

**Charles**

Darwin FRS FRGS FLS FZS JP^[6] (/ˈdɑːrwɪn/^[7] *DAR-wɪn*; 12 February 1809 – 19 April 1882) was an English naturalist, geologist, and biologist,^[8] widely known for his contributions to evolutionary biology. His proposition that all species of life have descended from a common ancestor is now generally accepted and considered a fundamental concept in science.^[9] In a joint publication with Alfred Russel Wallace, he introduced his scientific theory that this branching pattern of evolution resulted from a process he called natural selection, in which the struggle for existence has a similar effect to the artificial selection involved in selective breeding.^[10] Darwin has been described as one of the most influential figures in human history and was honoured by burial in Westminster Abbey.^{[11][12]}

Darwin's early interest in nature led him to neglect his medical education at the University of Edinburgh; instead, he helped to investigate marine invertebrates. His studies at the University of Cambridge's Christ's College from 1828 to 1831 encouraged his passion for natural science.^[13] His five-year voyage on *HMS Beagle* from 1831 to 1836 established Darwin as an eminent geologist, whose observations and theories supported Charles Lyell's concept of gradual geological change. Publication of his journal of the voyage made Darwin famous as a popular author.^[14]

Puzzled by the geographical distribution of wildlife and fossils he collected on the voyage, Darwin began detailed investigations and, in 1838, devised his theory of natural selection.^[15] Although he discussed his ideas with several naturalists, he needed time for extensive research and his geological work had priority.^[16] He was writing up his theory in 1858 when Alfred Russel Wallace sent him an essay that described the same idea, prompting immediate joint submission of both their theories to the Linnean Society of London.^[17] Darwin's work established evolutionary descent with modification as the dominant scientific explanation of diversification in nature.^[18] In 1871, he examined human evolution and sexual selection in *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, followed by *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872). His research on plants was published in a series of books, and in his final

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Darwin, c. 1854, when he was preparing *On the Origin of Species*^[4]

Born	Charles Robert Darwin 12 February 1809 Shrewsbury, England
Died	19 April 1882 (aged 73) Down, Kent, England
Resting place	Westminster Abbey
Alma mater	University of Edinburgh Christ's College, Cambridge (BA, 1831; MA, 1836) ^[5]
Known for	<i>The Voyage of the Beagle</i> <i>On the Origin of Species</i> <i>The Descent of Man</i>
Spouse	Emma Wedgwood (m. 183
Children	10
Parents	Robert Darwin Susannah Wedgwood
Awards	FRS (1839) ^[1] Royal Medal (1853) ^[2] Wollaston Medal (1859) ^[2] Copley Medal (1864) ^[2]