DISCOVERING GALAPAGOS Lesson

Introduce students to the early discovery of Galapagos by people and the various reasons why the early explorers travelled there.

**Resources required:** Paper, map of Galapagos, images of the Galapagos Islands, Letters from Galapagos documents, internet connection

1. **FIRE STARTER**

   Locate Galapagos on a map of the Pacific and South America, emphasising its remoteness and location on the Equator. Show students images of the Galapagos Islands both modern and historical. Ask students to imagine they are early explorers and in groups to write down words that they think of when they see this image and then to imagine what words came into the minds of the people who first discovered this island, bearing in mind the location of the islands. Ask groups to feedback to the class and have the words written on the board during the class. Do different student groups think about different words when they see the picture?

2. **GAINING GROUND**

   This activity uses the Letters from Galapagos Documents which include two historical sources, one a letter from Tomas de Berlanga, the official discoverer of the islands, and another an extract from Captain John Cook’s journal. Split the class into several groups and assign them either source 1 or source 2 to read. Allow a further 5 minutes per group to discuss what the source tells us about the experiences of the writers in each case.

   As a class, feedback the experiences and impressions of Galapagos that emerge from these sources. Students then use the historical sources and information from the website to create a cartoon strip which shows the events before the first permanent settlements, including whaling.

3. **MAKING WAVES**

   Set students the task of finding out about any other written historical sources about the Galapagos Islands. Did different people have varying experiences when they encountered the islands? Start with the Exploring Galapagos chapter on the Discovering Galapagos website. Other useful links include:
   - [http://www.geo.cornell.edu/geology/GalapagosWWW/Discovery.html](http://www.geo.cornell.edu/geology/GalapagosWWW/Discovery.html)
   - [http://www.ms-starship.com/sciencenew/galapagos_discovery.htm](http://www.ms-starship.com/sciencenew/galapagos_discovery.htm)
   - [http://www.pbs.org/safarchive/5_cool/galapagos/g21_history.html](http://www.pbs.org/safarchive/5_cool/galapagos/g21_history.html)

4. **FUTURE FOCUS**

   Ask students to reflect on the location of the islands and the fact that it was not colonised by the early explorers. How do the students think that has helped in the conservation of the unique ecosystem of the islands?

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**
- To locate the Galapagos on a map of the world or Pacific and their distance from mainland South America and their position on the Equator
- To understand why the area was first discovered but not permanently colonised

**STUDENTS’ OUTCOMES**
- To appreciate the remoteness of the islands
- To understand the various reasons why explorers did not set up colonies on the islands