



Aristotle

An Observer of Nature

Born: 384 B.C. in Greece Lived to be 62 years old

Young Aristotle

Science did not begin yesterday. Scientific thinking goes far back, even to prerecorded history and primitive people. When a person in ancient times tied a rock to a stick to make a weapon, he was thinking scientifically. The first farmer to discover that placing certain seeds in the ground would give rise to an edible plant was a scientist. Long ago people looked up at the stars and kept records of their path through the sky—they were the first astronomers.

Aristotle was among the first scientists to carefully observe nature. He wrote more than 150 books detailing what he learned about plants, animals and nature.

Aristotle was born to a wealthy family. His father was a doctor who served royalty. Young Aristotle learned much when he went with his dad to help the sick.

His dad died when Aristotle was only 10 years old. Since his mother was also dead, he was sent to live with a guardian.

At 17 Aristotle attended a school in Athens led by a genius named Plato. Plato was the most famous philosopher of his time. Aristotle soon became Plato's best student. Plato called him the "intelligence" of the school.

Aristotle stayed at the school for 20 years. He later started his own school. Most of his lectures were given outdoors as he and his students walked through the gardens of Athens.

Later in life Aristotle became a tutor to a young prince. He must have done a great job. The young prince grew up to be Alexander the Great.

Charles Darwin, a scientist in the nineteenth century, wrote that most scientists are mere "schoolboys" compared to Aristotle. What do you think he meant?