



Naturalist David Attenborough still going strong at 90

The creator of acclaimed BBC documentaries such as 'Life on Earth', 'Life in the Freezer' and 'The Private Life of Plants' celebrates 60 years of broadcasting

to broadcast: to transmit a programme by radio or television
snooker: a game similar to pool and billiards
against the odds: improbable, in difficult circumstances
an upset: an unexpected result
fledgling: a young, inexperienced organisation
to resign: to voluntarily leave a job or position
groundbreaking: innovative, pioneering, original
gifted: to have exceptional talent or natural ability
biopic: a biographical film
brim(ming): to be full to the top

The city of Leicester, in the East Midlands of England, has been partying and celebrating like no other this month. Leicester-born Mark Selby became world **snooker** champion on the same day that the city's football club won its first league championship **against all the odds**. It was Selby's second world title in three years but fans of the 'Foxes' had had to wait 132 years to celebrate being champions of England's top division. World-famous tenor Andrea Bocelli serenaded jubilant fans as Leicester City's players collected the Premier League trophy in what many have described as one of the greatest ever sporting **upsets**.

But that was not all, a week later the city was taking part in yet more celebrations. This time it was the birthday of broadcaster and naturalist Sir David Attenborough. The much-loved TV presenter and conservation activist had reached the remarkable age of 90. And even more remarkably, he is still travelling all over the globe to write, produce and present the nature documentaries that have made him both famous and much-loved all over the world.

While Attenborough was born in London, he was brought up in Leicester where his father was principal at University

College. After studying Geology and Zoology at Cambridge University he briefly worked in publishing before starting to work for the **fledgling** TV service at the BBC. The development and growth of BBC television is directly linked to Attenborough's career. He initially presented nature and wildlife programmes such as [Zoo Quest](#) but was soon promoted to the administration. As controller of BBC 2 between 1965 and 1973, he had a strong influence on the style and programming of the BBC for generations to come.

But his real passion was always making programmes, so when he was offered the position of BBC Director-General in 1973, a prestigious post but one that would anchor him to an office in London, he **resigned** and returned to writing and presenting programmes full-time.

The result of this return to his origins was a whole series of **groundbreaking** documentaries that influenced a whole generation of film-makers. Starting with 'Life on Earth' in 1979, the series of 'Life' documentaries has filmed birds, mammals, reptiles, invertebrates, amphibians, sea-life and plants in every imaginable corner of our planet over the last 30 years.

While Attenborough and his **gifted** crew of camera operators and film-makers have pushed technology to the limits to get ever more incredible sequences, it's arguably the emotional element that has most captivated spectators. Attenborough always tries to [get up close](#) to his animal subjects to share some time, and personal space, with gorillas, rhinos, sloths, sea lions, penguins, and manatees, to name just a few, his soft but authoritative voice calmly describing these moving encounters.

His older brother Richard Attenborough was a successful actor and director, best known for directing the Oscar-winning 1982 **biopic** 'Gandhi' as well as for his role in 'Jurassic Park' in 1993, as the park's billionaire creator John Hammond. Richard died at the age of ninety after spending many years in a wheelchair. His younger brother, on the other hand, is still **brimming** with energy and wit at the same age and will be back on our television screens this autumn presenting and narrating 'Planet Earth 2' the sequel to the award-winning 2006 series that was shown in over 130 countries.

Written by ECP coach Rob who recommends plenty of fascinating clips to watch on page 2 → → →

Weekly English Practice

12th May 2016

English Coaching Projects S.Coop.

weeklyenglishpractice.wordpress.com

www.englishcoachingprojects.net Calle San Ignacio de Loyola 15 bajo
info@englishcoachingprojects.net 01001, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Araba-Alava

“iLook, iThink, iSpeak” Express yourself better!

“Let's chat about that!”

THE DAY I MET ATTENBOROUGH



Classic Attenborough moments

Here are three clips of the broadcaster with [gorillas](#), [penguins](#) and the amazing [lyrebird](#) - and the animals give their personal opinions of him ;-)

- ➔ Would you get as close as him to these animals?
- ➔ Describe what the animals do in the real film and what they say in the animated part.

David Attenborough actively campaigns for the conservation of our planet and for the protection of animals. In this fascinating [clip](#) he is in Madagascar looking for the indri, a type of lemur.

- ➔ Why did the man stop hunting indri?
- ➔ How is this visit different to Attenborough's first experience with these animals 50 years ago?

Here are some [moments](#) chosen by the public from different documentaries that have been presented by Attenborough.

- ➔ Which one do you think is the most interesting?

On still working in his 80s

“If I was earning my money by mining coal I would be very glad indeed to stop. But I'm not. I'm travelling round the world looking at the most fabulously interesting things. Such good fortune.”

On public television

“Public service broadcasting is one of the things that distinguishes this country and makes me want to live here. I have spent all my life in it. I would be very distressed if public service broadcasting was weakened. I have been at the BBC since 1952, and know the BBC is constantly being attacked.”

Write your answers in an email and send them to your ECP coach!

- Have you ever heard of (i) the city of Leicester (ii) the game of snooker (iii) Andrea Bocelli (iv) David Attenborough?
- Have you ever seen a programme presented by David Attenborough? If so, which one(s)?
- Do you like watching documentaries? If so, what type do you prefer?
- Do you think you will live to celebrate your 90th birthday?
- What can we do to live to 90 years old and still be active?

On religion and Creationism

“My response is that when Creationists talk about God creating every individual species as a separate act, they always instance hummingbirds, or orchids and other beautiful things. But I think instead of a parasitic worm that is boring through the eye of a boy sitting on the bank of a river in West Africa. That's going to make him blind. And I ask them, 'Are you telling me that the God you believe in, who cares for each one of us individually, created this worm that can live in no other way than in an innocent child's eyeball? Because that doesn't seem to me to coincide with a God who cares for individuals'.”