

## LIFE CYCLES

### KEY IDEAS

- Animal life cycles involve a process of birth, maturation, opportunity for reproduction, death and decomposition
- Plant life cycles involve a process of germination, growth, opportunity for reproduction, death and decomposition
- Living things prosper within an environment that suits them

### EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- What happens to humans and other animals after they have been born?
- What would happen if a group of animals stopped having young?
- Where do plant seeds come from?
- What happens once they begin to grow?
- What do you happens to living things when they die?

### LIVING THINGS REPRODUCE

- Living things reproduce to keep their species in existence.
- They create new versions of themselves through the process of reproduction.
- These offspring grown and mature into adults which, in turn, reproduce.
- The processes of reproduction and growing can involve different stages with different creatures.
- For example, mammals are born; birds hatch from eggs; frogs eggs change into tadpoles and later change again (or metamorphose) into new frogs; butterfly eggs change into caterpillars and then into chrysales form which new butterflies emerge; oak trees produce fruit (acorns) which are seeds that grow into new trees.
- Many living things reproduce sexually, that is by fertilizing a female egg with a male sperm.
- The fertilized egg eventually develops into a young adult, sometime through

intermediate stages (for example, egg to tadpole to frog, or , egg to caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly).

- In plants, a fertilized egg can become a seed and be contained in a fruit (for example, an apple or tomato).
- Many plants reproduce asexually without fertilization by a process
- called vegetative reproduction (eg runners or rhizomes).

## **LIVING THINGS EVENTUALLY DIE**

- No individual living thing lasts forever, although some live for a very long time (some trees, for example).
- When living things die, the matter from which they are made decays and decomposes.
- The matter rots and is broken down into small parts by bacteria.
- This decayed matter is not wasted.
- It is a rich source of new material that provides nutrients for other living things and is returned either to the atmosphere or the soil.

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