

FAQ:

Does intelligent design completely reject Darwinian evolution?

The Short Answer: No. Some biological structures may have resulted from a combination of both design and evolution. Most intelligent design proponents accept microevolution but question if macroevolutionary changes are possible. Intelligent design theory questions if evolution can produce irreducibly complex structures. Thus, intelligent design holds that evolution is not capable of producing all aspects of life.

The Long Answer:

There are two fundamentally different possible causes for how humans have come to exist: blind natural processes (chance-law) or purposeful intelligent design. The two mechanisms are not wholly mutually exclusive over time, for some entities in the natural world may have come to their present forms due to some combination of chance-law and design. However, the two views stand in stark contrast to one-another as fundamentally different mechanisms for human origins. Some aspects of biology changes may very well be the result of Darwinian evolution (i.e. the mutation-natural selection mechanism), but some aspects of life may be due to design. Thus, in general, an organism life could be a combination of both forces at work on a species.

In particular, many proponents of intelligent design believe that microevolution is a strong force shaping life, but question if many macroevolutionary changes can be explained through the Darwinian mechanism. The term "evolution" simply means "change through time," but there are two types of evolution: macroevolution and microevolution. Microevolution is "slight, short-term evolutionary changes within species." (Futuyma, D., *Evolutionary Biology*, glossary, 1998) For example, within humans, there are different eye colors, hair colors, and skin colors. These are the result of microevolution. Macroevolution is "the origin and diversification of higher taxa" (Futuyma, D., *Evolutionary Biology*, pg. 447, 1998) or, "evolutionary change on a grand scale, encompassing [among other things] the origin of novel designs..." (Campbell, N. A., Reece, J. B., Mitchell, L. G., *Biology 4th ed.*, pg. G-13, 1999). There is thus a fundamental difference in kind between microevolution and macroevolution.

What intelligent design does reject that the notion that mutation and natural selection (combined with any other natural mechanism) is sufficient to produce or explain all aspects of life. Rather than stifling scientific progress, intelligent design frees scientific explanations to being bound to purely naturalistic causes, which in many cases are proving impotent. In recognizing that intelligent design is a sufficient and acceptable cause for the origin of biological complexity, intelligent design adds a new valid dimension to potential explanatory causes for life.

It should be noted that although ID and evolution are compatible on the general level (i.e. life could be the result of both evolution AND intelligent design), on the specific case-by-case level, intelligent design is NOT compatible by evolution. A single given nucleotide is in its present state either as a result of design or mutation/natural-selection—*not both*. That which is the product of design cannot be the product of natural selection, and visa versa. Thus, on the specific level, ID is not compatible with evolution. As William Dembski said during a talk at UCSD in 2001, "as far as the Darwinian mechanism goes, blessings to it." Dembski thinks its blessings stop at a certain point, and the information content at that point is so high, Dembski thinks it points to design.

Philosophically speaking, the difference between design and evolution is basically as follows:

Neo-Darwinian evolution states that humans arose through random mutations preserved by blind natural selection. Thus the famous paleontologist George Gaylord Simpson said in his book *The Meaning of Evolution*, that under evolution, "[m]an is the result of purposeless and natural processes that did not have him in mind." On the other hand, intelligent design theory postulates that humans originated due to the intentional arrangement of biomatter--including the human genetic code--by an intelligent agent. Under intelligent design, humans exist because an intelligent being *did* "have them in mind."