

Early Life - family	Born Shrewsbury, England on 12th Feb 1809 at The Mount - his home. Wealthy family. Was 5th child of 6 - Marianne, Caroline, Susan, Erasmus, Charles, Catherine. Mum died when he was eight. Older brother Erasmus was his best friend. Father - Robert Darwin - a doctor. Set up lab in garden shed! Big collector as a child - insects, stones, plants etc. Liked going for walks. Liked bird watching and collecting beetles. Loved nature, hated school - thought subjects e.g. Latin and Greek were boring. Nickname 'Gas' at school for smelly experiments he did! Enjoyed shooting as a teenager with Uncle Jos.
Education	Father was a doctor and wanted him to do medicine too, sent him to Edinburgh to study, but Charles was afraid of blood! Spent more time studying sponges. (1825 - 1827) Dad suggested he became a priest so went to Cambridge University but he didn't like that either! Had doubts over his faith and wasn't committed to his degree. Realised passion for geology (rocks) and botany (plants) At Cambridge, met prof Henslow and Prof Sedgwick who took him under their wing to study nature scientifically. Final exams ranked 10th out of 178 people! Famous for work on natural selection and idea of evolution.
Voyage	1831 - Aged 22, Henslow offered him 5 year voyage on HMS Beagle (naval survey ship) responsible for mapping coastlines, Darwin wanted to collect evidence and carry out detailed research. Stunned by how small vessel was. Had a library. Sleep in a hammock. Was often sea sick. Found amazing fossils of 10 foot tall sloths, huge crow sizes armadillos - provided idea that life on earth was very old. Galapagos - strange animals that nowhere else on Earth, varieties of species. On voyage he visited: Brazil, Chile, Australia, Falkland Islands, Galapagos Islands (where spent most of his time) Returned 2nd Oct 1836, to Cambridge to examine specimens. 1859 wrote book called 'On the Origin of Species' which explained his findings. Challenged creation story found in the Bible. Mixed reaction but made him famous and he got lots of awards and prizes.
Private life	Aged 28 began thinking about settling down, married cousin (Emma Wedgwood) 29th Jan 1839. Had children - William (27th Dec 1839) and Anne Elizabeth (2nd March 1841 - 23rd April 1851), Horace born 3 weeks later. 1842 - move to Downe, Kent. Big house, nice garden to walk and keep pigeons.
Legacy	Got sick when older, perhaps bitten by nasty bug during travels - no one knows for sure. Died 19th April 1882 aged 72 - buried in Westminster Abbey - privilege of important people. People came from around world to attend his funeral. Face is on UK £10 notes and has a statue in London's natural history museum. More than 120 species named after him.

Who was Charles Darwin?

During the mid-19th century, one man put forward a theory that would revolutionise science; that man was Charles Darwin.

Darwin, whose parents were Robert Waring Darwin and Susannah Wedgwood, was born on the 12th February 1809 at their family home (known as The Mount) near Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

They were considered to be a wealthy family as his father was a well-respected doctor.

Sadly, however, Charles's mother passed away in 1817 leaving behind Charles and his 5 siblings: Catherine, Marianne, Caroline, Susan and his older brother - Erasmus - who was named after their Grandfather.

Erasmus was Darwin's best friend and they were often seen together spending time in a chemical laboratory which they had established in their garden shed.

Unfortunately for Darwin, this earned him the nickname 'gas' amongst his peers due to the pungent experiments they often conducted whilst working from popular 'recipe' books.

During his spare time, Darwin enjoyed shooting with his Uncle Jos (otherwise known as Josiah Wedgwood).

Furthermore, he often went for walks, engaged in bird watching and was a passionate and avid collector of beetles.

Consequently, he built up a substantial beetle collection which included some very rare species.