

# EVOLUTION AND THE FOSSIL RECORD

**Evolution** is the gradual change in living things over long periods of time. Scientists use the fossil record to learn about how organisms have evolved throughout Earth's history.

The diagram below provides information about the age, size, and forefoot anatomy of a variety of organisms in the horse family, Equidae.

1. Would the fossilized remains of *Pliohippus* be found in a rock layer above or below the rock layer containing the fossilized remains of *Mesohippus*? Explain.

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2. What do you notice about the size of the organisms over time?

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3. What do you notice about the forefoot anatomy of the organisms over time? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Scientific studies suggest that having one large toe is more supportive than several smaller toes for horses with a large body mass. Does this make sense, based on your observations in questions 2 and 3? Explain.

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