

See Jane Evolve: Picture Books Explain Darwin

May 05, 2014

The Wall Street Journal:

Evolution by natural selection is one of the best ideas in all of science. It predicts and explains an incredibly wide range of biological facts. But only 60% of Americans believe evolution is true. This may partly be due to religious ideology, of course, but studies show that many secular people who say they believe in evolution still don't really understand it. Why is natural selection so hard to understand and accept? What can we do to make it easier?

A new study in *Psychological Science* by Deborah Kelemen of Boston University and colleagues helps to explain why evolution is hard to grasp. It also suggests that we should teach children the theory of natural selection while they are still in kindergarten instead of waiting, as we do now, until they are teenagers.

Scientific ideas always challenge our common sense. But some ideas, such as the heliocentric solar system, require only small tweaks to our everyday knowledge. We can easily understand what it would mean for the Earth to go around the sun, even though it looks as if the sun is going around the Earth. Other ideas, such as relativity or quantum mechanics, are so wildly counterintuitive that we shrug our shoulders, accept that only the mathematicians will really get it and fall back on vague metaphors.

Read the whole story: [The Wall Street Journal](#)