**Presentation points 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.
* Father Robert Darwin - Doctor
* Grandfather - Doctor (had great influence on his later theories)
* Mother Susannah Darwin - Daughter of the famous pottery maker Josiah Wedgwood.
* Mother died from cancer when Darwin was 8, three older sisters raised him.
* 1825, Darwin went to Edinburgh University to study medicine. Left because of boredom. Father very unhappy!
* 1828 went to Christ’s College, Cambridge to become a minister. Left.
* Began to study botany (study of plants), received a degree in 1831.

**Aboard The Beagle – Discoveries**

* Invited on voyage by Captain Robert Fitzroy to be a naturalist.
* Charles had a passion for geology and zoology and a great desire to travel the world.
* John Henslow declined the offer and recommended Darwin.
* 5 year journey he explored 4 continents
* Galapagos Islands full of creatures no one had seen before. He said there was something unique about each of them.
* Kept a book of his experiences and sent Henslow regular samples of his finds.
* Charles collected samples of flora, fauna and fossils from everywhere he went.
* Also gathered a large collection of specimens that naturalists and scientists were eager to study when he arrived home.
* Darwin left as 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.

**On The Origin of Species. What was it about?**

* Darwin’s most important and influential book in the history of biology.
* Published in November 1859 and sold out immediately.
* Wrote 6 updated variations over his lifetime about “All the organic beings which ever lived on this earth have descended from some one 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** (taken from a You Tube interview)
“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.