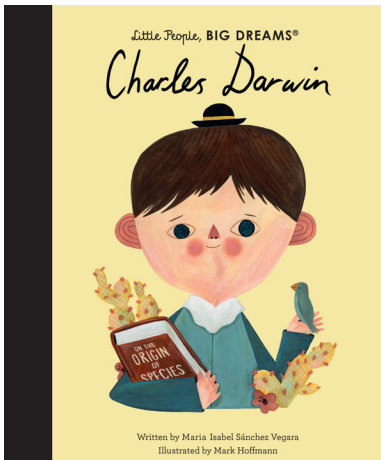


# Little People, BIG DREAMS™

## TEACHERS' GUIDE



Charles Darwin

Little People, BIG DREAMS™

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Charles Darwin was born in England in 1809. As a child, he loved nature and exploring. With some encouragement from a professor, he ended up on a voyage of discovery around the world. During his voyage, he discovered new species of plants and animals and collected fossils. Using what he learned about how animals adapted to survive over 20 years of research, Darwin published his famous book *On the Origin of Species*. Charles Darwin is remembered as the most important naturalist in history, and he is still influencing science today.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS IN THIS UNIT

1. Where did Charles's love of asking questions about the world come from?
2. How did Charles's time on the HMS Beagle impact his life and work?
3. What did Charles discover about plant and animal species that shocked the world?
4. What was the name of Charles's famous book?
5. Why is Charles a big dreamer who we should all admire?

### CLASSROOM DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Charles wanted to find out more about the secret life of the nature that was all around him (p. 3). Have the students sit in a circle and share what they are curious about in the world. Create a hand signal together that students can use during the discussion if someone shares a curiosity that they also wonder about.
2. In medical school, Charles learned that being a doctor was probably not a good career for him because he couldn't stand the sight of blood (p. 6). He had to change his plan of what he was going to do. Ask the students to share what they want to do when they grow up, but also ask them what a second option could be if they must change course like Charles did.
3. Charles discovered how the process of evolution works (p. 12), and part of human evolution is that we developed brains. Discuss with the students all the amazing things that our brains help us to do. Ask them to share what they are most proud of their brain for—perhaps helping them learn to read? Write? Ride a bike? Our brain is such an important organ!

4. When Charles wrote about evolution, nothing like that had ever been written about before (p. 11). That's why it was called "revolutionary." Charles had to be brave to write something like that. Ask the students to share about a time when they were brave. What did they do? How did they feel before, during, and after doing it?
5. On the Origin of Species, Charles's book about his findings, is still considered one of the most important books ever written (p. 14). Ask the students to share about books that are very important to them. What makes them special? What do they like about the book(s)?

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. Wonder Journals: After the students have taken part in the classroom discussion about their curiosities (Classroom Discussion Topic 1), provide them with a piece of paper or a journal in which they can continue to wonder. Remind them that Charles was curious about the world around him, so they should think about all of the different parts of their life and day to see what makes them wonder. They can write or draw about their wonderings in their journals.
2. Charles traveled to many places to study nature and learn about new species of plants and animals, including Africa, South America, and Australia (p. 7). Prior to this activity, print out pictures of three of Darwin's most famous discoveries—the giant tortoise, the blue-footed booby, and the red-lipped batfish. On the day of the activity, show the students the animal pictures and allow them to pick one to research further. Provide books or take a trip to the school library to learn more. Students can draw a picture of their chosen animal and share the three most interesting facts they learned.
3. On pg. 9, we see Charles sketching the different species of birds that he studied on the Galápagos Islands. He discovered that the birds with pointed beaks ate insects, and those with curved beaks ate fruit. Provide the students with various art materials and have them draw themselves as a bird. If they would want to eat bugs as a bird, have them draw a pointed beak. If they would prefer to eat fruit, have them draw a curved beak. They can use their creativity to design the rest of the bird to look however they want based on evolutionary needs and what would help them survive as a bird in their chosen environment.
4. Exploring and Discovering Nature Day: Before the activity, gather a variety of science tools like magnifying glasses and microscopes. Have them set up in the classroom and explain to the students that they are going to be nature scientists. Take them outside and have them gather materials from nature like leaves, flowers, pinecones, acorns, etc. Bring the nature materials in and use the science tools to examine them close-up. What do the scientists notice? What do they learn?
5. Charles discovered natural selection when he found that the animals best suited for their environments were the ones that survived. Examples on p. 13 include the fastest rabbit or the smartest fox. Generate a list of characteristics that animals are known for, such as those two provided in the book and more that you come up with together. Other examples might be wise like an owl or silly like a monkey. Have students compare themselves to an animal using the simile, "I am \_\_\_\_\_ like a \_\_\_\_\_." They can draw an accompanying picture and share with their classmates why they chose that particular animal or characteristic to describe themselves.

