

Activity 1

Do you know the answers?

1. Charles Darwin was ...
a) British b) French c) American
2. He lived in the ...
a) 1400s b) 1700s c) 1800s
3. He was a ...
a) Chemist b) Naturalist c) Surgeon
4. His first scientific expedition was aboard a ship called ...
a) HMS *Beagle* a) HMS *Trafalgar* c) *Titanic*
5. The voyage lasted ...
a) Six months b) Two years c) Five years
6. Darwin is famous for ...
a) Discovering dinosaurs
b) Finding a route around South America
c) A theory on evolution

Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882).

Charles Darwin was born in Shrewsbury, England on 12 February 1809. He came from a wealthy and famous family. His mother's father was the china manufacturer, Josiah Wedgwood.

In 1825 he went to Edinburgh University to study medicine and become a doctor like his father. However, the young Darwin did not enjoy his studies and at the end of his second year he left Edinburgh and moved to Cambridge University to study theology.

While at university he became interested in collecting beetles and after completing his studies in 1831 was offered the opportunity to join a two-year long scientific expedition as a naturalist aboard the HMS *Beagle*.

The voyage went to South America, the Galapagos Islands, Tahiti, Australia, South Africa then back to Brazil before heading home five years after leaving England. During the voyage Darwin collected many specimens and made lots of observations. In the Galapagos Islands he noticed that each island had its own type of tortoise and finch that, although similar, were different in some important ways.

After returning to England he spent the next 20 years working on his ideas and, in 1859, he published *On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection*. In this book Darwin outlined a new theory about evolution which shook the world. At first his ideas were attacked, but, in the end, people came to realise that they were probably true.

Darwin died on 19 April, 1882 and was buried in Westminster Abbey in London.

Activity 2

Read the text again and answer these questions.

1. What did Charles Darwin study at Edinburgh University?
2. What was his father's occupation?
3. Why did he leave Edinburgh University?
4. What was his hobby while he was at university?
5. What did he observe in the Galapagos Islands?
6. What was the name of his most famous book?
7. How old was Darwin when he died?

Activity 3

Match the words with the correct definition.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. expedition (n) | a) rich, with lots of money |
| 2. heading (v) | b) a chance to do something |
| 3. opportunity (n) | c) a long journey to a distant place |
| 4. outline (n) | d) to go in a particular direction |
| 5. shook (v) | e) an example of something, especially a plant or animal |
| 6. specimen (n) | f) an explanation that includes general points, but not details, about something |
| 7. theory (n) | g) an idea that explains how or why something happened |
| 8. wealthy (adj) | h) to frighten or upset people (past tense) |

Charles Darwin
Adrian Tennant**Level**

Elementary/Pre-intermediate

Topic

Charles Darwin

Subject(s)

Science

Time (approx)

Activity 1: 10 – 15 minutes

Activity 2: 15 – 20 minutes

Activity 3: 10 – 15 minutes

Preparation

Activity 1: Photocopy of quiz & text for each student.

Activities 2 & 3: One photocopy for each student.

Activity 1

- 1 On the board write up *Darwin*.
- 2 Ask students what they can tell you about him. Encourage students to use English and write up some of the things they say.
- 3 Tell students they are going to do a short quiz on Darwin, but not to worry as they'll have some choices.
- 4 Put students in pairs and give each pair a copy of the quiz and ask them to work together and discuss the choices.
- 5 Tell the students you will give them a text to read about Charles Darwin. They should read through quite quickly and try to check the answers to the quiz.
- 6 Hand out the text, monitor and help where necessary.
- 7 Put the students back in their pairs and get them to check together.
- 8 Check the answers as a class.

Answers

- 1 a) *British*
- 2 c) *1800s*
- 3 b) *Naturalist*
- 4 a) *HMS Beagle*
- 5 c) *Five years*
- 6 c) *A theory on evolution*

Activity 2

- 1 Hand out the worksheet for activity 2.
- 2 Ask the students to read the text again and answer the questions.
- 3 Put the students in pairs and ask them to check their answers together.
- 4 Monitor and help where necessary.
- 5 Check the answers as a class.

Answers

- 1 *Medicine*
- 2 *A doctor*
- 3 *Because he didn't enjoy his studies*
- 4 *Collecting beetles*
- 5 *That each island had its own type of tortoise and finch*
- 6 *On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection.*
- 7 *73*

Activity 3

- 1 Tell the students that there were (probably) some new words in the text.
- 2 Hand out the worksheet for activity 3.
- 3 Tell the students to find the eight words in the text before they try to match the words and definitions.
- 4 Point out that by looking at the words in the text (in context) they might be able to work out the meanings.

- 5 Give the students five or six minutes to try and do this. Monitor and help where necessary (but don't tell the students the answers).
- 6 Put the students in pairs and ask them to check their answers together.
- 7 Check the answers as a class.

Answers

1	c	5	h
2	d	6	e
3	b	7	g
4	f	8	a

Useful websites

A short article about Charles Darwin.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/darwin_charles.shtml

A lot more information about Darwin.
<http://www.aboutdarwin.com/>