

# **Children's Books about Evolution and Charles Darwin**

## **An Annotated Bibliography in Honor of Darwin's 200th Birthday**

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Compiled by:  
**Charlie's Playhouse**  
Evolution for kids!  
[www.charliesplayhouse.com](http://www.charliesplayhouse.com)

<b>About This Bibliography .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Index to Starred Books.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Recent and Forthcoming Books .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Published 2008 or 2009.	
<b>Cartoons, Storybooks, Pop-ups and Romps through Evolution.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Published 1990 to 2007.	
<b>Project and Activity Books on Evolution .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Published 1990 to 2007.	
<b>Straight Non-fiction Presentations of Evolution.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Published 1990 to 2007.	
<b>Human Evolution.....</b>	<b>30</b>
Published 1990 to 2007.	
<b>Darwin Biographies (Standalone).....</b>	<b>33</b>
Published 1990 to 2007.	
<b>Darwin Biographies (Volumes within Series) .....</b>	<b>36</b>
Published 1990 to 2007.	
<b>Books in Spanish .....</b>	<b>43</b>
Published any year.	
<b>Books Published before 1990 .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Books about Observing the World Carefully, as Darwin Did.....</b>	<b>51</b>
Not necessarily about the natural world or even science, but about the power of observing and understanding our surroundings.	

## About This Bibliography

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Dear Kids, Readers, Parents,  
Librarians, Teachers, Darwin Fans,  
and Prehistoric Creatures:

Here at Charlie's Playhouse we love evolution, natural selection, and Charles Darwin.

We also love books. As Darwin's 200th birthday approached, we thought it would be friendly to make an annotated bibliography of our collection of about thirty children's books about evolution. As we looked into it, we found a raft of books missing from our collection, along with at least nine new books scheduled for release in 2009. We've listed all 89 of our finds here.

Here's how we chose them. Books had to be targeted to ages fifteen or under and squarely focused on evolution or Darwin. Fictionalized accounts were welcome. We excluded books about dinosaurs because they are just too numerous and usually don't even bear on evolution. We excluded books on creationism or intelligent design for the same reasons. Within these constraints, we hope to present a truly comprehensive list, including older books. If you know of a book that we've overlooked, please let us know.

We give our view of every book we've read, and have flagged our top twelve favorites with red stars. We've ordered all the

books we don't yet have on our bookshelf, so as they arrive we will add our reviews. (Check our blog for updates.) For each book we also include another review, usually from Publisher's Weekly, Booklist, or School Library Journal. Authors of these reviews are noted where possible. We don't necessarily agree with this other review, we just thought you'd like a second opinion. If we couldn't find a review, we included the publisher's description.

Nearly all of these books are available on Amazon.com, and some of the older ones on Alibris.com. The newer ones may be available at your local or chain bookstore, and of course your local library may have a good collection.

One last note. There's a final section of six highly selected, idiosyncratic books that we just love. They aren't necessarily about the natural world or even about science, but about the importance of observing our world carefully, as Darwin did.

So enjoy. Browse this bibliography, choose your books, and then pass it on to the next person who might like to celebrate Darwin with a good kid's book.

Take care,

Kate

Kate Miller, PhD  
President, Charlie's Playhouse  
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## Index to Starred Books

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### **New in 2009**

<b>Animals Charles Darwin Saw</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Darwin</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Evolution Revolution</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>One Beetle Too Many</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>The True Adventures of Charley Darwin</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>What Darwin Saw: The Journey That Changed the World</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>What Mr. Darwin Saw</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Young Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the Beagle</b> .....	<b>6</b>

---

### **Top 12 Picks**

<b>The Beast in You!</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Bones, Brains and DNA</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>A Cartoon History of Earth (2 books in series)</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>A Cartoon Prehistory of Life Long Before Dinosaurs (2 books in series)</b> .....	<b>17 &amp; 18</b>
<b>Eyewitness: Evolution</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Inside the Beagle with Charles Darwin</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>The Kingfisher Book of Evolution</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Life on Earth: The Story of Evolution</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Optical Allusions</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Our Family Tree: An Evolution Story</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Prehistoric World</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>The Sandwalk Adventures</b> .....	<b>15</b>

---

### **Recession Busters**

<b>Charles Darwin: On the Trail of Evolution (Beyond the Horizons Series)</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>Evolution (Let's Read and Find Out Series)</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>The Voyage of the Beagle (Great Journeys Series)</b> .....	<b>49</b>

## Recent and Forthcoming Books

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Published 2008 or 2009. Listed in order of youngest reader's age and then author's name.

**Ages 4-8**

### **Charles Darwin**

By Alan Gibbons and Leo Brown, Kingfisher, 2008.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Publisher's Description:**

Ten-year-old Henry has just gotten the job of his life—assistant to Charles Darwin on a voyage of the HMS Beagle. He will help Darwin collect all the creatures that fly, scuttle, and leap on this expedition to faraway lands. Little does he know that it will be one of the greatest scientific expeditions of all time! As the trip gets under way, Henry records everything he sees and does in his diary, providing readers with a firsthand account of the famous adventure. Fictionally told but based on facts, Charles Darwin puts an innovative spin on the story and accomplishments of the most famous naturalist in history, just in time for Darwin's 200th birthday.

**Ages 4-8**



**New in 2009**

### **What Mr. Darwin Saw**

By Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom, Frances Lincoln Children's Books, March 1, 2009.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Publisher's Description:**

In 1831, at only 22 years old, Darwin was offered the position of Naturalist on HMS Beagle's world voyage. He was set to become a clergyman but returns after five years at sea an inspired genius. This book follows the journey of HMS Beagle, showing life on-board the ship for Darwin, the captain, crew and the expedition's artist. The reader sees Darwin discovering and observing insect life in Brazil, fossils in Argentina, earthquakes in Chile and turtles in the Galapagos Islands. The reader is therefore able to follow the steps which led to Darwin's inspired theory of evolution, while also showing the adventures and escapades he had during the voyage. A fascinating and colourful story of Darwin's life, this book also introduces young readers to one of the world's most important scientists and his discoveries. It concludes with a simple explanation of the theory of evolution. Written by an outstanding team in the field of children's non-fiction, this is a book to enlighten and inspire young readers.



**Ages 7-12**

**New in 2009**

### **One Beetle Too Many: The Extraordinary Adventures of Charles Darwin**

By Kathryn Lasky and Matthew Trueman, Candlewick, 2009.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Publishers Weekly Review:**

Distilling tough concepts into light, conversational prose, Lasky (John Muir) gives middle-graders a just-right introduction to Charles Darwin. In colorful, cut-to-the-chase language ( "He found anatomy class disgusting, and he once rushed out of an operating room, unable to stand the sight of blood"), she highlights Darwin's insatiable curiosity, his failures at school and his voyage aboard the Beagle. The author invites readers to follow Darwin's reasoning and the questions that led up to his theory of evolution. Taking advantage of the large trim size, Trueman (Noah's Mittens) up-ends perspective with multilayered mixed-media illustrations; mostly paint, these also incorporate bits of flowers and weeds as well as string, paper and fabric. Like the text, they aim for a homely, friendly style, as when young Darwin and his brother are shown gleefully exploding things in their homemade lab. Highly accessible.

**Ages 9-12**

### **Charles Darwin: Naturalist (Great Minds of Science Series)**

By Margaret Jean Anderson, Enslow Publishers, 2008.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Series Review From School Library Journal:**

These two introductory biographies will attract students because of their large print; manageable size and length; open format; and numerous black-and-white photographs, maps, and charts. Both books clearly explain their subjects' theories and contributions. An added bonus is the inclusion of age-appropriate suggestions for scientific activities, such as making a thermometer (Curie) or a worm zoo (Darwin). Such projects are not included in similar titles, such as Carol Greene's Marie Curie (Childrens, 1984). The writing, however, especially in Charles Darwin, does not flow quite as freely as that in Greene's work. Rather, Anderson and Poynter write in a style that tends toward short, choppy, declarative sentences that occasionally lack variety of structure, a relatively minor problem in two useful resources. Review by Phyllis Graves, Creekwood Middle School, Kingwood, TX

**Ages 9-12**



**New in 2009**

## **Young Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the Beagle**

By Ruth Ashby and Suzanne Duranceau, Peachtree Publishers, 2009.

### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

### **Publisher's Description:**

In 1831, young adventurer and nature enthusiast Charles Darwin set sail on a remarkable five-year voyage that changed the study of biology forever. In this fascinating new book, award-winning author Ruth Ashby shares the story of Darwin's famous journey aboard the British navy ship, the Beagle, which led to the development of his theories of evolution and natural selection. Ashby's lively account follows the naturalist's exciting trip around the world through seasickness, a life-threatening illness, and even an earthquake as he explores South America, the Cape Verde Islands, Tahiti, and the Galapagos Islands. During his travels, Darwin meets indigenous peoples and carefully collects and catalogs plants, fossils, birds, mammals, and insects. Darwin's observations of the distribution and diversity of plant and animal life ultimately leads to the development of his theories on evolution and the publication of *ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES* in 1859. Readers will be inspired by Darwin's transformation from talented but mediocre schoolboy into a remarkable scientist as they read about the revolutionary voyage that forever changed the world of biology.

**Ages 9-12**



**New in 2009**

## **Animals Charles Darwin Saw**

By Sandra Markle and Zina Saunders, Chronicle Books, 2009.

### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

### **Publisher's Description:**

A continuation of the "Explorers" series by award-winning author Sandra Markle, "Animals Charles Darwin Saw" features the many distinct creatures Darwin encountered during his worldwide voyage as a ship's naturalist. Readers will learn how the animals Darwin studied have had a dramatic effect on life today.



**Ages 9-12**

**New in 2009**

### **Darwin**

By Alice B. McGinty and Mary Azarian, Houghton Mifflin, 2009.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

#### **Publisher's Description:**

Filled with the fascinating words of Charles Darwin—designed as handwritten entries—this picture book biography reveals the assembling of a profound idea: the survival of the fittest. Two hundred years after his birth, 150 years after the publication of his *ORIGIN OF SPECIES*, this thought-provoking, splendidly illustrated account invites us into the private thoughts, hopes and fears of a soul who forever changed the way we see the world.



**Ages 9-12**

**New in 2009**

### **What Darwin Saw: The Journey That Changed the World**

By Rosalyn Schanzer, National Geographic Children's Books, 2009.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

#### **Publisher's Description:**

In 1831 a 22-year-old naturalist named Charles Darwin stepped aboard the HMS Beagle as a traveling companion of an equally youthful sea captain called Robert FitzRoy. The Beagle's round-the-world surveying journey lasted five long years on the high seas. The young Darwin noticed everything, and proved himself an avid and detailed chronicler of daily events on the Beagle and onshore. *What Darwin Saw* takes young readers back to the pages of his journals as they travel alongside Darwin and read his lively and awestruck words about the wonders of the world.

We follow Darwin's voyage, looking over his shoulder as he explores new lands, asks questions about the natural world, and draws groundbreaking conclusions. We walk in his footsteps, collecting animals and fossils, experiencing earthquakes and volcanoes, and meeting people of many cultures and languages. We examine his opinions on life in all its forms. We consider the thoughts of this remarkable scientist, who poured his observations and research into his expansive theories about life on Earth. In this exciting and educational account, Charles Darwin comes alive as an inspirational model for kids who think and question the world around them.

**Ages 9-12**



**New in 2009**

### **Evolution Revolution**

By Robert Winston, DK Children, 2009.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

#### **Publisher's Description:**

The award-winning series that brought young readers What Makes Me Me?, Think of a Number, and Can You Feel the Force? now reveals the story behind "the greatest idea in history." Page by page, the book answers questions such as "Why do tigers have stripes?" with entertaining text, full-color photographs, and all the boldness and innovation that define this series.

**Ages 9-12**

### **The Evolution of the Horse Coloring Book**

By Patricia J. Wynne, Dover, 2008.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

#### **Publisher's Description:**

Everyone who loves horses will be amazed to see the many forms these magnificent animals have taken since they first appeared over 50 million years ago. Kids and adults will delight in coloring the 30 beautifully illustrated images, which include the familiar animals of today, ancient breeds of the Eocene and Miocene eras, and even the very first horse, which was no bigger than a house cat!



**Ages 10-adult**

 **Top 12 Picks**

### **Optical Allusions**

By Jay Hosler, Active Synapse, 2008.

#### **Reiew from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Jay Hosler is nothing short of a national treasure. This book, like *The Sandwalk Adventures* (p.15), is an absolute delight and can be appreciated on many levels. Get a copy and pass it around the family. You'll all get something out of it, including belly laughs. Truly excellent.

#### **Publisher's Description:**

OPTICAL ALLUSIONS is the cure for all those clamoring for a painstakingly researched, scientifically accurate, eye-themed comic book adventure. WRINKLES THE WONDER BRAIN has lost his bosses' eye and now he has to search all of human imagination for it. Along the way, he confronts biology head on and accidentally learns more about eyes and the evolution of vision than he thought possible. And, as if a compelling story with disembodied talking brains, shape-changing proteins and giant robot eyes wasn't enough, each tale is followed by a fully illustrated, in-depth exploration of the ideas introduced in the comic story. Following in the tradition of the author's first two books, *Clan Apis* and *The Sandwalk Adventures*, *Optical Allusions* uses humor and adventure to weave an unforgettable story about the wonders of seeing.

**Ages 12-adult**

 **New in 2009**

### **Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith**

By Deborah Heiligman, Holt, 2008.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

#### **Publishers Weekly Review:**

This rewarding biography of Charles Darwin investigates his marriage to his cousin Emma Wedgwood. Heiligman (the *Holidays Around the World* series) has good reason for this unusual approach: as deeply as they loved each other, Emma believed in God, and Charles believed in reason. Embracing the paradoxes in her subjects' personalities, the author unfolds a sympathetic and illuminating account, bolstered by quotations from their personal writings as well as significant research into the historical context. We meet Charles as he weighs the pros and cons of wedded life—but then seeks his father's advice (Darwin père urges him to conceal his religious doubts); Emma becomes a more fervent believer after the death of her favorite (and more religious) sister. Heiligman writes for motivated readers, and her style can be discursive (mention of a letter can introduce a few sentences on the British postal system). Her book allows readers not only to understand Darwin's ideas, but to appreciate how Emma's responses tempered them. Eight pages of photos, not seen by PW.

For more fun stuff on evolution and Darwin, visit [www.charliesplayhouse.com](http://www.charliesplayhouse.com)



**Ages 12-adult**

**New in 2009**

## **The True Adventures of Charley Darwin**

By Carolyn Meyer, Houghton Mifflin, 2009.

### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

### **Publishers Weekly Review:**

Focusing on Charles Darwin's youth, this historical novel hooks readers with a revelatory opener: Darwin's nose almost kept him off the Beagle—the captain believed that facial features indicated character and the 22-year-old Darwin's honker bespoke a lack of energy and determination. Entertaining her audience throughout, Meyer (Mary, Bloody Mary) keeps Charley likable and easy to relate to, from his hatred of school food and fear of bullies to his anxiety over choosing a career. The pacing is particularly good, and readers get a full sense of Darwin's relationships and his joy in his discoveries. A well-told story that will appeal to all readers, not just those drawn to science.

## **Cartoons, Storybooks, Pop-ups and Romps through Evolution**

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Published 1990 to 2007. Listed in order of youngest reader's age and then author's name.

### **Ages 3-adult**

#### **The Story of Everything (Pop-Up Book)**

By Neil Layton, Hodder Children's Books, 2006.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

#### **Publisher's Description:**

This pop-up book is literally larger than life! Neil's unique perspective on the beginnings of the world, the Big Bang theory and evolution presents LIFE in a format accessible to even the very young - a perfect gift book for all. With pops, flaps and tabs.

### **Ages 4-8**

#### **The Tree Of Life: The Wonders Of Evolution**

By Ellen Jackson and Judeanne Winter Wiley, Prometheus Books, 2004.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

We support any book that talks to kids this young about evolution, and this one has a few nice things to offer. But overall we prefer Our Family Tree (p. 12) or Stones and Bones (p. 30) for this age group.

#### **Publisher's Description:**

Lavishly illustrated, "The Tree of Life" captures the excitement and sweep of Darwin's famous theory in an easy-to-read, fun manner.

**Ages 4-8**

### **We're Sailing to Galapagos**

By Laurie Krebs and Grazia Restelli, Barefoot Books, 2007.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

#### **Review from School Library Journal:**

A colorfully garbed couple take readers on a jaunty journey to the Galapagos Islands. For each day of the week, the rhymed text introduces one of the islands' unique animals. The repetition of the chorus "We're sailing to Galapagos. I wonder who we'll see" encourages audience participation. The bright collages create striking vistas that will also enhance group sharing. The youngest listeners will enjoy the visit to giant tortoises, black iguanas, and blue-footed boobies before they sail home. Older readers can learn more about the animals and Charles Darwin's famous exploration by perusing the informative entries following the rhyming section. Krebs offers an excellent introduction to a unique set of islands and some of its rare inhabitants.

Review by Kathy Piehl, Minnesota State University, Mankato

**Ages 4-10**



**Top 12 Picks**

### **Our Family Tree: An Evolution Story**

By Lisa Westberg Peters and Lauren Stringer, Harcourt Children's Books, 2003.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This is one of our all-time absolute favorites. The illustrations are gorgeous, the language is warm, simple, and accessible, and the story gently leads readers through the history of life using a family trip to the beach as backdrop. Any collection of kids' books about evolution should start here. Truly excellent.

#### **Review from School Library Journal:**

Peters's simple text uses the "we/us" format to place Homo sapiens in the "family" of life at its very beginnings. "All of us," she states in the first sentence of the book, "are part of an old, old family," going back to Earth's beginnings. "We've changed a lot since then." Through a simple progression, amply bolstered by Stringer's striking, large acrylics, she traces "our" family tree from unicellular organisms through amphibians, therapsids, and early mammals to early primates, hominids, and our distinct "humanness" today. Enriched by two pages of additional data and a colorful time line, the whole is rounded out by carefully written author and illustrator notes. Review by Patricia Manning, formerly at Eastchester Public Library, NY

 **Ages 6-12**  
**Top 12 Picks**

### **The Dawn of Life (Cartoon History of the Earth Series)**

By Jacqui Bailey and Matthew Lilly, Kids Can Press, 2001.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

What's not to like about this playful romp through the history of life on Earth? Every single part of these "Cartoon History" books -- the easy illustrations, the light tone of the text, the scientific veracity, the dumb jokes -- resonates with us. This is exactly how we like to dazzle kids with evolution too! Truly excellent. This one covers the Cambrian to the end of the Permian, and the next volume (below) carries on from there.

#### **Series review from School Library Journal:**

With slang expressions and onomatopoeia such as "yep," "phew," "splat," "whoosh," "woweee," and "yoo-hoo" throughout, these humorous presentations will lose readers who hate personifications and comic-book art, but will engage those who find science too dry and perfunctory. Cartoon fans will fall for these over-the-edge presentations and find themselves understanding the basic concepts. Dialogue balloons, fact boxes, and paragraphs of text share space with several illustrations per page, offering information in bites rather than straight narration. Review by Nancy Call, Santa Cruz Public Libraries, Aptos, CA

 **Ages 6-12**  
**Top 12 Picks**

### **The Day of the Dinosaurs (Cartoon History of the Earth Series)**

By Jacqui Bailey and Matthew Lilly, A & C Black Publishers Ltd., 2002

#### **The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

What's not to like about this playful romp through the history of life on Earth? Every single part of these "Cartoon History" books -- the easy illustrations, the light tone of the text, the scientific veracity, the dumb jokes -- resonates with us. This is exactly how we like to dazzle kids with evolution too! Truly excellent. This one covers from the Permian extinction to the end of the Cretaceous.

#### **Series review from Booklist:**

Straightforward and lighthearted, these books in the Cartoon History of the Earth series use comic-style art and brief text to follow contemporary theory, from the Big Bang and how life developed on this planet to humans' spread across the planet and the beginnings of civilization and trade. The nicely designed books use bold caps and asterisked notes within the text, offering the added bits of information and explanation to help readers understand key points. With no more than six panels to the folio-sized page, there's no crowding. Fittingly, human beings are largely absent from the pictures in the first three volumes (a green hand directs readers to added notes), but rocks, bacteria, dinosaurs, and fish, all expressively drawn, provide plenty of commentary and a bit of humor in speech balloons. Children will want to begin at the beginning and carry right on through history. Review by Francisca Goldsmith

**Ages 6-12**



**Top 12 Picks**

### **Life on Earth: The Story of Evolution**

By Steve Jenkins, Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

#### **The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

A search for kids' books on evolution usually turns up this one first. It's hugely popular, and deservedly so. The paper collage illustrations are gorgeous and the text is accessible. The presentation of natural selection using a bunch of jumpy frogs is a perfect example of how the dense science of evolution can be distilled and presented to kids on their level. Excellent.

#### **Review from Booklist:**

It's tough to get children to imagine a world without television, let alone one without life, but this oversize picture book for older readers makes the overwhelming concept easier to grasp. The main text, in large type, outlines evolution in simple, clear terms: the principal theory of how life began, Darwin's contribution, how mutation and even extinction have contributed. Jenkins' paper-cut spot art, with captions in small type, provides most of the specifics. There's no sense of scale in his pictures; the bee and the rabbit are the same size. But his paper cuts are extraordinary all the same, jam-packed with pattern and variegated color. Some of the art is just flashy and gorgeous: a double-page spread filled to the edges with animals and plants (there's an identification key at the back); a spectacular spread showing 19 of the 300,000 beetle species. Other pictures greatly extend the text--among them, a full page comprising small coordinated pictures that dramatize the natural selection of frogs. But the last double-page spread is, perhaps, the best. Jenkins makes the history of evolution even more accessible by placing important events on a time-line ribbon that represents a 24-hour day. Clever, eye-catching, and extremely effective. Review by Stephanie Zvirin.

**Ages 7-10**

### **Evolve or Die (Horrible Science Series)**

By Phil Gates and Tony De Saulles, Scholastic, 1999.

#### **The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

A great book! Using humor and storytelling, it grabs kids and doesn't let go, taking them on a wild ride through the evolution of life, Darwin's story, and raging debates about evolutionary science. Sure to entrance even kids who don't take to science at first. Recommended.

#### **Publisher's Description:**

This reference book is filled with weird and wonderful facts about survival and extinction. Go back millions of years to find out about insects as big as birds and fish with teeth, why you could be related to a chimp, and which incredible creatures are still being discovered



Ages 7-adult

Top 12 Picks

## **The Sandwalk Adventures: An Adventure in Evolution Told in Five Chapters**

By Jay Hosler, Active Synapse, 2003.

### **The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Jay Hosler is nothing short of a national treasure. This book, like *Optical Allusions* (p. 9), is an absolute delight and can be appreciated on many levels. The characters of Darwin and the mites living in his eyebrow (yes, the mites in his eyebrow) are endearing and sympathetic. Get a copy and pass it around the family. You'll all get something out of it, including belly laughs. Truly excellent.

### **Publisher's Description:**

Try to imagine a conversation between Charles Darwin of and a follicle mite named Mara living in his left eyebrow. Having trouble? Well, don't worry, because Jay Hosler has imagined it for you. Not surprisingly, there are a few strange aspects of this relationship, but perhaps none stranger than Mara's belief that Mr. Darwin is a diety! Can Mr. Darwin convince Mara that he didn't create life and all the species of the world? He sure hopes so. Fortunately, he has an elegant explanation for how species are formed. It's called Natural Selection and Mr. Darwin is somewhat of an expert on the topic. Join this unlikely duo as they go around and around Mr. Darwin's thinking path, the Sandwalk, looking for understanding and adventure.

Ages 7-10

## **How Whales Walked into the Sea**

By Faith McNulty and Ted Rand, Scholastic, 1999.

### **The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This book does something extraordinary that kids really need. It presents the gradual evolution of a modern-day animal, with discussions of evolutionary pressures and adaptive behaviors that drove the slow changes in body structures over time. This is *exactly* the kind of compelling story we need to be telling our kids! Our only reservation is that the language is fairly dry -- we wish it were livelier. Recommended.

### **Review from School Library Journal:**

The ancestors of modern whales were definitely land dwellers, with four sturdy legs, a tail, furry coats, and a set of powerful jaws. Through a long process of evolution, their forelegs became flippers, their tails grew muscular flukes, and their hind legs disappeared from view to become vestigial skeletal remnants. Their nostrils moved to the tops of their heads, and their jaws grew different teeth or transformed them into sheets of filtering baleen. But their blood is still warm, they still nurse their young, and those vestigial hind limbs testify to their four-legged forebears. McNulty recounts this aeons-long conversion in a simply worded, informative text, including data on modern cetaceans and their lifestyles as well, and an added page of further details on six whale species. Rand's exuberant paintings rendered in acrylics, watercolors, and chalks are a perfect foil for the readable text, presenting accurate images. Review by Patricia Manning, formerly at Eastchester Public Library, NY

**Ages 7-10**

**From Lava to Life: The Universe Tells Our Earth's Story**

By Jennifer Morgan, Dawn Publications, 2003.

**The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Jennifer Morgan has produced a trilogy of books in which the Universe, like a kindly parental figure, writes a letter to the reader explaining where it and all life came from. The first book is about geology and so is not included in this bibliography. "Lava to Life" is the second book, and covers the initial appearance of life on Earth. The language is lyrical and the illustrations are colorful but both are sometimes abstracted and hard to make out.

**Publisher's Description:**

"Once upon a time" meets science in a children's picture book that tells the thrilling story of how life began on Earth. The second in a trilogy of Universe stories - the first being Born with a Bang: The Universe Tells Our Cosmic Story-- this book picks up the story with the first appearance of life on Earth. It's a thrilling story about how Earth triumphs over crisis to become bacteria, jellyfish, flowers . . . even dinosaurs! The author, Jennifer Morgan, studied evolutionary science and saw its storytelling possibilities when she explained it to her elementary-age son. Coupled with brilliant artwork by Dana Anderson, who also studied Cosmology, these books will intrigue children and adults alike with their storytelling style and colorful pages.

**Ages 7-10**

**Mammals Who Morph: The Universe Tells Our Evolution Story**

By Jennifer Morgan, Dawn Publications, 2006.

**The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Jennifer Morgan has produced a trilogy of books in which the Universe, like a kindly parental figure, writes a letter to the reader explaining where it and all life came from. The first book is about geology and so is not included in this bibliography. "Mammals Who Morph" is the third book, and covers the later evolution of life on Earth. The language is lyrical and the illustrations are colorful but both are sometimes abstracted and hard to make out.

**Review from School Library Journal:**

This follow-up to The Big Bang (2002) and From Lava to Life (2003, both Dawn) is the last in a trilogy in which the personified universe presents the history of our cosmos in letters to an Earthling. This one picks up at the dawn of the Age of Mammals and ends with present-day humans inhabiting a modern Earth. Enveloped in a New Age-ish aura, the chatty text (Wow! Humans tamed fire!) is accompanied by frequently swirling art that may not reach the intended audience. While evolution is used in the subtitle and appears in the afterword for adults, it is never defined, not even in the glossary; nor are the terms natural selection or morph. Review by Patricia Manning, formerly at Eastchester Public Library, NY.



**Ages 8-12**

**It's True! We Came from Slime**

By Ken McNamara and Andrew Plant, Annick Press, 2006.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Publisher's Description:**

The It's True! series of nonfiction feature breezy writing and quirky cartoons designed to capture and hold the interest of preteens. We Came from Slime looks at prehistoric animals from plant-like goo to mammal-like reptiles.



**Ages 9-12**

**Top 12 Picks**

**When Bugs Were Big, Plants Were Strange, and Tetrapods Stalked the Earth: A Cartoon Prehistory of Life Long Before Dinosaurs**

By Hannah Bonner, National Geographic Children's Books, 2004.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This and its companion volume (next page) offer a terrific tour of the history of life on Earth. A bit more serious and science-minded than the "Cartoon History of Earth" series (p. 13), this series still has a cheeky sense of humor amidst the generous and approachable illustrations and the straightforward text. Excellent.

**Review from School Library Journal:**

Bonner takes a lighthearted approach to a fascinating topic. The Carboniferous and Permian periods spanned 100 million years or so just before the better-known Mesozoic Era. The author describes many of the unusual plant and animal species from those times in a lively, conversational style. Cartoon illustrations decorate every page. Some of them are strictly informational, but most contain elements of humor as well. The facts and the fun work well together, and it's always clear which is which. Weather reports by well-dressed reptile ancestors, want ads for bug-eating amniotes, and pictures with word balloons are among the other comic features. The more straightforward drawings of the unusual creatures are clear and eye-catching, though not all include estimated size. A useful two-page illustrated time line gives a nice overview. Review by Steven Engelfried, Beaverton City Library, OR.



**Ages 9-12**

**Top 12 Picks**

## **When Fish Got Feet, Sharks Got Teeth, and Bugs Began to Swarm: A Cartoon Prehistory of Life Long Before Dinosaurs**

By Hannah Bonner, National Geographic Children's Books, 2007.

### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This and its companion volume (previous page) offer a terrific tour of the history of life on Earth. A bit more serious and science-minded than the "Cartoon History of Earth" series (p. 13), this series still has a cheeky sense of humor amidst the generous and approachable illustrations and the straightforward text. Excellent.

### **Review from Booklist:**

This picture-book-size title offers a lighthearted look at some of the earliest life-forms on Earth. As promised in the title, the information packed into the double-page spreads starts with the oceans already teeming with primitive life and stops long before the dinosaurs appear on the scene. The passing of hundreds of millions of years can't quite be captured with a turn of the page, but a creative time line, which manages to be funny with the insertion of a few jokes, will help kids put each time period into context. Also included in the back matter are a glossary, a pronunciation guide, and a skimpy index. The suggested resources prove disappointing; only one video and a few Web sites are mentioned, along with the advice to go forth and Google. Overall, though, Bonner creates an effective and fun introduction to a complicated subject. Review by Todd Morning.

**Ages 9-12**

## **Evolution (Discovery Channel School Science Series)**

By Lynn Brunelle, Margaret Carruthers, et al., Gareth Stevens Publishing, 2002.

### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

### **Review from School Library Journal:**

A fast, furious, and ultimately confusing trip through a millennia-long process. Starting with a brief explanation of evolution, this book races through an "interview" with a giraffe, a look at the elephant's evolutionary family tree, the "artificial selection" of the dog, Charles Darwin and the voyage of the Beagle, the Scopes trial, etc. Interspersed are color photos, diagrams, illustrations, maps, and several "investigations" to attempt and quick flashes of factoids in colorful boxes. Review by Patricia Manning, formerly at Eastchester Public Library, NY

**Ages 9-12**

## **I Wonder Why Fish Grew Legs (I Wonder Why Series)**

By Jackie Gaff, Kingfisher Books, 2001.

### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

### **Publisher's Description:**

The best-selling I Wonder Why series has always been the perfect place for children to find the answers to their questions. With their quirky style and informative text, these books are great for gripping the imagination and for developing reading skills. Designed to amuse and intrigue the young reader, I Wonder Why Fish Grew Legs answers all sorts of fascinating questions that children ask about prehistory. Illustrated with stunning, high-quality artwork, a wealth of information is backed up with fun facts and lively cartoons. When did life on Earth begin? What killed the dinosaurs? When were elephants as small as pigs? - discover the answer to these questions and much, much more.

**Ages 9 and up**

## **The Voyage of the Beetle**

By Anne H. Weaver and George Lawrence, University of New Mexico Press, 2007.

### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

### **Publisher's Description:**

Why are there so many different kinds, or species, of living things on earth, each uniquely fitted to its environment? For Charles Darwin, this question represented the "mystery of mysteries." Darwin first began to formulate an answer during a youthful voyage around the world on the H.M.S. Beagle from 1831 to 1835. Darwin's answer, known as the Theory of Natural Selection, changed the way we think about life on Earth.

In a clever twist, this beautifully illustrated and engaging account reveals that Darwin had help from an unlikely source: a beetle named Rosie, who possessed a very un-beetle-like urge to see the world. Rosie the Beetle accompanied Darwin on the now-famous voyage of the Beagle. Her lively, witty narrative describes how she took Darwin under her wing, providing clues and hints that guided his insights. The young reader is challenged to use the clues to solve the mystery before Darwin does.

For more fun stuff on evolution and Darwin, visit [www.charliesplayhouse.com](http://www.charliesplayhouse.com)

**Ages 10-adult**

**Planet Ocean: A Story of Life, the Sea, and Dancing to the Fossil Record**

By Bradford Matsen and Ray Troll, Ten Speed Press, 1995.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Ray Troll's paleontological art is engaging, accurate, and very funny. This book is chock full of Troll's illustrations, comics, one-liners, and interesting sidebars, which make it great for an afternoon's browsing. The text is fairly dense and likely too much for ten-year-olds, but the rest of it will delight paleontology fans, even those younger than ten.

**Review from Library Journal:**

Offering a combination of evolution and paleontology with a large dose of extinction, the authors state that "650 million years ago, give or take a few million years, the sea was mother and father to us all" and that we all have a vertebrate in common from the Pikaia, a walking fish. They thus poke some fun at both creationists and evolutionists. Their writing is clear and entertaining, and the illustrations are similar to their earlier Shocking Fish Tales (Ten Speed Pr., 1993), but Planet Ocean has more variety. Unfortunately, the layout of the illustrations sometimes interrupts the text. Interesting and appealing aesthetically, this book is nevertheless hard to place. The illustrations are art, while the text is closer to science. For larger collections with an interest in current evolutionary theory for the lay reader. Review by Jean E. Crampon, Hancock Biology & Oceanography Lib., Univ. of Southern California, Los Angeles

## Project and Activity Books on Evolution

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Published 1990 to 2007. Listed in order of youngest reader's age and then author's name.



**Ages 7-14**

**Top 12 Picks**

### **The Beast in You!: Activities & Questions to Explore Evolution**

By Marc McCutcheon, Williamson Publishing Company, 1999.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

We love, love, love this book. The tone is welcoming and the illustrations are goofily fun. The activities are a special treat: illuminating yet still simple enough for kids to carry them out and understand on their own. If only every biology class used this as their evolution textbook! Any collection of evolution books for kids ought to include this one. Truly excellent.

#### **Review from School Library Journal:**

A fascinating and entertaining introduction. McCutcheon opens with "Spot the Animal!," which covers "beastly vestiges" in humans (canines, claws, tailbone, goose bumps) in a manner that will have readers alternately marveling, questioning, and giggling. He discusses the science of evolution, our early ancestors, and their development. Throughout the book, the author invites readers to extend their information through further questioning and observations of the world around them. Although his friendly, humorous style occasionally borders on cutesy, ("If you were out to lunch, you became lunch"), students will likely enjoy the puns and silly humor. McCutcheon provides opposing views represented by the Bible and science texts. He maintains that "Most of us need science and faith in our lives-." Black-and-white cartoons add humor to this entertaining presentation. Review by Rosie Peasley, Empire Union School District, Modesto, CA

**Ages 9-12**

### **Genetics And Evolution Science Fair Projects: Using Skeletons, Cereal, Earthworms, And More (Biology! Best Science Projects Series)**

By Robert Gardner, Enslow Publishers, 2005.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

We don't have this book in our collection yet. It is hard to find and pricey.

No more info available.

**Ages 10-14**

**Darwin and Evolution for Kids: His Life and Ideas with 21 Activities**

By Kristan Lawson, Chicago Review Press, 2003.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This one is for the studious and interested kid. The text is a bit serious, and the activities require a lot of patience and attention. For the right kid, it all pays off in a deep understanding of the topic. For everyone else, try *The Beast in You!* (p. 21).

**Publisher's Description:**

A thorough introduction to the life and work of this naturalist and thinker. The book begins with a description of Darwin's family life, privileged childhood, and education. His five-year voyage on the *Beagle*, during which he collected specimens to send back to England, is vividly described. The author places Darwin's ideas in context with those of other philosophical and scientific thinkers, tracing the work of both his predecessors and contemporaries. Lawson also explores how his subject's theories were accepted or rejected by others and discusses how the disagreement among scientists and creationists continues to the present time. The writing is consistently clear and lively. The text is supplemented by related activities, including how to develop a taxonomy, tying nautical knots, and making geological strata. Brown-and-white photographs and reproductions create a sense of the Victorian era. A list of resources for further research encourages students to delve deeper into the topic.

## Straight Non-fiction Presentations of Evolution

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Published 1990 to 2007. Listed in order of youngest reader's age and then author's name.

### Ages 4-8

#### **Life Story**

By Eric Maddern, Frances Lincoln, 2003.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

#### **Review from School Library Journal:**

This handsome picture book, originally published in England, outlines the course of evolution from the sludge of pre-historic seas to human development. The style is simple but not simplistic, and each two-page spread has a wonderful painting of the sea or landscape of the geologic era with the typical lifeforms of the time. The text is printed in a large type that will be attractive for young readers and make reading aloud relatively easy. It skirts the issue of why the climate cooled at the end of the "Age of the Dinosaurs," but otherwise is scientifically accurate. This will make a fine introduction to scientific evolution for primary students, and for independent readers at the third grade level as well. Review by Rosanne Cerny, New York Public Library

### Ages 6-adult



### Top 12 Picks

#### **Prehistoric World**

By Fiona Chandler, Jane Bingham and Sam Taplin, Usborne Books, 2000.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Prehistoric World (this book), Eyewitness: Evolution (next page) and the Kingfisher Book of Evolution (next page) form a reigning trio of accurate, engrossing, gorgeously illustrated general introductions to evolution for children. Our copies have each been equally thumbed-through, dog-eared, chewed-over and re-read. We couldn't bring ourselves to recommend one over the other; all three are in our top twelve picks. While owning all three is particularly nice, you could buy any one of them and do fine. You just can't go wrong. Truly excellent.

#### **Publisher's Description:**

'Usborne World History' books offer an useful introduction to history, explaining key topics in clear and simple language. Each title contains a chronology, a word list and a time chart.

**Ages 6-adult**



**Top 12 Picks**

### **Eyewitness: Evolution**

By Linda Gamlin, DK Children, 2000.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Prehistoric World (previous page), Eyewitness: Evolution (this book) and the Kingfisher Book of Evolution (below) form a reigning trio of accurate, engrossing, gorgeously illustrated general introductions to evolution for children. Our copies have each been equally thumbed-through, dog-eared, chewed-over and re-read. We couldn't bring ourselves to recommend one over the other; they are all in our top twelve picks. While owning all three is particularly nice, you could buy any one of them and do fine. You just can't go wrong. Truly excellent.

#### **Publisher's Description:**

Explore the world of living things, and trace the discoveries that explain the amazing diversity of life on Earth. The theory of evolution changed our understanding of the natural world -- and Eyewitness Evolution is the perfect way to learn more about it! Discover what life was like millions of years ago; how new species develop; and learn why pandas have false thumbs and penguins stand upright. Superb full-color photographs of animals, plants and fossils make this book a compelling look at evolution.

**Ages 6-adult**



**Top 12 Picks**

### **The Kingfisher Book of Evolution**

By Stephen Webster, Kingfisher Books Ltd, 2000.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Prehistoric World (previous page), Eyewitness: Evolution (above) and the Kingfisher Book of Evolution (this book) form a reigning trio of accurate, engrossing, gorgeously illustrated general introductions to evolution for children. Our copies have each been equally thumbed-through, dog-eared, chewed-over and re-read. We couldn't bring ourselves to recommend one over the other; they are all in our top twelve picks. While owning all three is particularly nice, you could buy any one of them and do fine. You just can't go wrong. Truly excellent.

#### **Review from Booklist:**

This wide-ranging introduction to evolution discusses many interrelated ideas. Each double-page spread presents a single topic within one of six broad subjects: the development of the beliefs concerning animal and human origins, the theory of evolution, the history of life on Earth, the evolution of behavior, the evolution of humans, and the future of evolution. The last section, an unexpected yet logical progression from the previous ones, speculates about future humans, the possibility of human extinction, and alien evolution. The illustration is lavish, if sometimes distracting, but readers will be fascinated with many of the pictures, which include colorful paintings and photos of animals, people, and places; surreal photomontages of fantastic scenes in the past and the future; portraits of scientists; scientific artifacts; maps; and diagrams. Students researching individual topics will need to consult other sources for more details, but this large-format book presents a great deal of information in an attractive manner, and it is one of only a few books accessible to young people that delves into so many aspects of the subject. Review by Carolyn Phelan.



**Ages 7-9**

**Story of Life on Earth**

By Nicholas Harris and Nicki Palin, Lerner Publishing Group, 1999.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

We haven't been able to purchase a copy of this one yet.

**Publisher's Description:**

A broad-brush approach to the theory of evolution, this book is intended to teach complex concepts to young children through a simple text and gorgeous illustrations. From nothingness to a world populated by a beautiful diversity of creatures, this book explains the very complicated issue of evolution with clarity and eloquence.

**Ages 7-10**

**Evolution (Cycles of Life Series)**

By Andres Llamas Ruiz, Sterling Pub Co Inc, 1996.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This book has some nice presentations of life during certain early geologic periods, but gets off course pretty quickly. The last page, for example, is titled "The height of the evolutionary process was the appearance of man." Hmm. The illustrations are good but sometimes amateurish. In our view, Prehistoric World (p. 23), Eyewitness: Evolution (p. 24) or the Kingfisher Book of Evolution (p.24) are much better alternatives.

**Review from School Library Journal:**

These series entries explain fairly complicated processes in nature, taking readers step-by-step through each cycle. The first book begins with single-cell organisms and then, following the sequence of evolution, focuses on fish, vertebrates, amphibians, birds, and mammals before ending with the appearance of humans. Each two-page spread contains several paragraphs of concise text balanced by colorful drawings and numerous, helpful captions. Metamorphosis explains how certain amphibians and insects transform themselves into another life form. It begins with mating and follows the creatures as they change from eggs and larvae to tadpoles and caterpillars, and then to their final states as frogs and butterflies. Both of these books are extremely appealing, with bright artwork and clear, straightforward texts. Review by Melissa Hudak, North Suburban District Library, Roscoe, IL

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**Ages 8 and up**

### **The Beginning (Voyages Through Time Series)**

By Peter Ackroyd, DK Publishing, 2004.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

We don't have this one in our collection yet.

**Publisher's Description:**

The Beginning brings an incredible story to life: the most astonishing history of the Universe. It is the story of who we are, where we are, and how we came to be here. It is the story of life itself. Beautifully illustrated throughout, and containing a wealth of factual information to complement extraordinary narrative, The Beginning will take you on a journey of wonder: from alien landscapes to "upside-down" continents, violent collisions, and mass extinction; from worms with jaws and pigs as big as men to saber-toothed cats and monstrous dinosaurs. A time when humans were the victims, not masters, of their world. Encounter history as you have never experienced it before.

**Ages 8-11**

### **How Life Began**

By Melvin Berger and Jerry Lofaro, Random House Children's Books, 1991.

**The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

We don't have this one in our collection yet.

**Review from School Library Journal:**

A dramatic and awe-inspiring exploration of how life began, the formation of this planet, the reign of the dinosaurs, and the development of human beings. Here is a successful blend of solid scientific theory and enticing storytelling that encourages a sense of wonder while sparking further inquiry. Readers witness the "big bang" 15 billion years ago that created the universe and are then placed in the land of the terrible lizards. The large format, text set off in boxes, and striking illustrations offer easy access to a complex subject. Pronunciation of scientific names and an adequate index are provided. This exceptional book is marred only by the overuse of exclamation points. Review by Denia Lewis Hester, Dewey School, Evanston, IL

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**Ages 8-11**

**Animals: Origin and Evolution**

By Cristiano Dal Sasso, Rocco Serini, Raintree Publishers, 1994.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Review from School Library Journal:**

These Italian imports are designed as introductory explorations of "...all aspects of evolution." Earth gives an overview of the planet, including its formation over five billion years ago; its structure; the geologic formation of the continents; the composition and changing characteristics of the atmosphere, oceans, mountains, volcanoes, geysers, glaciers, deserts, rivers, and lakes; and related weather and climate features. Animals covers the origin of life and the evolution of animals, from protists to mammals. Humans covers the evolution of humans, from the early hominids to Homo sapiens. The extensive use (two-thirds of each double-page spread) of photographs; maps; and full-color, museum-quality drawings and paintings, all of which are fully labeled and captioned, extends the texts. The inclusion of the same three charts in each volume—"Evolution of the Universe"; "Evolution of the Moneran, Protist, Plant, and Fungi Kingdoms"; and "Evolution of the Protist and Animal Kingdom" has a unifying effect. The books' format will attract browsers; their contents will be useful to those seeking basic information for reports. Review by Carolyn Angus, The Claremont Graduate School, CA

**Ages 9-12**

**The Big Picture Book**

By John Long and Brian Choo, Allen & Unwin, 2005.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

We don't plan to purchase this one for our library, but if someone wants to donate a copy to us, we'd be happy to review it!

**Publisher's Description:**

The story of four billion years of evolution is told in simple words and stunning images in this vivid volume. Using the latest scientific research, an up-to-date account of Earth's history—the Big Bang, major changes to the planet's continents and climates, and crucial steps in the evolution of life—is presented.

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**Ages 9-12**

**The Evolution of the World: A Revolving Picture Book**

By David Saville and Josephine Martin, Hyperion Books for Children, 1991.

**The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

We haven't been able to purchase this one yet.

**Publisher's Description:**

Traces, in text and revolving illustrations, the creation of the earth and the development of plant and animal life.

**Ages 9-12**

**Inheritance and Evolution (Basic Biology Series)**

By Denise Walker, Smart Apple Media, 2006.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Review from Booklist:**

This entry in the six-volume Basic Biology series is well written and visually appealing enough to entice a few kids who aren't normally interested in science. There's plenty of information, supported by excellent, full-color photos, charts, and graphs, as well as numerous examples that clarify facts about such topics as genetics, DNA, natural selection and cloning (including mention of the controversies surrounding them), and the process of extinction. That's a lot of ground to cover, so don't expect in-depth discussions; but Walker's study definitely gives readers a solid introduction to the basics. Boxed insets with more facts, suggestions for testing oneself on the material presented, and ideas for further investigations are strategically placed so as not to interrupt the flow of the main text--a very nice design choice should readers wish to skip them. A glossary is appended. Review by Stephanie Zvirin.

**Ages 10-14**

**Evolution (Great Ideas of Science Series)**

By Paul Fleisher, Lerner Publishing Group, 2005.

**The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This book reads like a textbook, with all the strengths and weaknesses that implies. The illustrations are workable but fairly few and not too compelling. A good introduction for a serious-minded kid.

**Review from School Library Journal:**

Fleisher summarizes some of the ideas about evolution before Darwin's Origin of Species. He goes on to describe the observations Darwin made while on his famous Beagle voyage. A map of the ship's course accompanies this section. The author also describes the travels and observations of Alfred Russel Wallace, who came to the same conclusions as Darwin while he was compiling his ideas. Objections to Darwin's theory in the 1800s and developments and discoveries in the field since then lead to a step-by-step description of how life may have come about and changed through billions of years. The final chapter touches on how principles of evolution have been used to justify eugenics and led to the advancement of genetic engineering and cloning in recent years. Creation science and intelligent design are mentioned as religious teachings rather than scientific theories. Color photographs, charts, and maps highlight the text. Shaded sidebars provide information on such topics as how fossils are dated and the concept of coevolution. A time line and brief biographies of persons of significance are included. Review by Ann G. Brouse, Steele Memorial Library, Elmira, NY

## Human Evolution

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Published 1990 to 2007. Listed in order of youngest reader's age and then author's name.

### Ages 4-8

#### **Stones & Bones**

By Char Matejovsky, Polebridge Press, 2007.

##### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Set in a lush library, two kids romp around with a Darwin-esque Grampa. The text, a rhyming poem, goes through the history of life on Earth with a focus on human evolution in the second half. The illustrations are sweet, gentle and filled with details to discover. Our only complaint is that the poetry is a little clunky and includes technical vocabulary that might be hard for kids, and even adults, to handle fluidly. Recommended.

##### **Publisher's Description:**

One of only eleven books selected by the editors of BioScience, the flagship magazine of the American Institute of Biological Sciences, for its Fall 2008 Focus on books on evolution and adaptation for young scientists, *Stones & Bones* sketches the story of evolution in seventeen verses. Through words and illustrations readers will find answers to questions such as, when did the Age of Mammals begin and what is it called? When did the first horses appear on earth? The first whales? What is the name and date of Darwin's revolutionary book on evolution? When did the earth begin to form? And many more. Also includes a CD of *Stones & Bones the Song* and a bonus recording of *The Song of the Meadowlark*, recipient of the award for Outstanding Achievement in Songwriting (Lyrics) from the Great American Song Contest in 2004.

### Ages 6-12

#### **We**

By Alice Schertle and Kenneth Addison, Lee & Low Books, 2007.

##### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

##### **Publisher's Description:**

This quality book is a handsome example of how human history developed from its beginnings in a river in Africa millions of years ago. Covering time from the evolution of early species to today, the writing is outstanding, simple, and beautifully poetic with illustrations that hold the reader's attention carrying the eye across the pages and through the mixed-media collages. The double-spread pages are captivating and very dramatic. The writing in its simplicity, cleanly encompasses just about everything of importance relating to evolution. It is clear enough for any reader to understand and to stir the imagination of any child. From cover to cover this book is an outstanding example of writing and illustration working together to blend the history of mankind into an understandable read for young children. The ending is perfect and a tender reminder, returning the reader home to study where we have come from and perhaps what has been forgotten. Beautifully written and illustrated. A winner.

**Ages 8-11**

### **Humans: Origins and Evolution**

By Fiorenzo Facchini and Rocco Serini, Steck-Vaughan, 1994.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Review from School Library Journal:**

These Italian imports are designed as introductory explorations of "...all aspects of evolution." Earth gives an overview of the planet, including its formation over five billion years ago; its structure; the geologic formation of the continents; the composition and changing characteristics of the atmosphere, oceans, mountains, volcanoes, geysers, glaciers, deserts, rivers, and lakes; and related weather and climate features. Animals covers the origin of life and the evolution of animals, from protists to mammals. Humans covers the evolution of humans, from the early hominids to Homo sapiens. The extensive use (two-thirds of each double-page spread) of photographs; maps; and full-color, museum-quality drawings and paintings, all of which are fully labeled and captioned, extends the texts. The inclusion of the same three charts in each volume-"Evolution of the Universe"; "Evolution of the Moneran, Protist, Plant, and Fungi Kingdoms"; and "Evolution of the Protist and Animal Kingdom"-has a unifying effect. The books' format will attract browsers; their contents will be useful to those seeking basic information for reports. Review by Carolyn Angus, The Claremont Graduate School, CA

**Ages 9-12**

### **From the Beginning: The Story of Human Evolution**

By David Peters, William Morrow & Co, 1991.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

We don't have this in our collection yet.

**Publisher's Description:**

Examines the history of life on Earth and traces the course of human evolution.

**Comment from PZ Myers on his blog Pharyngula.com:**

An older book that may be hard to get, but worth it for the wall-to-wall drawings of the organisms scattered along the human lineage, from single-celled prokaryote to modern humans.



**Ages 10-adult**

**Top 12 Picks**

### **Bones, Brains and DNA: The Human Genome and Human Evolution**

By Ian Tattersall and Rob DeSalle, Bunker Hill Publishing, 2007.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

A great book! The reader is led through the major concepts and history of human evolution by two mice named Darwin and Wallace. With lovely line drawings and deceptively sophisticated text, the tone is warm and the language is straightforward and authoritative. Excellent.

#### **Publisher's Description:**

Based on the New Hall of Human Origins in the American Museum of Natural History which opened in November 2006, *Bones, Brains and DNA* takes the young reader to the cutting edge of science, exploring and examining the tools by which we study our origins. Covering the milestones in evolution, global migration and how we became human through the invention of language, music, art and technology.

**Ages 12-adult**

### **The Human Story: Our Evolution from Prehistoric Ancestors to Today**

By Christopher Sloan, National Geographic Children's Books, 2004.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

A terrific book that just barely missed being among our top picks. While the text is definitely for older kids, anyone can enjoy the naturalistic portraits of previous homo species. They are so lifelike that they weirded out my 7-year-old, who had to close the book and put it away for a while. These species will get into your imagination! Highly recommended.

#### **Review from Booklist:**

Drawing on evidence from fossils and DNA, this authoritative overview of human evolution goes back 6,000,000 years to a time when humans and chimpanzees had a common ancestor. Then the focus moves to *Homo sapiens*, a species that has lived on Earth for only 200,000 years. Casual in tone and beautiful in design, with clear color photos, diagrams, and paintings on every page, the large volume is as inviting as a glossy magazine article--but it is no quick read. The science is intense, both the fascinating facts and the theories of paleoanthropology, including how natural selection works, how the body changed and became bipedal, and what recent findings show about where humans started and how they spread across the world. What many high-school readers will find most exciting is how today's cutting-edge technology helps us learn about the prehistoric connections all humans share. Great for classroom discussion. A detailed glossary and a bibliography are appended. Review by Hazel Rochman.



## Darwin Biographies (Standalone)

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Published 1990 to 2007. Listed in order of youngest reader's age and then author's name.

**Ages 6-12**



**Top 12 Picks**

### **Inside the Beagle with Charles Darwin**

By Fiona McDonald and Mark Bergin, Enchanted Lion Books, 2005.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

What fantastic illustrations of the Beagle, the animals, and the lands Darwin visited! The level of detail is enough to make you put your feet up and study it for hours. The language is wide open and accessible to kids on many levels. Excellent.

#### **Review from Booklist:**

Darwin's defining voyage on the British navy ship The Beagle provides a focused introduction to the scientist's life and revolutionary work in this picture-book size title in the new Inside series. The spreads follow the naturalist's voyage around the globe, with introductory and closing sections that offer insight into his groundbreaking ideas. Macdonald uses balanced language, carefully referring to natural selection and evolution as theories even as she acknowledges that most scientists believe Darwin's ideas are correct. Her coverage of the scientist's encounters with indigenous peoples is not as evenhanded as it might have been: more care could have been taken when discussing Darwin's generalizations about, for example, the Maori people's "poor and dirty conditions" and "traditional passion for fighting," and Macdonald presents a jarringly breezy view of South American peoples who were "captured" and converted to Christianity and English customs. Still, the excellent, detailed cut-away images of the ship; open layouts; and numerous watercolor-and-ink pictures of life at sea will ignite children's interest in Darwin's work and ideas. Time lines and a glossary close. Review by Gillian Engberg.

**Ages 9-12**

### **Charles Darwin and the Theory of Evolution**

By Heather Adamson, Heather, Gordon Purcell and Al Milgrom, Capstone Press, 2007.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

#### **Publisher's Description:**

Tells the story of how Charles Darwin developed his controversial theory of evolution based on the research he conducted during his voyage on the HMS Beagle. Written in graphic-novel format.

**Ages 9-adult**

### **The Tree of Life: Charles Darwin**

By Peter Sis, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This is a sophisticated, imaginative, and detailed depiction of Darwin's life, heavily infused with the artist's stylized perspective. While this book is nominally written for children, we think its serious tone and muted illustrations are better appreciated by adults. Recommended for older kids.

#### **Review from School Library Journal:**

Sis offers an impressive homage to the life and ideas of Darwin through a fully illustrated, multilayered narrative augmented with copious charts, maps, and sketches. Two strands of text recounting Darwin's youth from his own and his father's points of view run below picture blocks in several early pages. Soon smaller chunks of text, often taken from Darwin's journals, move across the spreads with a central image and copious small, framed vignettes and picture bits. Other pages are filled completely with rows of picture cards. The artist melds information into handsome constructions to explain first the long years of travel aboard the Beagle and then the naturalist's evolving ideas about the origin of species. He knew all along it was a troublesome notion, and Sis introduces many other scientists and thinkers who influenced his work or objected to it. A gatefold spread near the end of the book reproduces the title page of the famous book, here with swirling lines of explanation and illustration. Muted tones of blue, green, and tan, and finely hatched drawings in the manner of old prints lend a period look to the pages. Beautifully conceived and executed, the presentation is a humorous and informative tour de force that will absorb and challenge readers. Though linear in its chronology, the sweeping, circular design and shorthand catalog of species, people, and ideas encountered by Darwin is a fragmentary account. However, it's a fabulous, visually exciting introduction to the man, his ideas, and the science of the natural world. Review by Margaret Bush, Simmons College, Boston

**Ages 9-12**

### **Darwin, Nature Reinterpreted**

By Piero Ventura, Houghton Mifflin, 1995.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

#### **Review from Booklist:**

This picture book for older readers contains a great deal of information. In fact, persistent kids will come away seeing Darwin as a real human being. Just how much Darwin's comfortable English life differed from the worlds he encountered on his journey becomes clear, as does Darwin's wonder at the variety of plants and animals he saw. Ventura is best at describing young Darwin. When he tries to put the scientist's work into the context of exploration, he sometimes perpetuates old stereotypes (for example, the idea that Lewis and Clark went off into an empty land), and Ventura is not as critical of the experiments on the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego as the subject requires. Still, the broad vistas of pastel landscapes, with people appearing as diminutive figures, set the scene nicely for the text. Review by Mary Harris Veeder.

For more fun stuff on evolution and Darwin, visit [www.charliesplayhouse.com](http://www.charliesplayhouse.com)

**Ages 10 and up**      **Charles Darwin: The Life of a Revolutionary Thinker**

By Dorothy Hinshaw Patent, Holiday House, 2001.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Review from Publishers Weekly:**

This thoroughly researched but clinical biography presents the life and theories of one of history's most innovative and influential scientists. Patent (Prairie; Biodiversity), a trained scientist, excels when dissecting Darwin's experiments and thought processes, and her analysis is clear and passionate. But elsewhere, the writing becomes labored (e.g., a commentary on the dress code at Cambridge, a convoluted discussion of the scientist's early questionnaires) and distracts from Darwin's groundbreaking work and approach. The volume begins on a strong note with a prologue that connects the challenges of curing the modern common cold and AIDS (due to their evolving nature) with Darwin's theory of natural selection; in this way, Patent makes Darwin's work immediately relevant for contemporary readers. She also debunks several popular myths regarding Darwin, including the legend that he formulated his theory of evolution in its entirety during his five-year journey as naturalist aboard the Beagle; in truth he devoted an additional 26 years after his journey to scientific observation before publishing *The Origin of Species* in 1859. While the text conveys chronological details regarding Darwin's personal life (his wife, children, tragedies and friendships), it rarely captures the relationships or passions of the man, nor the mood of the era.

## **Darwin Biographies (Volumes within Series)**

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Published 1990 to 2007. Listed in order of youngest reader's age and then author's name.

**Ages 6-10**

### **Charles Darwin (Children of History Series)**

By Brenda Clarke and Christa Hook, Marshall Cavendish Corp, 1994.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This biography, mainly about Darwin's pre-Beagle childhood, is serious and earnest. It could inform a kid for a school report on Darwin, but probably wouldn't light a fire in anyone's heart about evolution. (It's also got some strange passages about the Fuegians, but that's another story.)

#### **Publisher's Description:**

A biography concentrating on the childhood of the British naturalist who became famous for his theories on evolution.

**Ages 7-10**

### **Scientists and Their Mind-blowing Experiments (Dead Famous Series)**

By Mike Goldsmith and Clive Goddard, Scholastic Hippo, 2003.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

There's only one chapter here about Darwin, but it's very engaging for kids. The tone and language are fun, much like *Evolve or Die* (p. 14). Recommended, especially for kids who might not want to tackle a whole book.

#### **Publisher's Description:**

You've probably heard of a few scientists. - Galileo Galilei and his telescope - Isaac Newton and his apple - Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution. But have you heard that. - Galileo was sentenced to life in prison for his shocking ideas about the solar system - Newton wasn't all that keen on science - sometimes it got on his nerves - Darwin wrote a book about his pet worms? Yes, even though they're dead, scientists are still full of surprises - and the nine in this book are more surprising than most. Now you can get the inside story from their lost notebooks, read the news reports as their breakthroughs hit the headlines, and find out all about the mind-blowing experiments!

**Ages 7-10**

**Who Was Charles Darwin? (Who Was... Series)**

By Deborah Hopkinson and Nancy Harrison, Grosset & Dunlap, 2005.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This reads very simply, with large text and black & white illustrations on each page. It's a straightforward, generally accurate account of Darwin's life. Very good for research or book reports.

**Publisher's Description:**

As a young boy, Charles Darwin hated school and was often scolded for conducting "useless" experiments. Yet his passion for the natural world was so strong that he suffered through terrible seasickness during his five-year voyage aboard The Beagle. Darwin collected new creatures from the coasts of Africa, South America, and the Galapagos Islands, and expanded his groundbreaking ideas that would change people's understanding of the natural world. About 100 illustrations and a clear, exciting text will make Darwin and his theory of evolution an exciting discovery for every young reader.

**Ages 7-13**

**Charles Darwin: On the Trail of Evolution (Beyond the Horizons Series)**

By Clint Twist, RSVP Publishers, 1994.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This large, wide-ranging, beautifully illustrated book gives a terrific introduction to the man, his times, and his ideas. It's fairly old, so some of the scientific information is outdated, but not too badly, and the bibliographic and historical information is fine. Used copies are available on Amazon for 45 cents, so we recommend this one as a great recession-buster.

**Publisher's Description of the Series:**

Beautifully illustrated with photographs, artwork, maps, and contemporary drawings and paintings, the books in this series look at explorers whose discoveries helped to change the world. Together they chart the course of 1,000 years of seafaring, exploration, and discovery. Each book describes the background to these amazing journeys, focusing on the economic pressures and technological advances that combined to make them possible. The books also examine the native societies the explorers encountered, and assess the effect of their discoveries on their homelands and the new regions they visited.



**Recession Busters**

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**Ages 9-12**

**Mr. Darwin's Voyage (People in Focus Series)**

By Linda Jacobs Altman, Dillon Press, 1995.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Review from School Library Journal:**

Written much like an adventure story, this book is filled with interesting information and with people who seem real and alive. The naturalist's long voyage on the Beagle, the social climate of the times, and the prevailing ideas toward native peoples all play an important part. Altman incorporates into the text both the evolution of Darwin's theories and the events that shaped his thinking. Illustrated with average-quality, black-and-white reproductions and photographs, this is not only an excellent source for research, but also an exciting and worthwhile read. Even students with little interest in science will be drawn in. Review by Eva Elisabeth Von Ancken, Trinity Pawling School, NY

**Ages 9-12**

**Charles Darwin: British Naturalist  
(Great Names Series)**

By Diane Cook and Vitali Konstantinov, Mason Crest Publishers, 2002.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Publisher's Description:**

A biography of the nineteenth-century English naturalist whose study trips, on which he documented the diversity of animal life, led him to develop theories about evolution and natural selection.

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**Ages 9-12**

**Charles Darwin: A Photographic Story of a Life  
(DK Biography Series)**

By David C. King, Hodder Children's Books, 2006.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Publisher's Description:**

Even as a young boy, Charles Darwin loved investigating the natural world. His father feared that Charles would never be a doctor or clergyman-and he was right. After a life-changing round-the-world adventure on HMS Beagle, Darwin the passionate amateur became a full-fledged scientist, and over the next 20 years he gathered evidence for a theory of evolution that would change the world forever.

**Ages 9-12**

**Charles Darwin (Giants of Science Series)**

By Michael Pollard, Blackbirch Press, 2002.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Publisher's Description:**

Charles Darwin revolutionized scientific thought with his theory of evolution by natural selection. Initially criticized by scientists as well as religious leaders, Darwinism today is widely accepted in the scientific community. It continues to inspire research that leads to insights about the origins of life on Earth.

**Ages 9-12**

**Charles Darwin and The Origin of the Species  
(Uncharted, Unexplored, and Unexplained Series)**

By Jim Whiting, Mitchell Lane Publishers, 2005.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Publisher's Description:**

As a young man in England, Charles Darwin had no idea what he wanted to do with his life. Then he was asked to go on a long ocean voyage. Boarding the ship Beagle in 1831, he spent nearly five years sailing around the world. He returned with one of the most important ideas in the history of science: the theory of evolution. It took him more than 20 years to publish a book about his theory. When his book, *The Origin of Species*, appeared in 1859, it aroused a great deal of controversy.

**Ages 10-14**

**Charles Darwin: Revolutionary Biologist  
(Lerner Biographies Series)**

By J. Edward Evans, Lerner Publishing Group, 1993.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Review from School Library Journal:**

An excellent, straightforward account of the English naturalist's life and work. Evans develops a clear picture of the man, chronicling key events from his childhood through his often sickly and reclusive later years. Darwin's assignment as a naturalist on a voyage of the HMS Beagle and his interaction with the captain are vividly portrayed, reading like an adventure story. The book is generously illustrated with black-and-white archival photographs, reproductions, and drawings, all of which have informative captions. Darwin's development of his theory on natural selection and the origin of species and the controversy surrounding its presentation are particularly well described so that this biography serves equally as an introduction to the theories of this "revolutionary biologist." Review by Carolyn Angus, The Claremont Graduate School, CA.



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**Ages 10 and up**

**Charles Darwin: Evolution of a Naturalist  
(Makers of Modern Science Series)**

By Richard Milner, Facts on File, 1994.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

We don't have this one in our collection yet.

**Publisher's Description:**

Examines the life and work of the renowned biologist who transformed conventional Western thought with his theory of natural selection.

**Ages 10-14**

**Charles Darwin and Evolution (Science Discoveries Series)**

By Steve Parker, HarperCollins Childrens Books, 1992.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Review from School Library Journal:**

A brief overview of the scientist's work and ideas that were formed by his research, especially the painstaking observations made on his around-the-world voyage on the HMS Beagle, and by the writings of thinkers such as Thomas Malthus. Parker relates Darwin's work to that of other naturalists in the main text and places it in the context of other scientific, political, and artistic events and explorations in his lifetime through the use of a time line. The last double-page chapter describes the work of Gregor Mendel in genetics and the development of neo-Darwinism, which adds the latest DNA research to the work of these two men to form the more complete theory of evolution in use today. The illustrations, mostly full-color photographs and a few drawings, help to explain some concepts, such as the formation of a coral atoll, and contribute to the book's attractiveness. Review by Margaret M. Hagel, Norfolk Public Library System, VA

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**Ages 12-adult**

**Charles Darwin: And the Evolution Revolution  
(Oxford Portraits in Science Series)**

By Rebecca Steffo, Oxford University Press, 1996.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Review from School Library Journal:**

This portrait of a scientist “whose work has shaped our understanding of the natural world” is not only an excellent biography but also a fine introduction to evolutionary biology. Information on Darwin’s childhood and education shows how his early passion for natural history provided background for the meticulous observations he made during his 5-year-long voyage on the HMS Beagle, the formulation of his theory of evolution, and the 20 years of additional research that he undertook before publishing *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. Steffo gives the main points of Darwin’s theory of “descent with modification” and effectively quotes the scientist’s writings to communicate how his theory was influenced by the work of others and his desire to amass supportive data in anticipation of every possible objection. The author deals with the opposition that Darwin encountered on religious grounds and from fellow scientists in a particularly insightful fashion. She considers the path to general acceptance of the man’s theory as part of science and common thought and addresses the on-going controversy surrounding Darwinism today. Well-captioned black-and-white archival photographs, reproductions, and drawings; a chronology, and two-or-three-page sidebars all extend the text. The impressive list for further reading includes titles by Darwin, books on his life and work, and on Darwinism and evolution. A well-written, thoroughly engaging biography. Review by Carolyn Angus, The Claremont Graduate School, CA

## Books in Spanish

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Listed in order of youngest reader's age

### **Ages 4-8**

#### **Me llamo Charles Darwin/ My Name is Charles Darwin (Me Llamo.../ My Name Is... Series)**

By Lluís Cugota and Teresa Martí, Parramón, 2007.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Publisher's Description:**

Charles Darwin ha sido una figura clave en las ciencias naturales. Desde pequeño mostró un gran interés por la naturaleza y a los 22 años emprendió un viaje científico que a lo largo de cinco años le llevó por todo el mundo, donde pudo estudiar una infinidad de seres vivos y fenómenos naturales. Su teoría más importante fue la de la evolución de las especies, originada por la selección natural de los especímenes más aptos para la vida en un medio determinado.

### **Ages 9-12**

#### **Charles Darwin (Tras los pasos de . . . Series)**

By Jean Baptiste de Panafieu, Vincent Desplanche and Jorge González Batlle, Blume, 2007.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Publisher's Description:**

Whether epic tale or legendary quest, the narrative texts in this series are adapted in a captivating style for each period, allowing the reader to track heroes and share their adventures, discover great civilizations, and learn about world history. The texts are based directly on original works or on a variety of authentic, ancient sources and tales. The narratives are enhanced by specially commissioned illustrations, photographs, and reproductions of ancient artifacts and documents.

Mito, historia épica o búsqueda legendaria, los textos narrativos de esta colección adaptados con estilo cautivador para cada período permiten al lector seguir la huella del héroe para compartir sus aventuras, descubrir grandiosas civilizaciones y aprender acerca de la historia mundial. Los textos están tomados directamente de trabajos originales o de una variedad de fuentes auténticas antiguas y de relatos.

## Books Published before 1990

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Listed in order of youngest reader's age and then author's name.



**Ages 4-8**

**Recession Busters**

### **Evolution (Let's Read and Find Out Science Books Series)**

By Joanna Cole and Aliko, Trophy Press, 1989.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

A lovely, gentle and calm book that still holds up well twenty years later. The illustrations are lively, appealing, and filled with children making discoveries. The text is straightforward and still more or less accurate, but it does include some fairly complex vocabulary for this age. Since it's a bit old, you can usually find it on the cheap from Amazon or Alibris. Recommended.

#### **Review from School Library Journal:**

Four billion years is not a concept that the human mind can easily grasp. Yet this is the very time span that encompasses the development of life on earth. Cole has once again succeeded in taking a complex subject and making it comprehensible to beginning readers. She begins with a brief explanation of how fossil discoveries in the 18th and 19th Centuries led to the realization that our planet was much older than had been previously imagined. Through a careful progression, aided immensely by Aliko's colorful illustrations, Cole unfolds the amazing story of the development of life from the simple to the more complex. The carefully-worded text makes it clear that science has many gaps to fill in its understanding of this progression. This is a book that should spark further interest in evolution and related subjects. Review by David N. Pauli, Northern Waters Library Service, Ashland, Wis.

**Ages 7-10**

### **How Life on Earth Began**

By William Jaspersohn and Anthony Accardo, Olympic Marketing Corp, 1985.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This is a thoughtful, graceful, and well-paced history of life on Earth, with age-appropriate text. The black and white illustrations are sometimes lovely but at other times a bit bland. This book is interesting to read as a historical document, reflecting the state of knowledge in 1985. It says, for example, that birds evolved from pterodactyls and that the dinosaur extinction was probably caused by climate change over millions of years. We like reading older books like this as games, trying to spot the assertions that science has cleared up since the book's publication.

#### **Publisher's Description:**

Explains how life first appeared on the earth as simple cells capable of reproducing themselves and then evolved into a series of more complex organisms.

**Ages 8-12**

### **Life Story**

By Virginia Lee Burton, Houghton Mifflin, 1962.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

1962! This book must have been one of the very first for children on evolution, and it holds up surprisingly well. While it is too out of date for us to recommend as a source of scientific information, it's interesting as a window into how people thought about evolution over forty years ago, and how they talked to children about it. Gentle, lyrical and sweet.

#### **Review from Publishers Weekly:**

"The drama of Life is a continuing story," says Burton in her epilogue; she amply demonstrates this in her magnificent description of the evolutionary process, with text and paintings presented as a five-act play.

**Ages 9-12**

### **The Human Body: How We Evolved**

By Joanna Cole, Walter Gaffney-Kessell and Juan Carlos Barberis, William Morrow, 1987.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

#### **Review from School Library Journal:**

Cole presents the evolution of Homo sapiens in a simple yet thorough manner. Comparisons between modern man and his ancestors center on the development of the pelvis, legs and feet, hands, jaws and teeth, and the brain, which receives the most attention. Advances in the development of tools and communication are also offered as evidence of our descent from the hominids. Written material is brief; a full two-thirds of each page is covered with finely detailed black-and-white pencil drawings and diagrams of those anatomical parts being discussed. Following the main text is an illustrated time line of human culture, synthesizing cultural achievements. The rise and fall of the previous species is not incorporated here, but is shown on a separate graph later in the book. A "who's who among the hominids": an artistic rendering of the profile, the scientific name, and a one- to two-paragraph description of each species is extremely useful, providing a concise presentation for comparison complete on a two-page spread. Cole finishes with speculation as to why the various species died out, touching on survival of the fittest and cross breeding. In all, this should be well received by the many children who are fascinated by prehistoric man. Review by Denise L. Moll, Lone Pine Elementary School, West Bloomfield, Mich.

**Ages 9-12**

**Evolution: The Story of the Origins of Humankind - A Three-Dimensional Book**

By Raymond Hawkey, Putnam Juvenile, 1987.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Publisher's Description:**

Pop-up illustrations present the evolution of mankind from the earliest animal in the earliest days of life on Earth.

**Ages 9-12**

**Darwin and the Voyage of the Beagle: A Fictional Account of Charles Darwin's Work and Adventures During the Five-Year-Long Voyage**

By Felicia Law, Patricia Law and Judy Brook, Dutton Childrens Books, 1985.

**The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

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**Review from School Library Journal:**

This delightful episodic biography of Charles Darwin lets readers experience a sea voyage around the world in a 19th-Century English three-masted brig. In December 1831, the ship, HMS Beagle, set sail from England to chart the shoreline and coastal waters of important landmarks and routes. Young Charles Darwin was on board as a companion to Captain Fitzroy and as a naturalist. During the five-year voyage, Darwin studied plants, animals, fossils and geology. Events throughout the five years are described by three narrators: the author, Darwin or Ben Sweet, a fictionalized young boy, with whom readers will identify. Darwin explains to Ben facts and theories about the natural world; he hypothesizes about the law of the jungle, insect disguises for survival and the importance of adaptability to the environment. The social issues of slavery, Chilean miners and "civilizing" the natives of Tierra del Fuego are touched upon. The writing is lively. The later controversy which Darwin's theories sparked with the publication of his *Origins of Species* is not even hinted at; the book ends with the voyage. Brook's illustrations include many double-page spreads as well as small detailed pictures in ink and wash, and these precise illustrations and charts create an authentic atmosphere and factual backup for the text. This adventure/biography makes Darwin's famous voyage come alive and puts across very well Darwin's central theories of evolution. Review by Hope Bridgewater, Halifax City Regional Library, Nova Scotia, Canada

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**Ages 9-12**

**Hominids: A Look Back at Our Ancestors.**

By Helen Roney Sattler and Christopher Santoro, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1988.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Review from School Library Journal:**

Hominids is a fascinating and well-organized account of the complicated process of piecing together prehistory from fragmentary remains. Sattler meticulously describes the changes of human evolution, always cognizant of the hypothetical nature of what is stated as archaeological fact. Along with the linear development of humans, she provides a wealth of information about the climate, food, tools, fauna, and flora that played a role in the development of mankind. Despite the difficulty of the subject matter, the succinct and clear style of both artist and writer make this book accessible to young readers. Review by Cathryn A. Camper, Minneapolis Public Library

**Ages 9-12**

**Darwin and the Enchanted Isles (Science Discovery Books)**

By Irwin Shapiro and Christopher J. Spollen, Putnam Pub Group Library, 1977.

**The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

We don't plan to purchase this one for our library, too expensive.

No other info available.

**Ages 9-12**

**Charles Darwin and the Theory of Natural Selection  
(Barrons Solution Series)**

By Renee Skelton, Barron's Educational Series, 1987.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Review from School Library Journal:**

A solid biography of Darwin that should prove useful for reports. Most of the book deals with Darwin's adventurous youth, when he spent nearly five years as the naturalist on a British naval vessel. Darwin's theories are shown to have come to him not in a sudden flash of awareness during the voyage, but gradually after he returned home and pondered those things that he had observed. In the face of all this information on Darwin's early life, however, an explanation of the theory of natural selection gets somewhat lost. Pen-and-ink illustrations are better when Robinson draws natural history subjects than people, as the figures show odd proportions. The map of the voyage of the Beagle is small and not very detailed, but the index and glossary are helpful aids. Despite a few weaknesses, this is an admirable biography. Review by Todd Morning, Schaumburg Township Public Library, Ill.

**Ages 9-12**

**The Adventures of Charles Darwin**

By Peter Ward, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Will review when we have time!

**Chapter Titles:**

The Beetle Man; A Ducking for Mr. Darwin; Grasshoppers, Lizards and Kingfishers; Mr. Darwin Gets Ants in his Pants; Gunfire, Revolution and Men Overboard; Jemmy Button Returns to the Land of Fire; Cowboys and Indians; Giant Birds and Wild Cats; Mountains and Earthquakes; Galapagos, Giant Tortoises and Sea Dragons; Through Paradise to Home.





**Ages 10-15**  
**Recession Busters**

**The Voyage of the Beagle (Great Journeys Series)**

By Kate Hyndley and Peter Bull, Bookwright Press, 1989.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This is one of the better books among the pre-1990 group. With naturalistic illustrations and straightforward language, it focuses on issues and exploits that would probably appeal to young readers. Used copies are nearly free on Amazon (13 cents!), so although more recent books cover the same ground with more spirit, this is a good choice if you don't want to spend more than, oh, say, a quarter. Recommended.

**Review from School Library Journal:**

Darwin's five-year voyage as a naturalist on the Beagle allowed him to observe a wider variety of natural habitats than would have been possible had he studied wildlife only in England. The journey and its side trips are all discussed in two-page chapters. The book ends with a discussion of Darwin's two major works, *On the Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*, in which he published his theories of evolution and natural selection. The book is illustrated with full-color paintings and photographs as well as a few black-and-white drawings. This is an attractive book that should appeal to readers with a sense of adventure and an interest in science. Review by Margaret M. Hagel, Norfolk Public Library System, VA

**Ages 10-14**

**The Evolution Book**

By Sarah Stein, Workman Publishing Company, 1986.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This book has a serious, textbook tone with black & white photos and illustrations throughout. The activities are fairly involved, sometimes requiring uncommon materials or extraordinary patience. We'd recommend *Prehistoric World* (p. 23), *Eyewitness: Evolution* (p. 24) or the *Kingfisher Book of Evolution* (p.24) instead.

**Review from School Library Journal:**

Stein tries to make evolution accessible and immediate, without distracting readers with the usual controversies that accompany its study. She approaches the material through natural history and biology, and suggests activities that demonstrate the scientific principles involved. Her good intentions have, unfortunately, prevented complete success. She introduces technical terms and processes, but before she defines them completely, she switches to colloquialisms that confuse rather than clarify. This problem is compounded by the lack of a glossary, and the fact that new words are not always defined. Many photographs of children engaged in common activities provide visual appeal but little elucidation. Well-drawn diagrams are not always supported by clear textual explanation. Some suggested activities will aid understanding. Others are not explained fully enough to ensure success (a compost heap), are of questionable value (skinning and tanning hides), or are simply unsafe (demonstrating the Moro reflex with a baby). Review by Allen Meyer, Vernon Area Public Library District, Prairie View, Ill.

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**Ages ?**

**Evolution (Usborne Young Scientist Series)**

By Barbara Cork and Lynn Bresler, Usborne, 1985.

**The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

We haven't been able to find this one for sale yet.

No other info available.

**Ages ?**

**A Closer Look at the Dawn of Life**

By L.B. Halstead, Richard Orr and Philip Weare, Scimitar, 1981.

**The view from Charlie's Playhouse:**

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**Publisher's Description:**

Discusses the origins of the Earth, the chemistry of life, the origin of life in the seas, and the history of life on land from the first plants to the emergence of mammals and man.

## Books about Observing the World Carefully, as Darwin Did

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Not necessarily about the natural world or even science, but about the power of observing and understanding our surroundings. Listed in order of youngest reader's age and then author's name.

### Ages 3-6

#### **Newton**

By Rory Tyger, Little Tiger Press, 2002.

##### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

There's so much to love about this little book for the littlest kids! It has nothing to do with evolution or Darwin, but its simple story shows that instead of being scared of mysteries, we can check them out and find answers behind them. The titular bear and his friends even find emotional comfort in this view of life. It's clearly not an accident that the bear is named after one of the most famous scientists in history. Truly excellent.

##### **Publisher's Description:**

Flap! Flap! Flap! What was that noise? Was it a ghost? "Don't worry," Newton told his toys, "there's always an explanation for everything." With his bravest toy, Snappy, tucked under his arm, Newton sets out in the dark to find out.

### Ages 4-10

#### **Uno's Garden**

By Graeme Base, Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2006.

##### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

With delightful illustrations of funky animals and people, Base shows how exponential growth of human population cannot survive alongside the geometric growth of plants and animals. Yes, the ideas are *that* complex, and their presentation is *that* accessible, even to 4-year-olds. A terrific story that is easily related to evolutionary ideas. Truly excellent.

##### **Review from Booklist:**

Uno loves the forest and builds his home among colorful plants and the wondrous Moopalooops, Lumpybums, and Frinklepods. The beautiful setting soon draws other creatures, and the village grows into a bustling city. But as development continues, plant and animal life decrease, sending residents to greener pastures, leaving Uno and one Snortlepig tending the last little garden. Ultimately, Uno's descendants nurture the forest back into balance with human life. Base's imaginative, intricate pictures occupy most of each double-page spread; running across the top of the pages are brief text and math equations, accompanied by visual icons to help children keep track of the increase and decrease of the various creatures and buildings. Providing plenty of opportunity for seek-and-find fun, the vibrant art also visually reinforces the progressive change, and a double gatefold spread at the close dramatically shows the city and forest in balance. An appended note explains the numbers games. This is both a visual treasure trove and a cautionary yet hopeful tale of environmental awareness and responsibility. Review by Shelle Rosenfeld

**Ages 4-8**

**Big Bug Surprise**

By Julia Gran, Scholastic Press, 2007.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This one is for every kid with a geeky obsession that isn't appreciated by everyone. The heroine's infatuation with bugs annoys her classmates, until the day they really need her expertise. While those around her panic, she keeps her cool, uses her knowledge, and saves the day. Hooray for passionate, observant, nerdy kids! Excellent.

**Review from Publishers Weekly:**

Pint-size Prunella is the authority on all things insect in this delightful paper-over-board volume. Gran (Princess Penelope) draws Prunella herself with massive bug eyes, wing-like arms, a ladybug dress and hair ribbons that protrude like antennae. The heroine inhabits a room outfitted with a variety of buggy furnishings (a bee-shaped clock, a chair with a back resembling a ladybug) and home to many winged and six-legged creatures (an ant farm and, in the book's denouement, a dung beetle). Not surprisingly, no one seems to have the time-or the inclination-to share in Prunella's interest. But when she finally gets her moment in the sun (involving a homeless colony of bees), Prunella offers a solution that saves the day. Finally, she gets what she was hoping for: an appreciative audience. Gran nicely portrays a heroine whose passion is its own reward.

**Ages 5-8**

**Clara and Senor Frog**

By Campbell Geeslin and Ryan Sanchez, Schwartz & Wade, 2007.

**Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

OK, this one is a stretch to include in this bibliography, but hear me out. In this sweet story, Clara learns from her Diego Rivera-like stepfather that painting the real world is far more magical than staged magic shows. In other words, let's just see the world for what it is, and appreciate how dazzling it is, instead of layering it with falsehoods. For kids more interested in art than science, this book might make the connection between an artist's eye and Darwin's close and fascinating observations. Excellent.

**Publisher's Description:**

Sawed in half? Rabbits pulled from hats? These are tricks, just magic tricks, and Clara knows them all. But on a visit to a rich gringo's house, she spots a picture of a watermelon, done by a famous artist. The painted fly on it looks so real, Clara swears she saw it move. At last, real magic! Soon Clara discovers her own artistic abilities and she paints as if from a dream—orange cats with silver wings and shells that open up like flowers. This beautiful, original story is peppered with Spanish words, features a character reminiscent of Diego Rivera, and vibrant illustrations that evoke the essence of Mexican art.

**Ages 7-10**

### **Ug: Boy Genius of the Stone Age**

By Raymond Briggs, Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2002.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

Ug is one of the greatest overlooked characters in children's literature. What a kid. He is a striver, an inventor, an observer and a thinker, stuck in a world resistant to change. If ever there was a parallel to Darwin, here it is. This book is genuinely hilarious, even for adults, and will start some great discussions about how scientists work and how knowledge advances. Truly excellent.

#### **Review from Publishers Weekly:**

Ug is a dreamer. Foremost amongst his dreams? Soft trousers. When he balks at the stone pants his father carves for him ("I can hardly move"), his father replies, "Listen to me, Ug. Nowadays everything is made of stone. This is why nowadays is called The Stone Age." Briggs, with his trademark comic strip-like panels, follows Ug from boyhood to manhood on his quest for a more enlightened life, mining this rich vein of cheeky humor brilliantly. Ug's mother, the slyly named Dugs, believes that her son is headed for ruin ("He'll end up painting animals on the walls"), and the exchanges between the two frequently sound like a Monty Python routine (when Ug asks what's for dinner, for instance, Dugs replies, "Same as always bits of dead animals." "I wish there was something else, something nice," the boy says, to which his mother replies, "Nice! You're always going on about Nice!," and on from there).

**Ages 8 and up**

### **There's a Hair in My Dirt! A Worm's Story**

By Gary Larson, Harper Collins, 1998.

#### **Review from Charlie's Playhouse:**

This book is chock full of sight gags and absurd dialogue reminiscent of the Far Side comic, so get ready to laugh. We're also treated to a hilarious story told by Father Earthworm about Harriet, a human. Harriet's egregious misunderstandings of nature arouse the earthworms' scorn and drive the lesson home -- that a true understanding of the natural world is more important than our romantic fantasies about "nature." Good for a laugh and some food for thought. Truly excellent.

#### **Amazon.com Review:**

It isn't easy being an earthworm, and when one little guy gets mad at a hair in his dinner, Father worm decides to tell him a story. What follows is an ecological fable that combines environmental lessons with the kind of off-the-wall humor that could only come from one man: Gary Larson. Father worm tells the story of Harriet, a beautiful but stupid maiden who frolics through the forest enjoying the beauty of nature, but completely failing to understand it. The young earthworm learns that nature is not a cute and cuddly theme park designed for the entertainment of stupid humans, but a complex, fragile, and sometimes violent system where every creature plays a vital role, even the lowly worm. Review by Simon Leake.