

Repeated patterns in DNA may be missing piece of the story of human evolution

About 8 million to 12 million years ago, the ancestor of great apes, including humans, underwent a dramatic genetic change.

Small pieces of DNA replicated and spread across their resident chromosomes like dandelions across a lawn. But as these “dandelion seeds” dispersed, they carried some grass and daisy seeds — additional segments of DNA — along for the ride. This unusual pattern, repeated in different parts of the genome, is found only in great apes — bonobos, chimpanzees, gorillas and humans.

“I think it’s a missing piece of human evolution,” said Evan Eichler, a geneticist at the University of Washington, in Seattle. “My feeling is that these duplication blocks have been the substrate for the birth of new genes.”

Read the full, original story: [A Missing Genetic Link in Human Evolution](#)

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- [The Most Fascinating Human Evolution Discoveries of 2013](#), Scientific American
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