

GRADES K-4: Preparing for Your Visit

The following activities are designed to help you and your students make the most of your visit to the *Darwin* exhibition.

Darwin's Words: Read this anecdote from Darwin's life aloud to your students:

"One day, on tearing off some old bark, I saw two rare beetles, and seized one in each hand. Then I saw a third and new kind, which I could not bear to lose, so I popped the one which I held in my right hand into my mouth. Alas! it ejected some intensely acrid fluid, which burnt my tongue so that I was forced to spit the beetle out, which was lost, as was the third one."

—Charles Darwin, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin*

Follow up with questions such as:

- What does this story tell you about the kind of person Darwin was?
- Why was he so keen on collecting all three beetles?
- What do you think Darwin learned from the experience?

Remind your students that putting any specimen of plant or animal in their mouths is neither safe nor necessary for scientific collection and observation.

Observation Activity: Hand out clipboards and paper and take your class for a walk outside to look for living things. Ask questions such as, What is a living thing? Where might we find them? How could we record what we find? Using pictures or words, ask students to describe every living thing they see, hear, or smell. Back in the classroom, talk about what students found, where, and why. What connections can students make between what they found and what those species need to survive?

Internet Activity: Direct your students to visit the Animals, Adaptation, & the Galapagos/Science Explorations website (<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/explorations/adaptation/>). The Level I activity engages students in one of the most important scientific skills—observation—and includes an online interactive and off-line writing exercise. Encourage students to keep a field journal (as a class, or individually) while they complete the activities on the website.

Voyage of the *Beagle*: Print out and make copies of a map of the *Beagle* voyage found at <http://www.amnh.org/education/resources/rfl/pdf/beaglevoyage.pdf>. Give each of your students a copy of the map to take with them to the Museum. While at the exhibition, ask them to label the stops on the map with the name of the country, and the year Darwin arrived there. Have them pick three stops and describe the observations he made at each place.

Reference:

- **University of California Museum of Paleontology:** Understanding Evolution for Teachers (<http://evolution.berkeley.edu/evosite/evohome>)

Welcome to the DARWIN EXHIBITION

Complete the activities below as you walk through the exhibition. You will need a pen or pencil and a hard surface to write on.

For the Love of Beetles:

As a child, Darwin loved to collect beetles. He was amazed by how many different kinds there were. Pick any two beetles from the *Young Naturalist* or *A Trip Around the World* sections, and draw them in the boxes on the right. Then, answer the questions below the boxes. Don't forget to write the correct name of your beetle specimens!

Name: _____

Name: _____

How are these two beetles different? _____

How are these two beetles similar? _____

Treasure Hunt for Tools: When you walk in, you'll see a magnifying glass that Darwin used. How many other tools can you find in the exhibit? Describe three of them and what you think Darwin used them for.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

It's Alive! Choose a live animal and draw it on the other side of this page. Pick two features of the animal (such as eyes or claws) and write about how you think they help the animal survive.

Save the Insects! Explore the "Nowhere to Hide" interactive in the last room of the exhibition.

- Which insects survive when the leaves are green? _____
- What happens to these insects when you change the color of the leaves? Why? _____
