

Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882)



On 12 February 2009, Charles Robert Darwin would have been 200 years old.

Darwin, a naturalist and founder of the theory of evolution, was born in Shrewsbury, Shropshire (England) on 12 February 1809 as the fifth of six children of a wealthy family. His father, Robert Darwin, was a medical doctor and financier, his mother, Susannah Wedgwood, was the daughter of the English china manufacturer Wedgwood. In 1839 he married his cousin Emma Wedgwood. They had ten children; three of them died while still children. Darwin died on 19 April 1882. He is buried in Westminster Abbey.

Darwin first studied medicine at the university of Edinburgh. However, after two years he gave up and started studying theology in Cambridge. There he met two scientists who influenced his future career: the geologist Adam Sedgwick (1785-1873) and the biologist John Stevens Henslow (1796-1861).

In 1831 Darwin finished his studies of theology, and with the support of Henslow he went on a 5-year expedition around the world on board the ship HMS Beagle.

What impressed him most on this voyage were the geological formations of the continents, the different fossils, animals and plants, and the effects of natural forces on the surface of the earth. He developed his theory of evolution, and in 1859 he published *On the Origin of Species*, his first book.

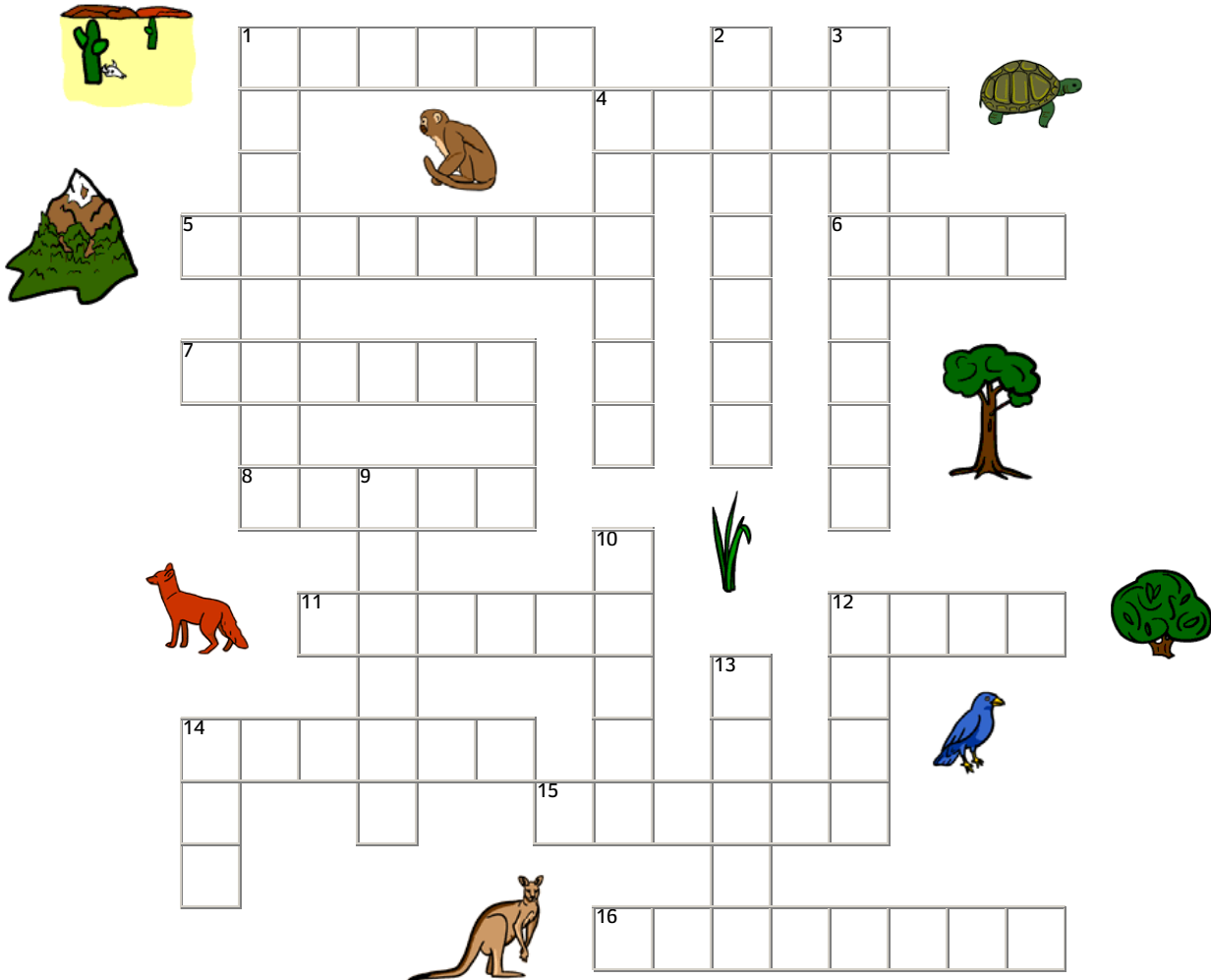
His evolutionary theory was influenced by the observations he made. On the Galapagos Islands he observed tortoises, mockingbirds and finches; in Australia kangaroos and platypuses; on the Falkland Islands foxes; in Patagonia he found fossils of extinct mammals; and in Brazil he was impressed by the tropical forest.

Darwin was convinced that all species of life have evolved from common ancestors over millions of years through the process of natural selection.

Criticism was prompt. In particular, he was attacked by the Church. Scientists, however, accepted and recognized his work. In 1839 he became a member of the Royal Society and in 1878 of the French Academy of Sciences.

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The words which you have to find in the following crossword are all related to Darwin and the objects of his observations – animals, plants, and landscapes.



Across

- 1 an area that has very little water and very few plants but a lot of sand
- 4 an area covered by grass
- 5 higher than a hill
- 6 a high plant with a trunk and leaves
- 7 an animal that feeds its young ones on milk
- 8 a flow of water
- 11 a plant like roses, tulips, daffodils
- 12 higher than a flower but lower than a tree
- 14 an area covered with trees
- 15 an area surrounded by water
- 16 an animal that moves by jumping

Down

- 1 an animal that lived millions of years ago but is now extinct
- 2 an animal like a large hairy elephant that lived thousands of years ago and is now extinct
- 3 an animal he found on the Galapagos Islands
- 4 an animal that has a long tail, climbs trees and is related to humans
- 9 an area between mountains
- 10 a green plant that is eaten by cows and sheep
- 12 a creature that is covered with feathers and can fly
- 13 a large area of flat land
- 14 an animal that looks like a dog, with a reddish-brown fur and a thick tail

