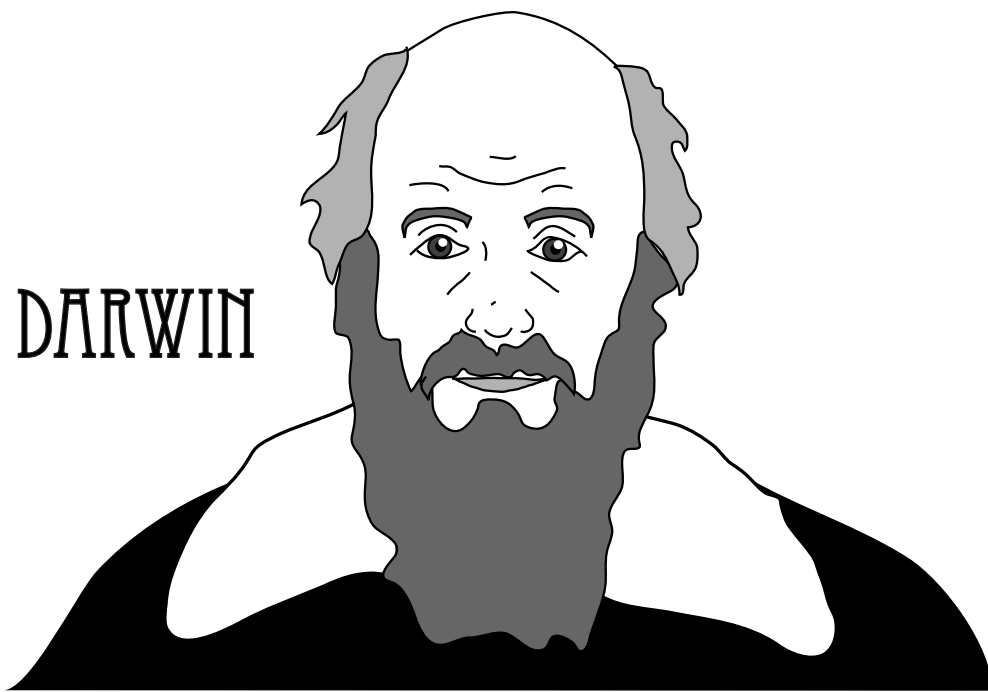


CHARLES DARWIN



Charles Darwin

Charles Darwin was born in Shrewsbury, England, in 1809. From the time he was a young child, Charles liked collecting plants and catching animals. His father, Robert Darwin, was a doctor, and he wanted his son to follow in his footsteps. Charles, however, found the study of medicine boring and surgery stressful. He neglected his university classes, but studied natural history, the study of the development of plants and animals, on his own. Though he did well in school, Darwin spent most of his college years hunting and carrying on his own studies outside of the classroom.

After graduation, Darwin was given the chance to use his expertise. Captain Robert FitzRoy invited Darwin to sail with him on his ship, the HMS Beagle, and help him map the coast of South America and make a study of the natural history of the area. Darwin joined him on his voyage and filled his notebooks with sketches and observations. He collected specimens, samples of plants and animals for scientific study, as they went along.

The expedition included a trip to a group of islands called the Galapagos. Darwin noticed that each of the Galapagos islands had its own varieties of birds and animals. This finding led him to develop his theory of natural selection, which he wrote about in his book, *On the Origin of the Species*. In natural selection, the fittest organisms, or life forms, survive long enough to reproduce. Though Darwin was not the first one to use it, the phrase “survival of the fittest” is another way we refer to natural selection. The theory was the beginning of the modern understanding of evolution, the development of species over time.

VOCABULARY

Look at the text and define these key concepts:

Natural history _____

Specimens _____

Natural selection _____

Imagine you had a pet cat. What kind of traits could it develop over time to help it adapt to life in your home?

In each box below, draw an animal that would be suited to survive in:

The desert

The North Pole

Outer space!

