



TeachersFirst READING TREKS

Charles Darwin's Around-the-World Adventure

Teacher Guide

Access Reading
Trek Map

Grade Level & Content Areas

Ages: 5–7

Grades: K–2 (read-aloud)

Reading Level: 5th grade

Lexile Measure: AD840L

Guided Reading Level: U

Developmental Reading

Assessment (DRA): 44

Content Areas: English/language arts, reading, literature, and social studies (including geography and history) and biology (including ecosystems and evolution).

Synopsis of Book

Author and artist Jennifer Thermes tells Charles Darwin's story in this picture book, which includes maps embedded in the illustrations. After some background on his childhood, the story follows Charles Darwin's five-year voyage aboard the HMS *Beagle*, a British tall ship that set sail from England in 1831 and didn't return to its home country until 1836. Over those five years, Darwin travels aboard the HMS *Beagle* as the ship's crew explores and charts the lands and seas of Europe, South America, Australia, and Africa. Along the way, Darwin studies land formations and how they've changed over time and collects plant and animal specimens to send back to England, many of which are featured in the illustrations.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for K–5

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 2: TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS

National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts

- CREATING
- RESPONDING

Next Generation Science Standards

- Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity

Social Justice Standards

- Identity
- Diversity

Using a TeachersFirst® Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks create a virtual field trip of resources about a piece of literature or a text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to the contents of a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this teacher guide and the accompanying [Reading Trek map](#) as you and your students explore this book. And, if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

Using This Reading Trek in Class

Below is a list of ideas for how to use this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book to the class on an interactive whiteboard using the [Reading Trek map](#) and highlighting its various layers.
2. Identify the biomes Darwin visits, considering distinct characteristics such as climate, location by continent, and examples of the flora and fauna found there. Students can work in pairs or small groups to research and create a slide for the specific location they chose. Encourage students to use Stickies.io ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to share information within their group. Upload completed slides to create a presentation. Find world and regional maps to use as backgrounds on Printable World Maps ([TeachersFirst review](#)).
3. Discuss social equality on board a tall ship during the early 1800s. Create a mind map of each crew member's chores and responsibilities using Superstructures ([TeachersFirst review](#)), with the crew member in the center. Suggested crew members include the captain, quartermaster, sailing master, pilot, engineer, first mate, boatswain, gunner, carpenter, deckhand, powder monkey, cook, steward, and cabin boy. The HMS *Beagle*'s designated crew, as part of the British Navy, included 10 officers and 4 midshipmen,

38 seamen and boys, and 8 marines; another 8 individuals including Darwin, also set sail on this excursion as supernumeraries.

4. View videos about wildlife from the Galapagos Islands, such as “[Greatest Animals of the Galapagos | Awesome 8](#)”, “[Galapagos Islands National Geographic Expeditions \(Ecuador\)](#)”, and “[World Wildlife Fund: The Galapagos](#)”. Students can create trading cards featuring

animals that live there using Trading Card Creator ([TeachersFirst review](#)).

5. Discuss adaptations for survival as compared to variations. Students can sort traits into the two categories either physically using pictures on paper or digitally using the Manipulatives Template on Flippity ([TeachersFirst review](#)).

Extension Activities:

1. Explore watercolor paints and watercolor pencils on both standard paper and watercolor paper. Jennifer Thermes encourages children to enjoy the process of making art without worrying about the finished product. This activity can be done as a team activity with the art educator.
2. Match animals to the many habitats visited in the story while playing the *Habitats* game ([TeachersFirst review](#)).
3. Sketch a collection of plants growing naturally in an open area. Use the Google Lens app ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to identify a plant using an uploaded photo. After verifying that the

plant is safe to touch, collect a leaf specimen, press it to preserve it, and dry it. Research the plant's past and current uses, habitats, and color variations.

4. Have students brainstorm variations between them, their siblings, and their parents. Students can create a Venn diagram using Vizzlo ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to show specific traits, such as hair and eye color and handedness, compared with a particular sibling or parent; if a blood relative is unknown or unavailable, the student might choose a famous individual and their relative.

Helpful Resources

From TeachersFirst:

- [TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps](#)
- [TeachersFirst Review of Google My Maps](#)
- [OK2Ask: Building Background Knowledge with Reading Treks](#)
- [OK2Ask: No Passport Required: Cross-Curricular Learning Journeys with Google My Maps](#)

Other Resources:

- [Jennifer Thermes](#)
- [Meet Jennifer Thermes](#)
- [American Museum of Natural History | Darwin Exhibition](#)
- [The Voyage of the Beagle](#)
- [A to Z Animals](#)
- [Understanding Evolution](#)
- [Charles Darwin and the *Beagle*: how the voyage transformed our understanding of the world](#)
- [Life Has a History](#)
- [Darwin in Patagonia](#)
- [Variation of Traits](#)
- [Evidence of Common Ancestry and Diversity](#)
- [Natural Selection](#)
- [Timeline of Evolutionary Thought](#)
- [Galapagos Island Animals: Where, When, and How to Spot Them](#)
- [Puffin Resource Pack on *Origin of the Species*](#)
- [Darwin's Fantastical Voyage Correspondence Pack](#)