



1859: Charles Darwin published "On the Origin of Species" (UK)



The teaching of evolution in the United States

With his theory of evolution, Darwin stated that all life is related and has descended from a common ancestor. In 2007, a survey found that in the US, only one in three state high school biology teachers explained this theory to their students as the nation's leading scientific authorities recommended. The same survey showed that 13% of teachers presented creationism – the belief that nature, life, and all aspects of the universe are acts of divine creation – as a valid scientific alternative.

Although in our country the theory of evolution is taught without it causing polemics, it has caused plenty of controversy in many American states. In the past, some states even banned the teaching of evolution or forced teachers to present it alongside creationism. However, several Supreme Court cases have ruled against this. Laws giving teachers the option to question the theory of evolution passed in Louisiana and Tennessee. In Oklahoma, teaching biological evolution is optional. Judicial proceedings have often been involved in this controversy. For example, in 2000 in Minnesota, biology teacher Rodney LeVake was taken to court by his school because he wanted to teach the theory of evolution and not only creationism, as required by the school (even though teaching evolution is required in this state).

Teaching ideas

★★★ **CYCLE 4** - Team up with science teachers in your school to explain to your pupils what the theory of evolution is. In English class, ask pupils to write a speech to convince American science teachers that it is important to study the theory of evolution in detail. You can have them read the article "[The Importance of Teaching Human Evolution](#)" from the *National Center for Science Education* to find ideas.