**Presentation on Charles Darwin**

**Date of birth:** February 12, 1809

**Place of birth:** Shrewsbury, Shropshire

**Date of death:** April 19, 1882

**Place of death:** Downe, England. Buried in Westminster Abbey, London

**Famous quote:**

“It is not the strongest of species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives, it is the one that is most adaptable to change.” Charles Darwin, The Origin of the Species.

**Childhood and interests before science:**

Charles Darwin came from a wealthy family of scientists.

His father Robert Darwin was a successful doctor, as was his Grandfather who had a great influence on his later theories. His mother Susannah was the daughter of the famous pottery maker Josiah Wedgwood. Unfortunately, when he was eight she sadly passed away from cancer and it was up to his three older sisters to raise and look after him.

In 1825, Charles went to Edinburgh University to study medicine but he realised that he didn’t like studying medicine. He thought the surgeries were horrible to watch and he was bored with his studies, so his father took him out of college and told him he would come to nothing in life.

In 1828 he joined Christ’s College in Cambridge to become a minister but gave that up as well. He than began to study botany (study of plants) and received a degree in 1831.

**Aboard The Beagle – What did CD discover?**

Charles Darwin was invited to go on the journey by Captain Robert Fitzroy to be a naturalist when John Henslow, another naturalist, declined the offer

By the time he had finished his degree Charles had a passion for geology and zoology and a great desire to travel the world. When the opportunity came to become a naturalist on the HMS Beagle and to travel the South Seas he grabbed it with both hands.

Over the 5 year journey he explored 4 continents and found the Galapagos Islands full of creatures no one had seen before. He said there was something unique about each of them. He kept a book of his experiences on each continent and also sent Henslow regular samples of his finds. All the while Charles collected samples of flora, fauna and fossils from everywhere he went. He also gathered a large collection of specimens that naturalists and scientists were eager to study when he arrived home.

Before he left on the journey Darwin was an unknown recent graduate but returned as a respected and well known scientist.

During the trip Darwin started thinking about how different species had formed and the idea of evolution which his Grandfather had also made theories about.

**“On The Origin of Species” What was it about?**

This was Darwin’s most important and influential book in the history of biology. It was published in November 1859 and sold out immediately. He wrote 6 updated variations over his lifetime about “All the organic beings which ever lived on this earth have descended from someone primordial form, into which life was first breathed.” Or the origin of life and Evolution. One of his most famous ideas was called ‘survival of the fittest’ which was all about natural selection and the survival of species best suited to their environment.

**What have other important people said about the work of Charles Darwin?**

David Attenborough – Natural historian   
“I can’t remember a time I hadn’t been aware of Darwin or his theory of natural selection. Even before I had seen his name on the inside front cover of my copy of The Origin of the Species, bought when I was 18, I had heard of Wallace and evolution even as early as 12 years old”.

David Attenborough is a passionate Darwinian and sees evolution as the cornerstone of all the programmes and series he has ever made.