

How The Giraffe Got Its Long Neck

Once upon a time, most giraffes had short necks but there were some that had long necks. Food was plentiful on the ground and there were a lot of delicious leaves in the trees available to those that could reach them.

A major environmental change took place. It became extremely dry and all of the plants on the ground died because their roots were too short to get the water that was deep in the ground. The leaves on the trees were the only food source left for the giraffes.

The giraffes with the long necks were able to eat the leaves while the short-necked giraffes starved to death. The long neck giraffes reproduced and passed on the long-necked trait to their offspring. Now all we have left are long necked giraffes!

Answer the following questions about the story above.

1. What was the **variation** among the giraffes?
2. Describe the **struggle for existence** among the giraffes.
3. Which giraffes were **best fit** for the drier environment? Explain.
4. Why aren't there any more short-necked giraffes?
5. Based on our class notes, what is one possible way the original long-necked giraffes got their long necks? (WHAT CAUSES VARIATION?)