15-GY7 Tree of Life

Well, it started off with Bacteria and then fish and that turned into reptiles, reptiles into dinosaurs and dinosaurs into birds and mammals and mammals turned into apes and humans.

Claim(s) **Evolution started with bacteria and different forms of animals, including humans, eventually evolved from that beginning.**

Any challenges to the expressed claim?

Anything to disagree with?

Any clarification needed?

Question(s). **What does it mean when evolution is described as from 'common descent'?**
What does the 'Tree of Life' mean in the context of evolution?

Note: Darwin's Tree of Life sketch is reproduced in the Primary Science article, Representations. His sketch illustrates how a genus of related species may come into existence from a common starting point, or common ancestor. The number of individuals that can survive would be limited by food supply; slight within-species variations might improve the capability to compete. Survival and subsequent breeding success would increase the frequency of that variant and might even drive the original form to extinction.

Although Natural Historians had developed classification systems that grouped together individual species sharing strong observable similarities, Darwin's insight was a challenge to the prevailing Creationist view, that all living things had been created in their currently existing form. Fossil findings of extinct species supported Darwin's view, especially when 'missing links' were found – intermediate species for which there was no current living example.

Modern genetics has revealed that different species crossbreed more than originally thought, meaning that instead of genes simply being passed down individual branches of the Tree of Life, they are also transferred between species on different evolutionary paths. The result is a messier and more tangled 'web of life'. Nevertheless, the Tree of Life metaphor is an invaluable stepping stone to understanding evolutionary processes.