



READING: Charles Darwin

*Charles Robert Darwin was a British **naturalist** and **biologist** known for his theory of evolution and his understanding of the process of natural selection.*

Darwin was born on February 12, 1809, in the tiny merchant town of Shrewsbury, England. A child of wealth and privilege who loved to explore nature, Darwin was the second youngest of six kids. Darwin came from a long line of scientists: His father, Dr. R.W. Darwin, was a medical doctor, and his grandfather, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, was a renowned botanist. Darwin's mother, Susanna, died when he was only eight years old. In October 1825, at age 16, Darwin enrolled at University of Edinburgh. Two years later, he became a student at Christ's College in Cambridge. His father hoped he would follow in his footsteps and become a medical doctor, but the sight of blood made Darwin queasy. Darwin was far more inclined to study natural history.

After Darwin graduated Christ's College in 1831, he took the naturalist's position aboard the **HMS Beagle**. The ship, commanded by **Captain Robert FitzRoy**, was to take a five-year survey trip around the world. The voyage would prove the opportunity of a lifetime for the young naturalist. On December 27, 1831, the HMS *Beagle* launched its voyage around the world with Darwin aboard. Over the course of the trip, Darwin collected a variety of natural specimens, including birds, plants and fossils. Upon his return to England in 1836, Darwin began to write up his findings in the *Journal of Researches*, published as part of Captain FitzRoy's larger narrative and later edited into the *Zoology of the Voyage of the Beagle*. The trip had a monumental effect on Darwin's view of natural history. He began to develop a revolutionary theory about the origin of living beings that ran contrary to the popular view of other naturalists at the time. **Darwin's theory of evolution** declared that species survived through a process called "**natural selection**," where those that successfully adapted or evolved to meet the changing requirements of their natural habitat thrived and reproduced, while those species that failed to evolve and reproduce died off. Through his observations and studies of birds, plants and fossils, Darwin noticed similarities among species all over the globe, along with variations based on specific locations, leading him to believe that the species we know today had gradually evolved from common ancestors. Darwin's theory of evolution and the process of natural selection later became known simply as "**Darwinism**." On November 24, 1859, he published a detailed explanation of his theory in his best-known work, ***On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection***. In the next century, DNA studies provided scientific evidence for Darwin's theory of evolution.

Social Darwinism is a collection of ideas that emerged in the late 1800s that adopted Darwin's theory of evolution to explain social and economic issues. Darwin himself rarely commented on any connections between his theories and human society. But while attempting to explain his ideas to the public, Darwin borrowed widely understood concepts, such as "survival of the **fittest**" from sociologist Herbert Spencer. Over time, as the **Industrial Revolution** and *laissez faire* capitalism swept across the world, social Darwinism has been used as a justification for imperialism, labor abuses, poverty, racism, eugenics and social inequality.

Following a lifetime of devout research, Charles Darwin died at his family home, Down House, in London, on April 19, 1882. He was buried at Westminster Abbey.

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 When was Charles Darwin born? _____
- 2 What happened on 1931? _____
- 3 Who commanded the ship? _____
- 4 How long did the trip take? _____
- 5 What was Darwinism? _____
- 6 When did Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*? _____
- 7 How old was Charles Darwin when he died? _____

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Charles Darwin was born in Shrewsbury, England. _____
- 2 Darwin's family was educated and had a lot of money. _____
- 3 He came from a long line of explorers. _____
- 4 He graduated from Edinburgh University in 1931. _____
- 5 Darwin's theory of evolution declared that species survived through a process called "natural selection,". _____
- 6 **Social Darwinism** is a collection of ideas that adopted Darwin's theory of evolution to explain geological and political issues. . _____
- 7 Charles Darwin died alone in one of his expeditions . _____

Source: <https://www.biography.com/scientist/charles-darwin>

KEY

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 When was Charles Darwin born? _____ **He was born on February 12, 1809**_____
- 2 What happened on 1831? ___ **He graduated from Christ's College and he embarked on the HMS Beagle** _
- 3 Who commanded the ship? _ **Captain Robert FitzRoy**__
- 4 How long did the trip take? _ **five years** _
- 5 What was Darwinism? ___ **It was Darwin's theory of evolution and the process of natural selection** ___
- 6 When did Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*? _ **He published it on November 24, 1859** _
- 7 How old was Charles Darwin when he died? _ **He was 73 years old** _____

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Charles Darwin was born in Shrewsbury, England. **_(T)___**
- 2 Darwin's family was educated and had a lot of money. **_(T)___**
- 3 He came from a long line of explorers. **_(F- He came from a long line of scientists)_**
- 4 He graduated from Edinburgh University in 1831. **(F-He graduated from Christ's College)_**
- 5 Darwin's theory of evolution declared that species survived through a process called "natural selection,".

- 6 **Social Darwinism** is a collection of ideas that adopted Darwin's theory of evolution to explain geological and political issues. **_(F- It is a collection of ideas tha adopted Darwin's theory of evolution to explain social and economic issues)_**
- 7 Charles Darwin died alone in one of his expeditions. **_(F-He died at his family home in London)_**