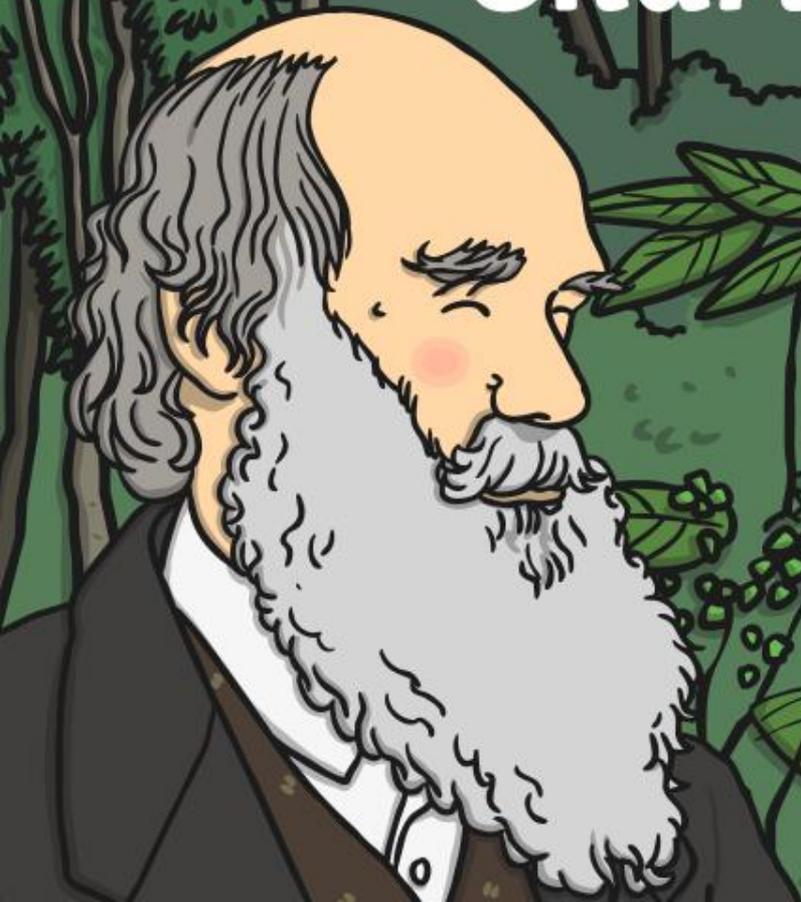


The Life of Charles Darwin



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Who Was Charles Darwin?

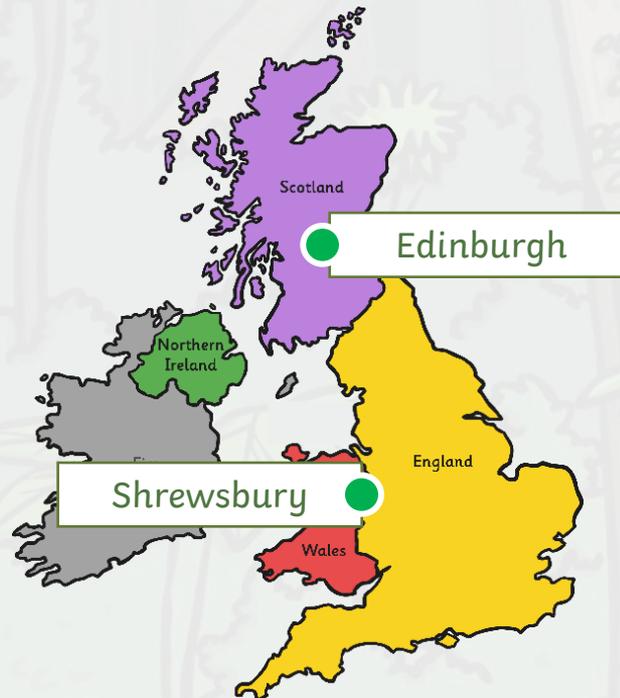
Charles Darwin was born on 12th February 1809
in Shrewsbury, England.



When he was nine years old, Charles Darwin went to Shrewsbury School for boys. Darwin did not particularly enjoy school and found some of the work, like Latin and Greek, hard. He did, however, love science and was always asking questions. When he was 13 years old, he set up a science lab in his garden shed.



When he was 16 years old, Darwin was sent to Edinburgh to train to become a doctor, like his father, grandfather and brother, who were also all doctors.



However, Darwin did not enjoy it and knew he did not want to become a doctor. He didn't like looking at blood. His father then sent him to Cambridge to become a vicar but he was more interested in learning about nature and animals. He had lots of friends and teachers at university who helped him to learn more about these things.

Darwin passed his exams to become a vicar but he did not want this to be his job. John Henslow, a teacher from Cambridge, sent him a letter saying that Robert FitzRoy, the captain of the ship HMS Beagle, was looking for someone to be the ship's naturalist. The person would have to explore, collect and record information about the rocks, plants and animals that they found on their trip. Darwin knew this was his dream job and so persuaded his father to let him go on the trip.



HMS Beagle



The Beagle set sail on her voyage in 1831. Living conditions on the ship were hard at times. There was not a lot of room on board as the ship held 75 people and it was always very dusty. Darwin was often seasick and also caught a fever but he was glad he had made the decision to go on the trip.

The Beagle's voyage lasted for 5 years. They travelled to South America and reached the Galapagos islands. When he went ashore Darwin found plants and animals that nobody had ever seen before! He took seeds from the plants to take home with him.

Animals Darwin discovered living in the Galapagos islands:

Finches



Galapagos Tortoise



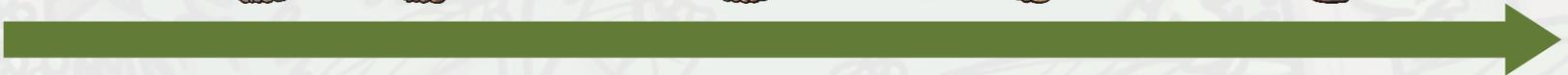
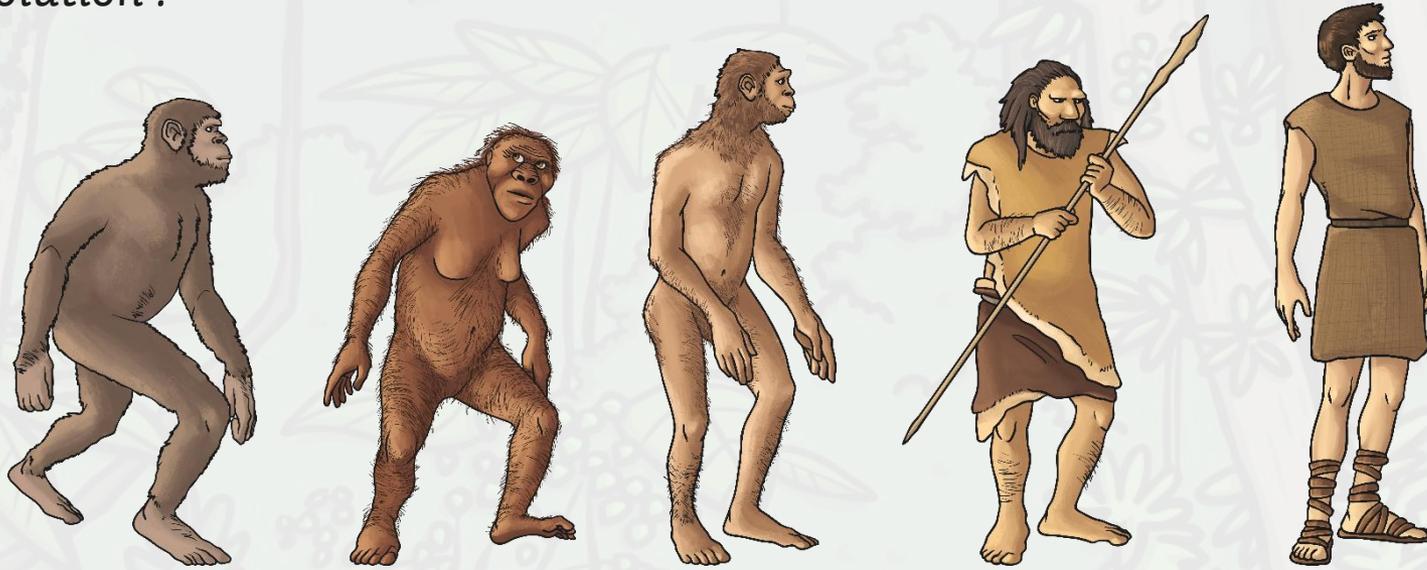
Darwin wrote down all of his findings and sent home information to England all about the things he had found.



When he returned home to England in 1836, he planted the seeds he had bought back and noticed that some, like rhubarb and celery, grew very well. He continued studying plants and animals and was now a well-known scientist in England.

In 1859 Charles Darwin wrote a famous book all about the things he had found on his travels. After 20 years of studying, he had an idea that the plants and creatures he had collected hadn't always been the same as they were when we found them.

He thought that, millions of years ago, living things had all started off in the same way and had gradually, very, very slowly, changed. In this way lots of different animals and plants had developed. This idea is called 'evolution'.



Charles Darwin died on 19th April 1882 and even now, over 100 years later, people are still talking about his ideas and findings.

