

Charles Darwin

Charles Darwin is one of the world's most famous naturalists, but his life wasn't always destined to head that way. He struggled through his early years of school, after being born in 1809, and eventually went to university in Edinburgh and then Cambridge.

At Edinburgh, Darwin studied medicine like his father and grandfather had but hated the surgeries and studying bodies. He left without graduating.

When Darwin left on his fateful voyage aboard the Beagle, he was on track to become a country parson. His father was so devoutly religious that he initially forbade his son to take the journey. Eventually, he relented. Even then, Darwin was invited onto the ship by the captain with the plan to prove the theory that God created all life, not that it evolved.

The trip proved to be successful in ways that he'd never imagined and gave Darwin all of the information to come up with his theory of descent with modification. It's important to realise that Darwin didn't come up with the idea of evolution; people had been aware that animals changed over time for a hundred years or so. He described how they changed to improve the species.

Vocabulary

Which word means something was always going to happen?

struggled **destined** **studying**

Which word means that Darwin found something difficult?

struggled **destined** **studying**

Retrieve

What was Darwin likely to become if he hadn't gone on the voyage?

What was the name of the ship?

Infer

What evidence is there that Darwin wasn't cut out to be a doctor?

Why might Darwin's discoveries have upset his captain?

