bottleneck effect** : a sudden fall in population size leaves few survivors, so the recovered population carries only part of the original variety of alleles.

The Hardy–Weinberg principle

The **Hardy–Weinberg principle** - calculates **allele frequencies** and **genotype** frequencies – $p + q = 1$ and $p^2 + 2pq + q^2 = 1$.

Only when nothing acts

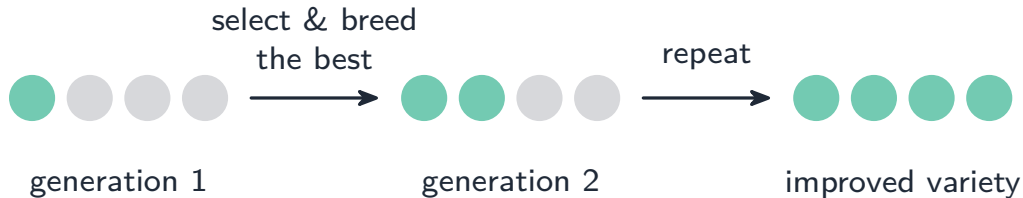
It holds only with no **mutation** , no selection, no migration, random mating and a large population – so a *departure* from it is evidence that something **is** acting.

Hardy–Weinberg is the null model. Its value in an exam is what its failure tells you, not the arithmetic.



Selective breeding

In **selective breeding** (**artificial selection**), humans choose which organisms breed. Used to breed **disease resistance** into crops and raise milk **yield** in cattle.



Two tools of the plant and animal breeder

Inbreeding

Inbreeding crosses close relatives to fix a desired trait – at the cost of losing variety and exposing harmful recessives.

Hybridisation

Hybridisation crosses two different inbred lines; the offspring are vigorous and uniform. This is how commercial maize is made.

The trade-off

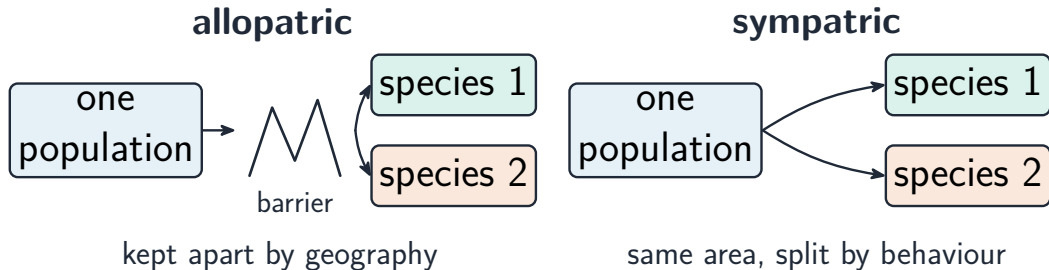
Uniformity is what a farmer wants and what a population's future does not: an identical crop meets an identical disease.

Selective breeding is directional selection with a human doing the selecting – the mechanism is unchanged.

Speciation

Evolution changes a population's **gene pool** over time; DNA shows how closely species are related.

- **allopatric** – a physical barrier
- **sympatric** – same area, different behaviour



Two routes to a new species

What speciation is

Speciation happens when two populations become genetically separated, so they can no longer breed together.

Allopatric speciation

Allopatric speciation : the populations are kept apart by a **geographical separation** – a sea, a mountain range, a new river.

Sympatric speciation

Sympatric speciation : they live in the **same** area but are separated by differences in behaviour, timing or way of life.

Then what

Once gene flow stops, mutation and selection act separately on each population until the differences are large enough to prevent interbreeding.

Say which *barrier* first – geographical or reproductive – and the rest of the answer follows from it.

Exam tips

- Explain **natural selection** as a sequence: variation → selection pressure → the better-adapted survive and reproduce → allele frequency changes.
- Use the **Hardy–Weinberg** equations ($p + q = 1$, $p^2 + 2pq + q^2 = 1$); q^2 is the recessive-phenotype frequency – a common calculation.
- Distinguish **stabilising, directional and disruptive** selection with an example of each.
- Distinguish **allopatric vs sympatric** speciation (geographic vs reproductive isolation).



Worked example – Hardy-Weinberg

A recessive condition affects 1 in 100 people. Find the frequency of carriers.

- Affected are homozygous recessive
 $\Rightarrow q^2 = 0.01$.
- $q = \sqrt{0.01} = 0.1$, and $p = 1 - q = 0.9$.
- Carriers are **heterozygous**:
 $2pq = 2 \times 0.9 \times 0.1$
- $= 0.18 \Rightarrow$ **18%** – 18 times more carriers than affected people.

Two equations: $p + q = 1$ and $p^2 + 2pq + q^2 = 1$. Always start from q^2 – the **recessive phenotype** is the only frequency you can count directly.

Hardy–Weinberg

$$p + q = 1$$
$$p^2 + 2pq + q^2 = 1$$

p	frequency of allele A
q	frequency of allele a
p^2	frequency of genotype AA
$2pq$	frequency of genotype Aa
q^2	frequency of genotype aa

H-W equilibrium: no selection, mutation, migration, drift, or non-random mating

Hardy–Weinberg: allele frequencies p and q give genotype frequencies p^2 , $2pq$, q^2

Topic 17 – key takeaways

1

Variation

discontinuous (groups) vs
continuous (range)

2

Natural selection

the best-adapted survive &
reproduce

3

Selection types

stabilising, directional, disruptive

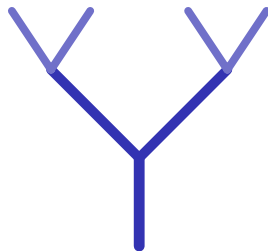
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Speciation

allopatric (barrier) vs sympatric
(behaviour)

Check yourself

- 1 Blood group is which pattern of variation?
- 2 Which selection shifts the mean to one extreme?
- 3 What reduces variety after a population crash?
- 4 Speciation by a mountain range is which type?



Answers 1. discontinuous 2. directional 3. a bottleneck 4. allopatric