Students harbor widespread misconceptions about the mechanisms of organic evolution. The problem is especially apparent when they discuss the evolution of their own species—year after year I hear from my students that *Homo sapiens* will soon evolve to lose the pinky toe and become more intelligent. Such misconceptions are not effectively addressed by pedagogy that teaches Darwin’s theory via memorization of facts and vocabulary words. This lesson attempts to better develop sound comprehension of natural selection theory by prompting students to use its concepts to explain the evolutionary status of humans.

I have used the following lesson successfully with all ability levels in first and second high school biology courses. I expect that the lesson would be useful in certain college biology courses as well.

The Question

This activity centers on the question: Are humans still evolving? Of course there is little doubt that human populations currently undergo microevolutionary changes in allele frequencies due to natural selection and other factors. Anthropologist Meredith Small (1999) writes, “...some people live and some people die, and some people pass on more genes than others. Therefore, there is a change in the human gene pool over time.” Some advanced students will realize this immediately. Nevertheless, humans behave differently enough from other species to make the question interesting to consider and to discuss. And, even in an Advanced Placement Biology classroom, many students will initially focus on the popular misconceptions that they have encountered repeatedly in the past.

Moreover, the purpose of this activity is not to expeditiously arrive at a definitive answer to the question...