

Today, we are going to find out about a scientist who was interested in the world around him...

Article 29

Your education should develop your respect for the natural world



Little Charles lived with his family in Shrewsbury, England, at a time when people didn't know much about the secret life of nature. Had worms always crawled on the ground? He wanted to find out!





Back then, many teachers told their students that animals and plants had appeared on Earth all at once, in the blink of an eye. Could this be possible? Somehow, Charles was not convinced...



Questioning things was natural for the Darwins. They were a family of scientists who thought outside the box. Charles' grandfather was a well-known plant expert and his father was a doctor who hoped his son might follow in his footsteps.



Charles entered medical school but he couldn't stand the sight of blood! So he switched subjects and continued to read and learn all about plants, animals and nature.

One day, he received an invitation to join a scientific expedition to the coasts of Africa, South America and Australia. The HMS Beagle left port during Christmas in 1831. It was a chance for Charles to see the world and finally study new species!



Soon, he started noticing how plants and animals changed from place to place. In Brazil, he found the remains of an animal that had lived thousands of years ago and was similar to other mammals he knew well.

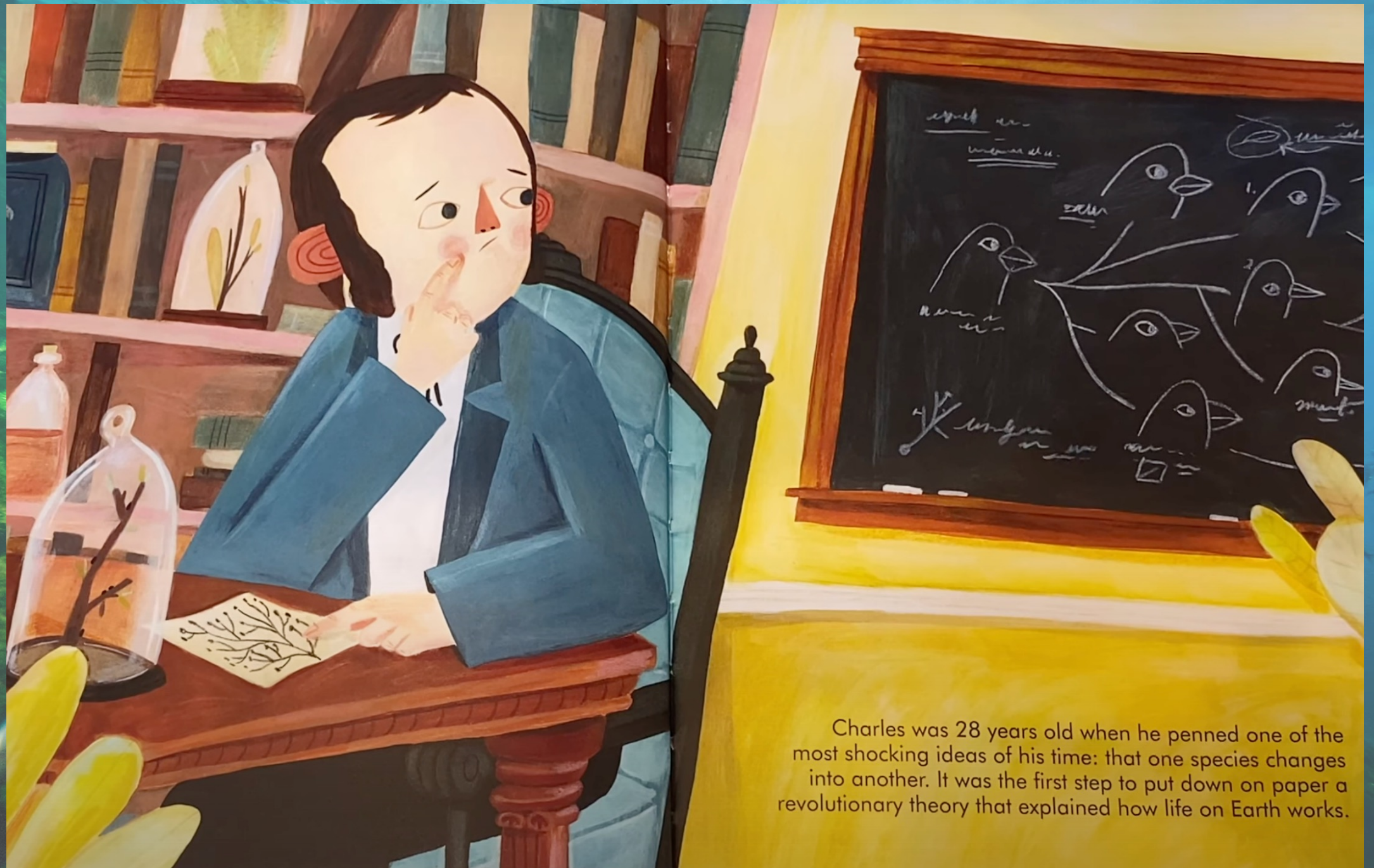


On the Galápagos Islands, he met dozens of families of finches and mockingbirds. Those who ate insects had pointed beaks, while those who loved fruits had curved beaks. 'What if these species shared the same ancestor?' Charles thought.



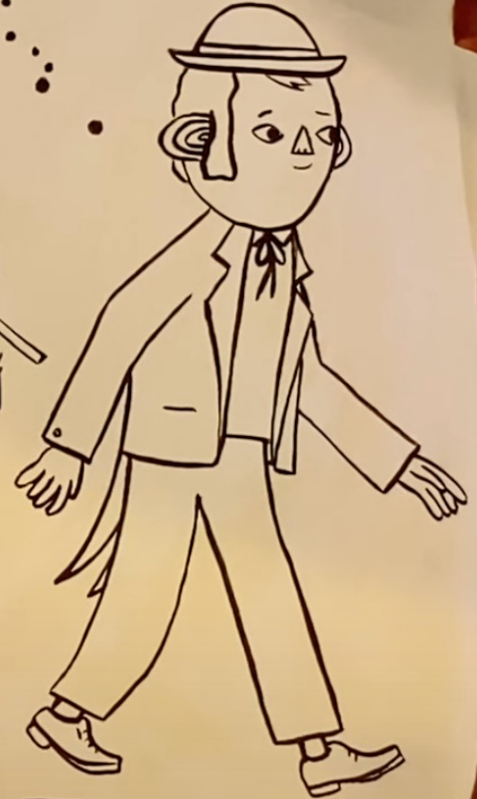


After five years travelling the world, Charles began to realise that plant and animal species were not fixed, as everyone thought. He formed the idea that they had slowly changed to adapt to the place in which they lived.



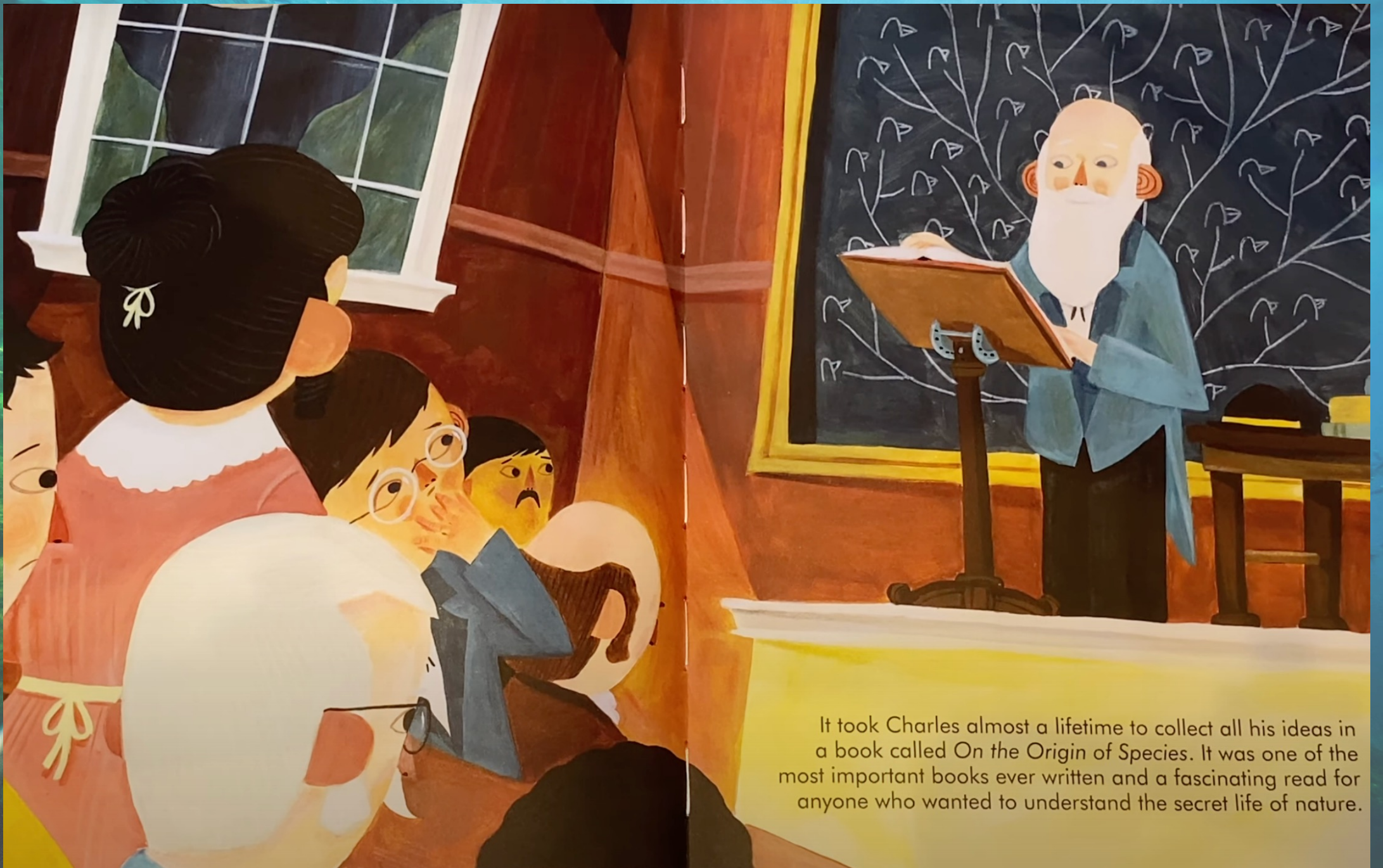
Charles was 28 years old when he penned one of the most shocking ideas of his time: that one species changes into another. It was the first step to put down on paper a revolutionary theory that explained how life on Earth works.

Over time, all living beings eventually become new species. This process happens through tiny little changes over thousands of years. We call it 'evolution', and Charles had just discovered its secret mechanism.



Charles's discovery was called 'natural selection': nature rewards those that adapt best to their environment. The fastest rabbit, the smartest fox, or the owl with the best eyesight would survive in the wild and live to make many more animals like them.

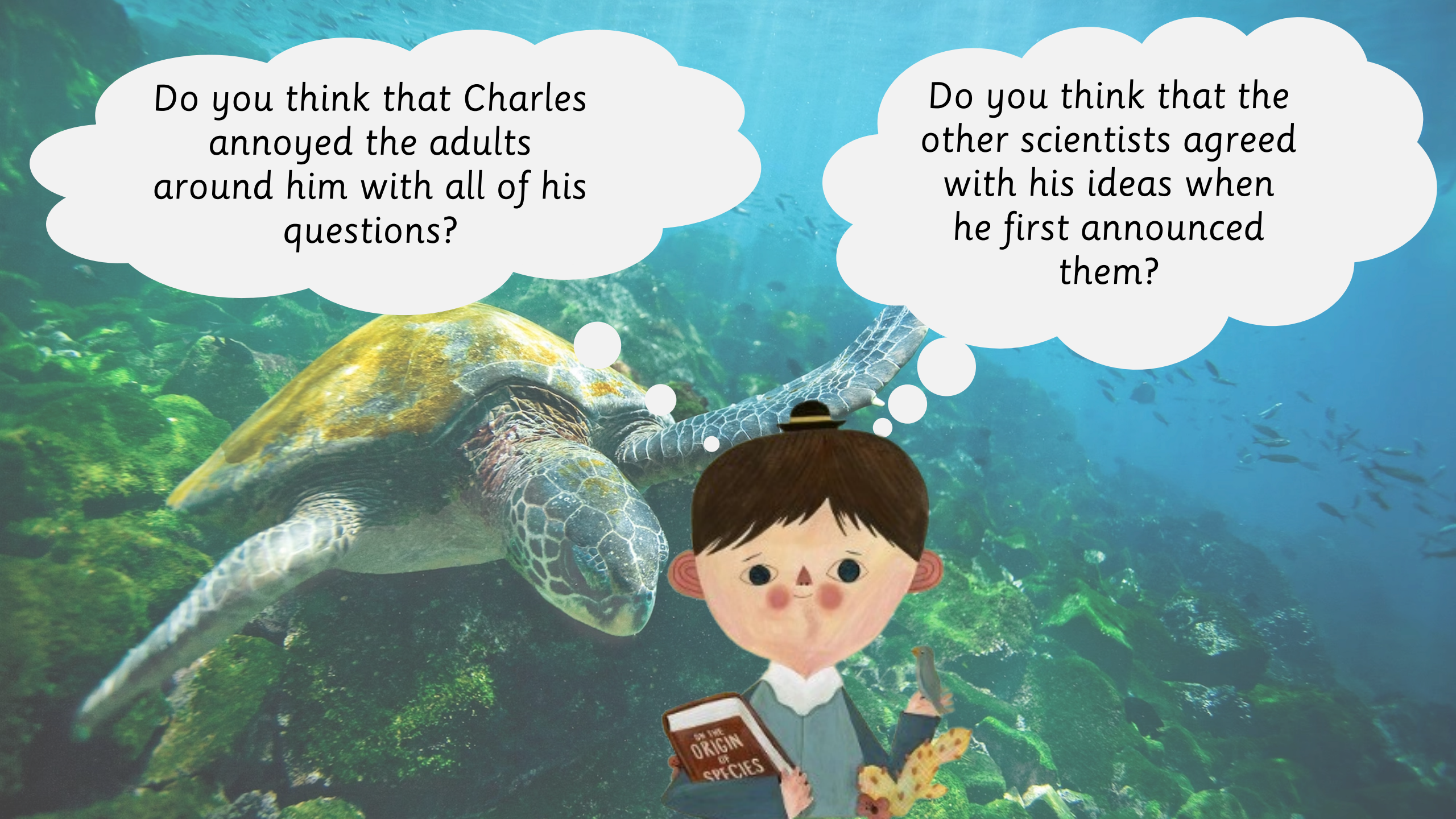




It took Charles almost a lifetime to collect all his ideas in a book called *On the Origin of Species*. It was one of the most important books ever written and a fascinating read for anyone who wanted to understand the secret life of nature.

And since then, the latest discoveries in science are informed by Charles – the most important naturalist in history. The bold boy who understood that knowledge takes more courage than ignorance... but the truth is always worth it.





Do you think that Charles annoyed the adults around him with all of his questions?

Do you think that the other scientists agreed with his ideas when he first announced them?



School Reflection

This is our school,
Let peace dwell here,

Let the rooms be full of contentment.

Let love abide here,
Love of one another,
Love of mankind,
Love of life itself.
Let us remember

That as many hands build a house,

So many hearts make a school

Help us to learn, play and share together.

We hope our school will be a place of great discovery, adventure and creativity.

May it be a place where we love to learn and where we learn to love,

A place where everyone is respected, and all are deeply valued.