16-2 Evolution as Genetic Change

Natural selection affects which individuals survive and reproduce and which do not.

If an individual dies without reproducing, it does not contribute its alleles to the population's gene pool.

If an individual produces many offspring, its alleles stay in the gene pool and may increase in frequency.

Evolution is any change over time in the relative frequencies of alleles in a population.

Populations, not individual organisms, can evolve over time.

Natural selection on single-gene traits can lead to changes in allele frequencies and thus to evolution.

Organisms of one color may produce fewer offspring than organisms of other colors.

For example, a lizard population is normally brown, but has mutations that produce red and black forms.

Red lizards are more visible to predators, so they will be less likely to survive and reproduce. Therefore, the allele for red color will become rare.

Black lizards may warm up faster on cold days. This may give them energy to avoid predators. In turn, they may produce more offspring.

The allele for black color will increase in relative frequency.

Effect of Color Mutations on Lizard Survival

Initial Population	Generation 10	Generation 20	Generation 30
80%	80%	70%	40%
10%	0%	0%	0%
10%	20%	30%	60%

Natural selection can affect the distributions of phenotypes in any of three ways:

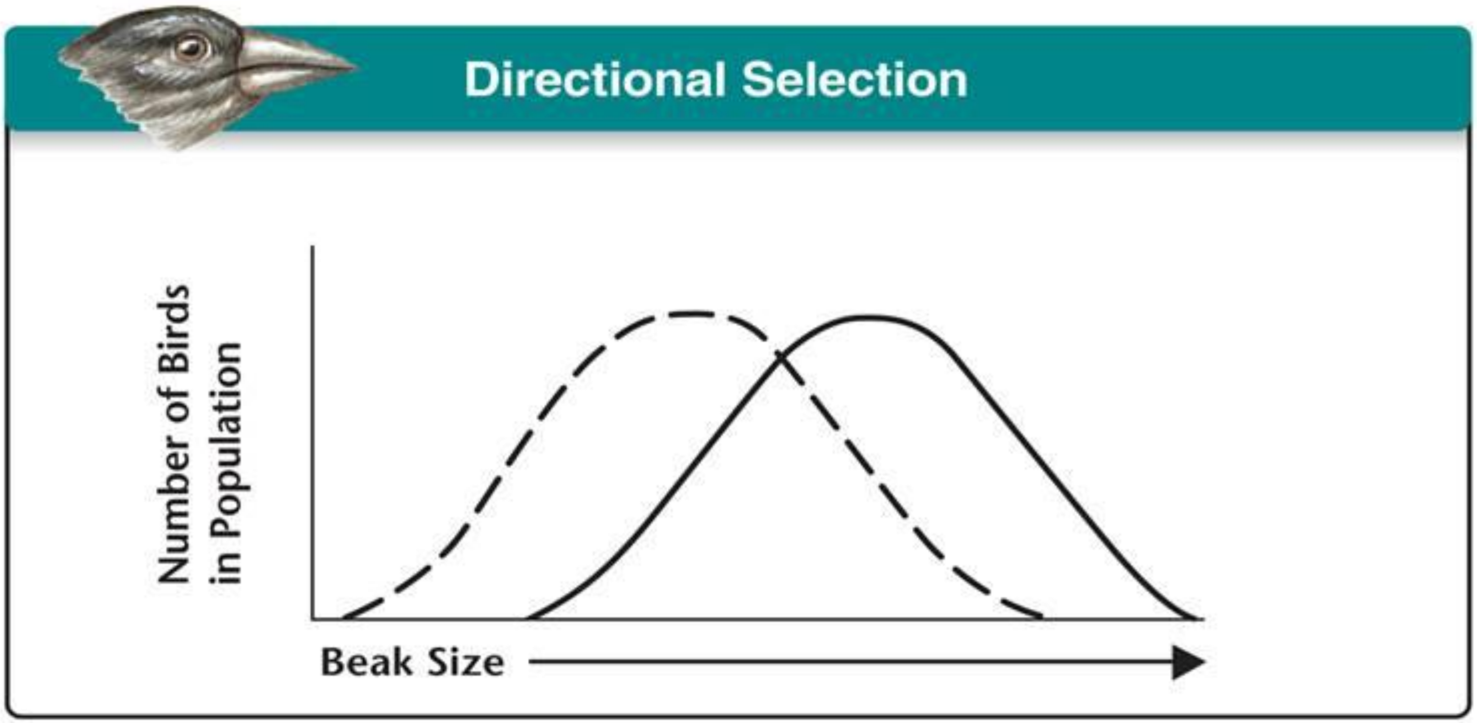
- **directional selection**
- **stabilizing selection**
- **disruptive selection**

Directional Selection

When individuals at one end of the curve have higher fitness than individuals in the middle or at the other end, **directional selection** takes place.

The range of phenotypes shifts as some individuals survive and reproduce while others do not.

In this case, birds with larger beaks have higher fitness. Therefore, the average beak size increases.

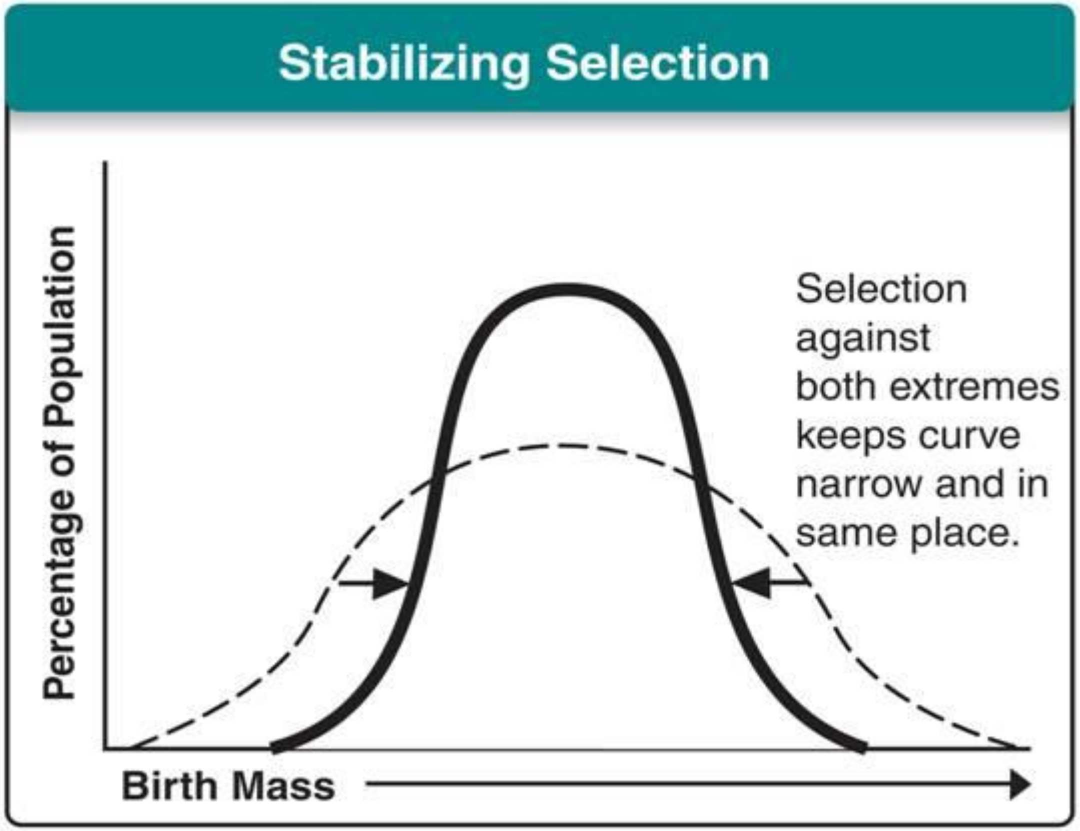


Stabilizing Selection

When individuals near the center of the curve have higher fitness than individuals at either end of the curve, **stabilizing selection** takes place.

This keeps the center of the curve at its current position, but it narrows the overall graph.

Human babies born at an average mass are more likely to survive than babies born either much smaller or much larger than average.

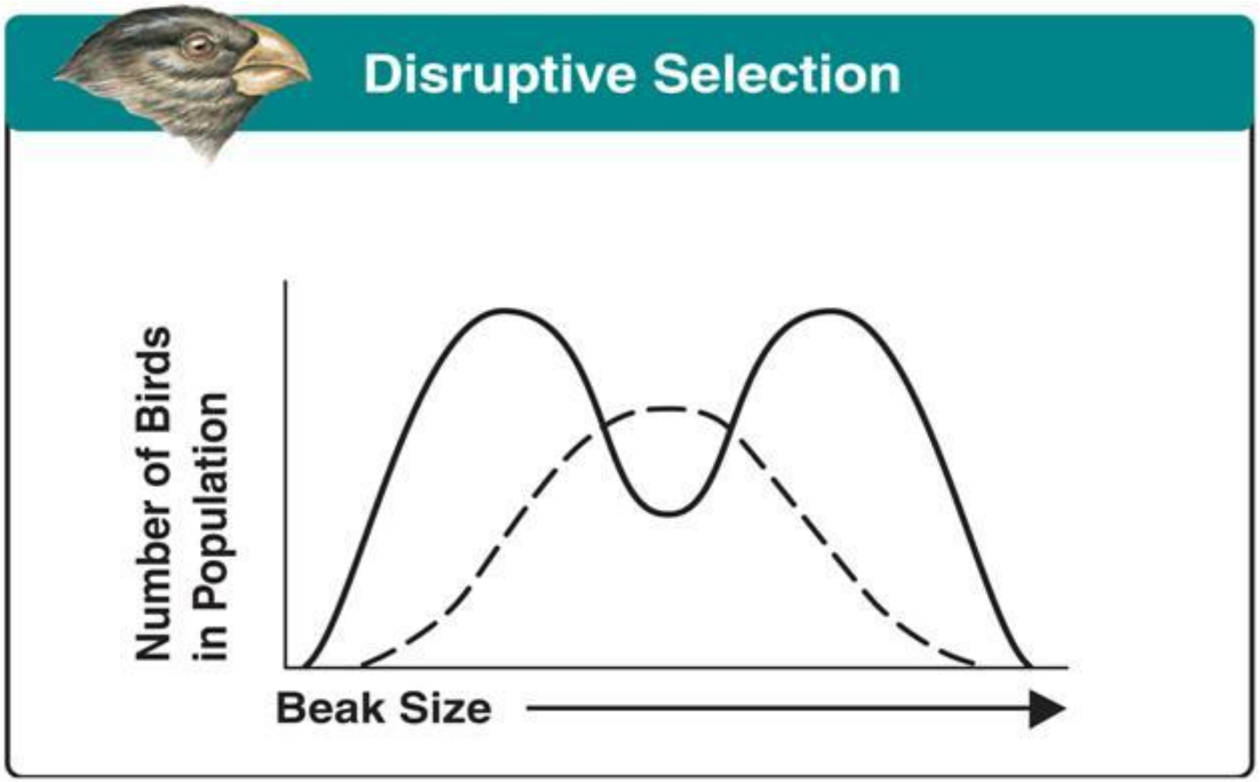


Disruptive Selection

When individuals at the upper and lower ends of the curve have higher fitness than individuals near the middle, **disruptive selection** takes place.

If the pressure of natural selection is strong enough and long enough, the curve will split, creating two distinct phenotypes.

If average-sized seeds become scarce, a bird population will split into two groups: one that eats small seeds and one that eats large seeds.



In small populations, individuals that carry a particular allele may leave more descendants than other individuals do, just by chance.

Over time, a series of chance occurrences of this type can cause an allele to become common in a population.

Genetic drift may occur when a small group of individuals colonizes a new habitat.

Individuals may carry alleles in different relative frequencies than did the larger population from which they came.

The new population will be genetically different from the parent population.

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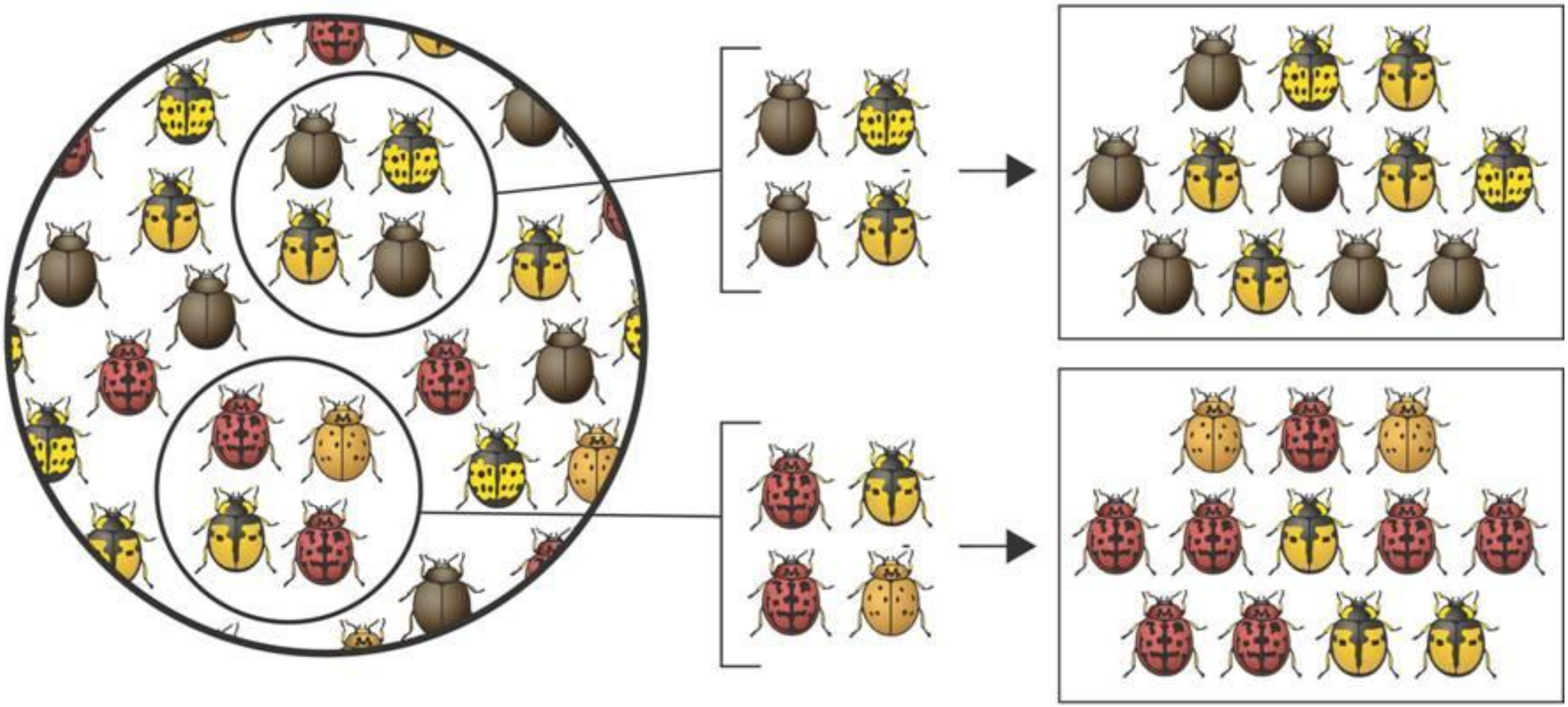
Genetic Drift



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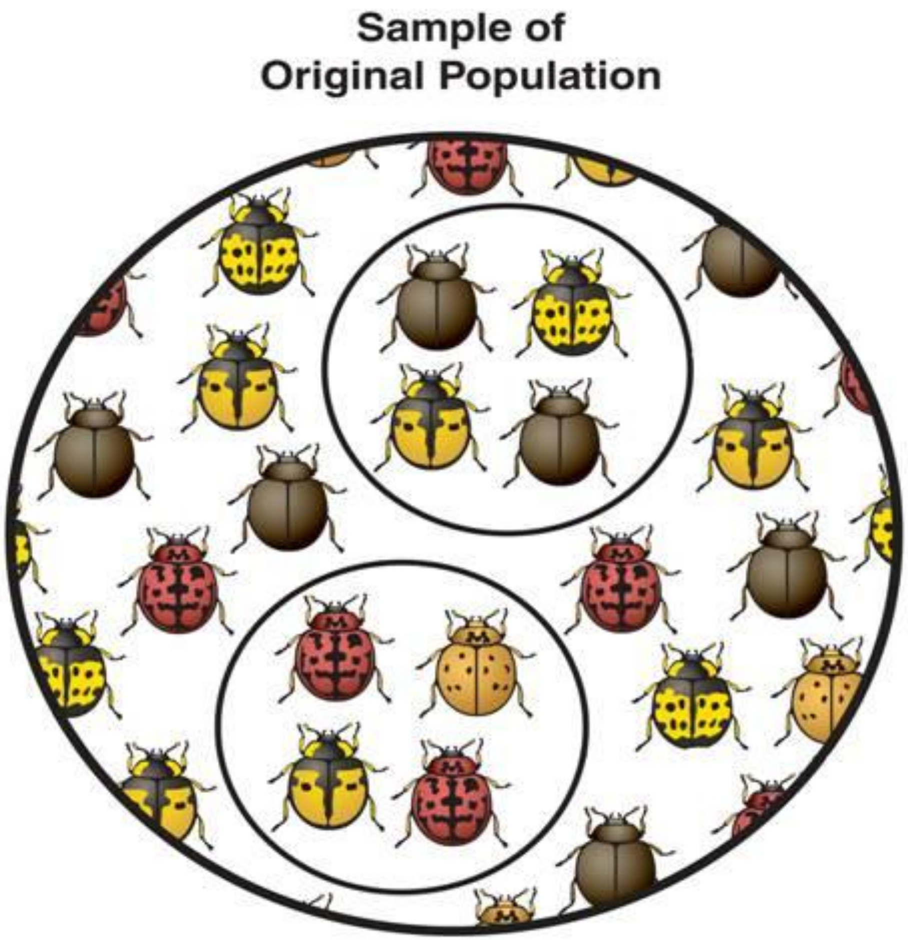
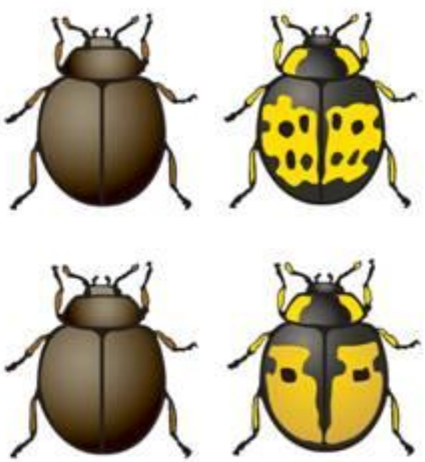
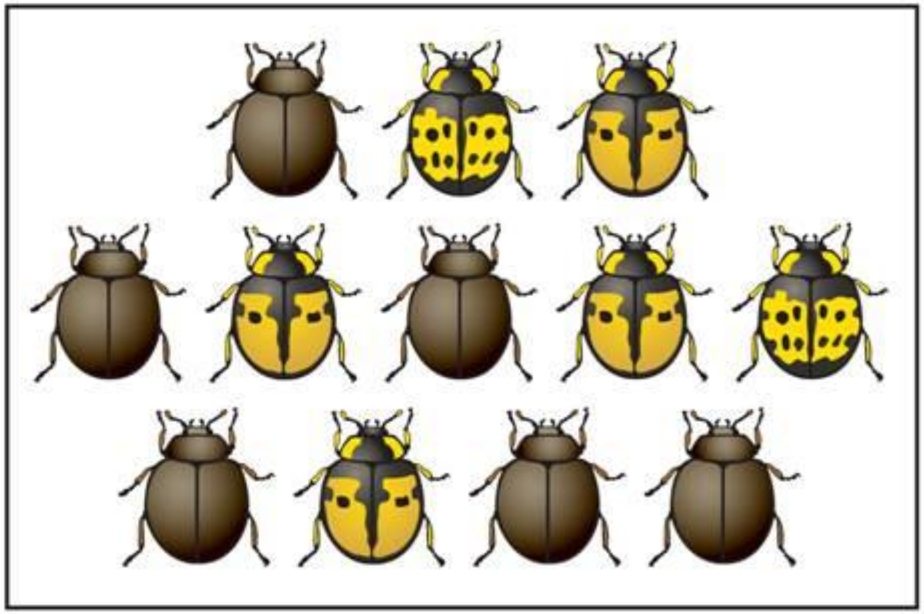

Sample of
Original Population

Founding Population A

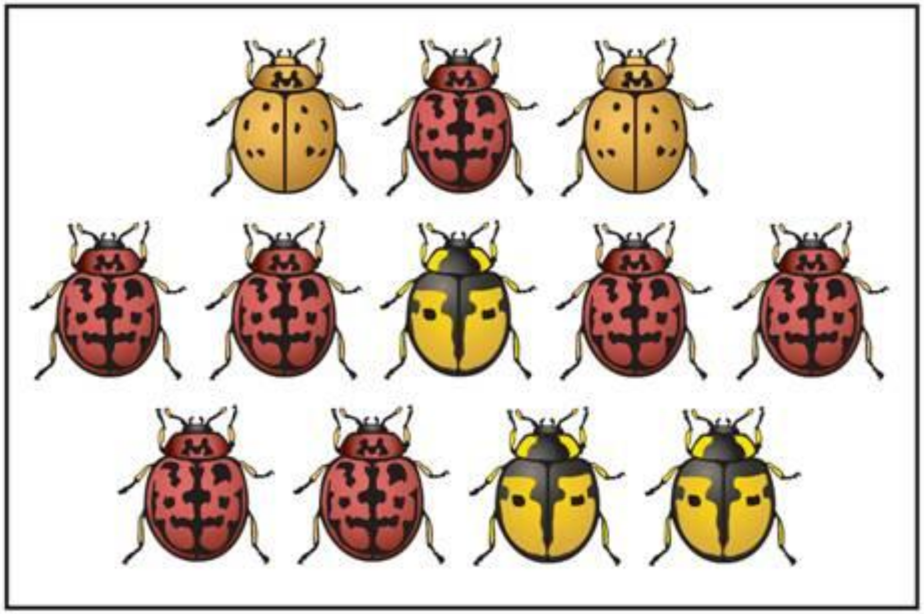


Founding Population B

Descendants



Population A



Population B

When allele frequencies change due to migration of a small subgroup of a population it is known as the **founder effect.**

Evolution Versus Genetic Equilibrium

The **Hardy-Weinberg principle** states that allele frequencies in a population will remain constant unless one or more factors cause those frequencies to change.

When allele frequencies remain constant it is called **genetic equilibrium**.

Five conditions are required to maintain genetic equilibrium from generation to generation:

- there must be random mating,
- the population must be very large,
- there can be no movement into or out of the population,
- there can be no mutations, and
- there can be no natural selection.

Random Mating

Random mating ensures that each individual has an equal chance of passing on its alleles to offspring.

In natural populations, mating is rarely completely random. Many species select mates based on particular heritable traits.

Large Population

Genetic drift has less effect on large populations than on small ones.

Allele frequencies of large populations are less likely to be changed through the process of genetic drift.

No Movement Into or Out of the Population

Because individuals may bring new alleles into a population, there must be no movement of individuals into or out of a population.

The population's gene pool must be kept together and kept separate from the gene pools of other populations.

No Mutations

If genes mutate, new alleles may be introduced into the population, and allele frequencies will change.

No Natural Selection

All genotypes in the population must have equal probabilities of survival and reproduction.

No phenotype can have a selective advantage over another.

There can be no natural selection operating on the population.

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Section QUIZ

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1 Which of the following patterns of natural selection on polygenic traits favors both extremes of a bell curve?

a. stabilizing selection

A b. disruptive selection

c. directional selection

d. genetic drift

2 Which of the following events could lead to genetic drift?

a. A few new individuals move into a large, diverse population.

A b. A few individuals from a large, diverse population leave and establish a new population.

c. Two large populations come back together after a few years of separation.

d. The mutation rate in a large population increases due to pollution.

3 The situation in which allele frequencies remain constant in a population is known as

a. genetic drift.

b. the founder effect.

A c. genetic equilibrium.

d. natural selection.

4 Which of the following conditions is required to maintain genetic equilibrium in a population?

a. movement in or out of the population

A b. random mating

c. natural selection

d. small population

5 According to the Hardy-Weinberg principle, no evolution will take place if

A

a. all five of the Hardy-Weinberg conditions are met.

b. any one of the Hardy-Weinberg conditions is met.

c. at least three of the Hardy-Weinberg conditions are met.

d. none of the Hardy-Weinberg conditions are met.

END OF SECTION