

Skills Worksheet

Active Reading

Section: Developing a Theory

Read the passage below. Then answer the questions that follow.

A key person in Darwin's thinking about **evolution** was Thomas Malthus. Malthus wrote an economic essay in which he observed that human populations were increasing *exponentially*, while the available food supply was increasing *linearly*. That is, more people were added each year to the population than were added the year before. However, the food supply increased the same amount each year.

Darwin realized that Malthus's observations about human populations apply to all populations. Recall that a population is all the individuals of the same species that live and breed together in a specific place. Every organism of a population has the potential to produce many offspring during its lifetime. In most cases, however, only a limited number of those offspring survive to reproduce, due to limited resources in the environment.

SKILL: READING EFFECTIVELY

Read each question, and write your answer in the space provided.

1. Based on the first paragraph of this passage, what can the reader infer was Malthus's idea about the fate of the human population?

2. How did Darwin apply Malthus's idea to all species?

Active Reading *continued*

In the space provided, write the letter of the phrase that best answers each question.

- _____ 3. Which describes exponential growth?
- a. adding a greater number of individuals to a population each successive year
 - b. removing a greater number of individuals from a population each successive year
 - c. adding the same number of individuals to a population each successive year
 - d. None of the above
- _____ 4. Which describes a population?
- a. a group of mating individuals comprised of different species in a specific place
 - b. a group of mating individuals comprised of the same species in a specific place
 - c. a group of individuals comprised of different species occupying several different places
 - d. None of the above