

# State Policy Language on Evolution

## Pennsylvania

Students will “Critically evaluate the status of existing theories (e.g... theory of evolution...)”  
*[Pennsylvania, Academic Standards for Science and Technology; adopted January 2002]*

## New Mexico

Students will “critically analyze the data and observations supporting the conclusion that the species living on Earth today are related by descent from the ancestral one-celled organisms.”  
*[New Mexico Science Standards; adopted 2003]*

## Minnesota

“The student will be able to explain how scientific and technological innovations as well as new evidence can challenge portions of or entire accepted theories and models including... [the] theory of evolution...”  
*[Minnesota Science Standards, History and Nature of Science, Grades 9-12; adopted 2004]*

## Missouri

“Identify and analyze current theories that are being questioned, and compare them to new theories that have emerged to challenge older ones (e.g., theories of evolution...)”  
*[Missouri Biology Standards; adopted 2005]*

## South Carolina

“Summarize ways that scientists use data from a variety of sources to investigate and critically analyze aspects of evolutionary theory.”  
*[South Carolina High School Biology Science Standards; adopted 2006]*

## Alabama

“[E]volution by natural selection is a controversial theory. ... Instructional material associated with controversy should be approached with an open mind, studied carefully, and critically considered.”  
*[Alabama State Board of Education, Resolution; adopted 2001]*

## Texas

Students must “analyze, evaluate and critique scientific explanations ... including examining all sides of scientific evidence of those scientific explanations so as to encourage critical thinking,” and also “analyze and evaluate” core evolutionary claims, including “common ancestry,” “natural selection,” “mutation,” “sudden appearance,” the origin of the “complexity of the cell,” and the formation of “long complex molecules having information such as the DNA molecule for self-replicating life.”  
*[Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Science Subchapter C. High School; adopted 2009]*

## Mississippi

“No local school board, school superintendent or school principal shall prohibit a public school classroom teacher from discussing and answering questions from individual students on the origin of life.”

*[Mississippi Code; enacted 2006]*

## Louisiana

Louisiana schools shall “create and foster an environment...that promotes critical thinking skills, logical analysis, and open and objective discussion of scientific theories being studied including, but not limited to, evolution, the origins of life, global warming, and human cloning.”

*[Louisiana Science Education Act; enacted 2008]*

## Tennessee

Students may “understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific weaknesses of existing scientific theories covered in the course being taught,” including such topics such as “biological evolution, the chemical origins of life, global warming, and human cloning.”

*[Tennessee Academic Freedom Law; enacted 2012]*