

STATEMENT ON EVOLUTION IN TEXTBOOKS

Evolution and Science

The coverage of evolution in biology textbooks we have written reflects the broad consensus in the scientific community. As noted in a booklet issued by the National Academy of Sciences, "Evolution pervades all biological phenomena. To ignore that it occurred or to classify it as a form of dogma is to deprive the student of the most fundamental organizational concept in the biological sciences" (*Science and Creationism*, National Academy Press 1985, p. 22).

Our textbooks are written from this point of view. Evolution occupies a prominent position, and is covered explicitly. Many sections use evolutionary concepts to explain the diversity of living and fossil organisms, the adaptations of organisms to their environments, and similarities of structure and function shared by related organisms. In this way, we present students with the understanding of biology shared by the overwhelming majority of working scientists in the United States and throughout the world.

What Do States Require of Biology Textbooks?

Although state requirements vary, the majority require that biology curricula must include extensive coverage of evolution. The few states where standards or curriculum guidelines do not mention evolution by name nonetheless require the coverage of evolutionary topics. If we omitted proper coverage of evolutionary facts and theories, we would not be in compliance with these and other curricula that require complete, accurate, up-to-date, and conceptually-based educational materials.

Our Message to Textbook Adopters

As scientists and teachers, we find it unacceptable that school districts considering our books for adoption would be encouraged to choose one book over another based on the perception that teachers should avoid the topic of evolution. We encourage school districts deciding among our books to use genuine scientific and educational criteria.

We also deplore the efforts made in some states and districts to require that evolution be disclaimed. Such disclaimers single out evolution from all other scientific ideas as somehow less reliable or less accepted by scientists, or as "only a theory". Evolution is a normal part of science and should be treated the same way as all other scientific ideas. It does a disservice to students to mislead them about the important position that evolution holds in biological and other sciences.

Those who have joined in this statement do so as individuals. We do not speak on behalf of our publishers, but for ourselves, as biologists, authors, and educators.

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