

Sir David Attenborough

Sir David Attenborough is a natural historian and TV presenter who has introduced millions of people to a variety of animals from around the world. He has a distinctive and widely recognisable voice which people have come to both copy and love.

His Younger Years and Family Life

David Frederick Attenborough was born 8th May 1926 in London. He and his two brothers were raised on the campus of University College in Leicester where their father was a university principal and writer.

Attenborough became interested in the natural world and animals from a young age. By the age of seven, he had an impressive collection of bird eggs and fossils. Once he had finished school, David studied natural sciences at the University of Cambridge. However, once he graduated, David was called to serve for two years in the Royal Navy. He spent two years on a ship in North Wales and did not get to see the world as he had hoped.

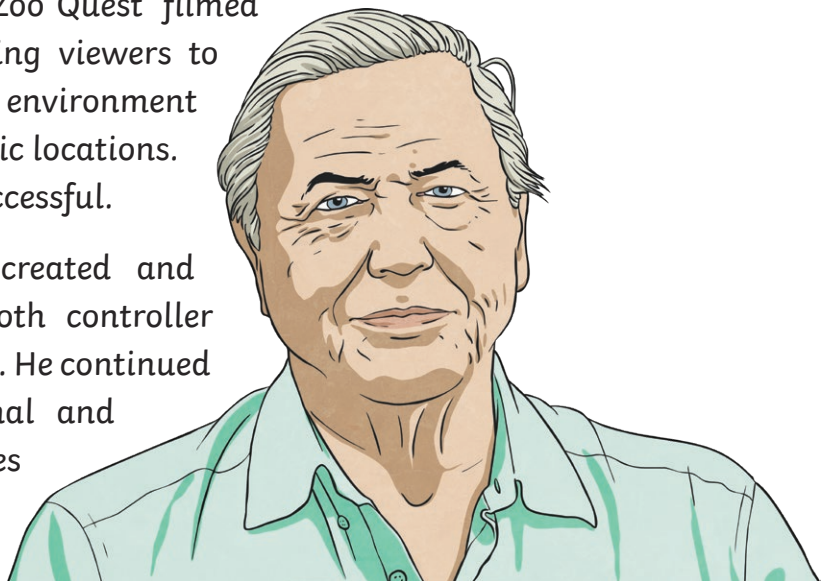
In 1950, Attenborough married Jane Oriel and they had two children together. Sadly, Jane died in 1997.

His Career

After the war ended, Attenborough returned to London and by 1952, he was working as a producer for the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). This was the beginning of an amazing career in television.

Things were not easy at the BBC to begin with. There were few programmes about the natural sciences and those that were did not film animals in their natural environment. This troubled Attenborough and so in 1954, he began a series called 'Zoo Quest'. 'Zoo Quest' filmed animals in the wild, allowing viewers to see animals in their natural environment in sometimes far off and exotic locations. The show was incredibly successful.

In 1965, BBC Two was created and Attenborough worked as both controller and director of programming. He continued to bring viewers educational and fascinating programmes about nature and history.



However, in order to follow his dreams into the wild, Attenborough resigned from the BBC in 1972.

Attenborough began to write and produce many TV series on his own. His most successful programme was 'Life on Earth' which first aired in 1976. 'Life on Earth' was a series that explored wildlife in its natural habitat around the world. At the height of its popularity, around 500 million people tuned in to watch the show.

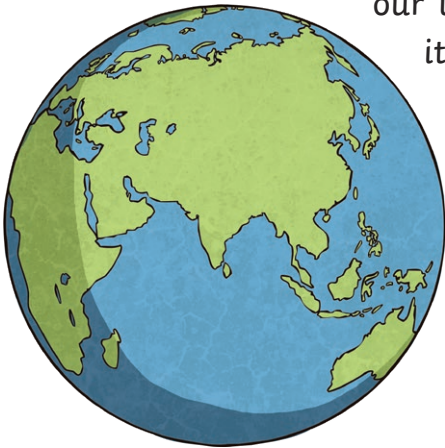
More recently, Attenborough's 'Planet Earth' has become the biggest wildlife documentary ever made and was the first show to air in high definition on the BBC.



Achievements

Attenborough has gained many awards throughout his career. In 1985, he received a knighthood from the Queen, earning the title of Sir David Attenborough. Most important of all perhaps is that Sir David Attenborough has several species of plants, insects and birds named after him.

Sir David Attenborough has made significant contributions to our understanding of nature and the need to care for it. Despite being in his mid-nineties, Attenborough is a leading figure in the fight against plastic pollution, deforestation and other issues that are having a damaging impact on our planet.



Questions

1. What is distinctive about David Attenborough?

2. What is David Attenborough's middle name? Tick **one**.

- Francis
- Frederick
- Ford
- Frank

3. Why was David Attenborough disappointed when serving in the Royal Navy during the Second World War?

4. Who did David Attenborough marry in 1950?

5. What does the BBC stand for? Tick **one**.

- British Broadcasting Company
- Best Broadcasting Corporation
- British Broadcasting Corporation
- Best Broadcasting Company

6. **Find** and **copy** a word which means **tropical** and **unfamiliar**.

7. Explain why you think 'Life on Earth' was such a popular programme.

8. Do you think Sir David Attenborough deserved his knighthood? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Answers

1. What is distinctive about David Attenborough?

his voice

2. What is David Attenborough's middle name? Tick **one**.

- Francis
- Frederick**
- Ford
- Frank

3. Why was David Attenborough disappointed when serving in the Royal Navy during the Second World War?

Pupil's own response, such as: David Attenborough was disappointed because he was hoping to see the world while he served in the Royal Navy. Instead however, he spent two years in North Wales on a ship.

4. Who did David Attenborough marry in 1950?

Jane Oriel

5. What does the BBC stand for? Tick **one**.

- British Broadcasting Company
- Best Broadcasting Corporation
- British Broadcasting Corporation**
- Best Broadcasting Company

6. **Find and copy** a word which means **tropical** and **unfamiliar**.

exotic

7. Explain why you think 'Life on Earth' was such a popular programme.

Pupil's own response, such as: I think that 'Life on Earth' was such a popular programme because there was not much on TV about nature before it and because it showed animals in their natural habitat and environment rather than in captivity such as in zoos.

8. Do you think Sir David Attenborough deserved his knighthood? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Pupil's own response, such as: Yes, I think that Sir David Attenborough deserved his knighthood because he has taught people so much about animals around the world and because even though he is in his nineties, he still works hard to fight against pollution and other issues that are destroying our planet.

Sir David Attenborough

Sir David Attenborough is one of Britain's best loved TV presenters. He is a natural historian who has introduced millions of people to a variety of unknown species of animals from around the world. He has a distinctive and widely recognisable voice which people have come to both copy and love.

Family Life

David Frederick Attenborough was born in Isleworth, West London on 8th May 1926 which is the same year that Queen Elizabeth II was born. He and his two brothers were raised on the campus of University College in Leicester where their father was a university principal and writer.

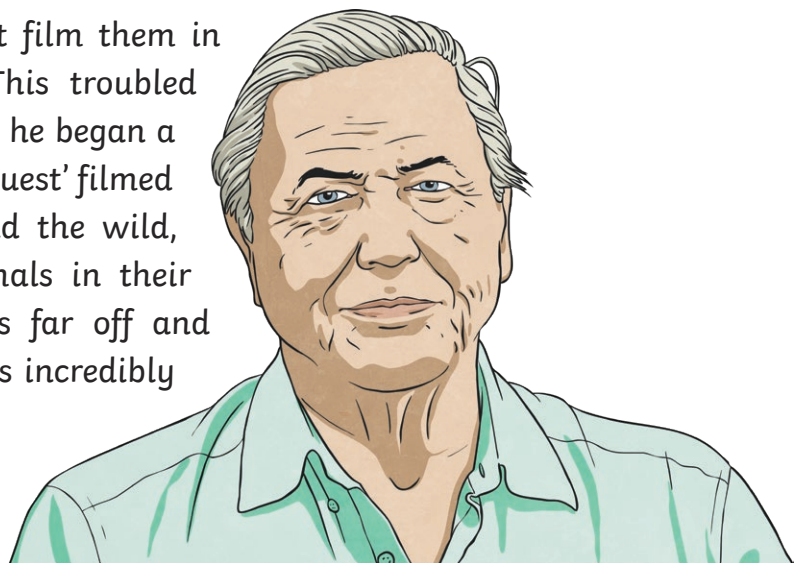
Attenborough developed an interest in the natural world and animals and by the age of seven, had gathered an impressive collection of bird eggs and fossils. When he had finished school, David studied natural sciences at the University of Cambridge. In 1947 however, David was called to serve for two years in the Royal Navy. He spent two years on a ship in North Wales and did not get to explore nature around the world as he had hoped.

In 1950, Attenborough married Jane Oriel and they had two children together. Sadly, Jane died in 1997 from a bleed in the brain.

Career

After the war ended, Attenborough returned to London and started working for an educational publisher. Shortly after, he began a training program with the BBC and in 1952, began working as a producer for the television station. This was the beginning of an astounding career in television.

Things were not easy to begin with at the BBC. There were few programmes devoted to the natural sciences and those that involved animals did not film them in their natural environment. This troubled Attenborough and so in 1954, he began a series called 'Zoo Quest'. 'Zoo Quest' filmed animals both in captivity and the wild, enabling viewers to see animals in their natural habitat in sometimes far off and exotic locations. The show was incredibly successful.



After leaving the BBC to continue his studies, Attenborough was asked to return in 1965 when BBC Two was created. Here, he worked as both controller and director of programming and continued to bring viewers educational and fascinating programmes about nature and history. However, in order to follow his dreams into the wild, Attenborough resigned from the BBC once again in 1972.

Attenborough began to write and produce many TV series independently. His most successful programme was 'Life on Earth' which first aired in 1976. 'Life on Earth' was a series that explored wildlife and the evolution of nature around the world. At the height of its popularity, around 500 million people tuned in to watch the show.

More recently, Attenborough's 'Planet Earth' has become the biggest wildlife documentary ever made. It was the first show to air in high definition on the BBC, providing viewers with a greater sense of colour and reality of the places that he was filming in.

Achievements

Attenborough has gained many awards throughout his career. He has won several BAFTAs and Emmys and, in 1985, he received a knighthood from the Queen, earning the title of Sir David Attenborough. Most important of all perhaps is that Sir David Attenborough has several species of plants, insects and birds named after him.

Did You Know...?

There is only one animal that Sir David Attenborough does not like... rats!



Sir David Attenborough is truly a great Briton and has made significant contributions to our understanding of nature and the need to care for it. Despite being in his mid-nineties, Attenborough is a leading figure in raising awareness about issues that are destroying our planet such as plastic pollution and deforestation and is teaching the world about the importance of protecting our planet now before it is too late.

Questions

1. What is significant about the year that David Attenborough was born?

2. How many children did David Attenborough's parents have? Tick **one**.

- two
- four
- three
- one

3. Explain how Attenborough's studying of the natural world was interrupted in 1947.

4. What significant event happened in Attenborough's life in 1950?

5. **Find** and **copy** a word which means **dedicated**.

6. In what year did 'Zoo Quest' first air? Tick **one**.

- 1952
- 1954
- 1947
- 1950

7. What was Attenborough's first independent programme?

8. Explain why 'Planet Earth' was a pioneering documentary.

9. How is Sir David Attenborough continuing to teach people about the environment in his older years?

Answers

1. What is significant about the year that David Attenborough was born?

Pupil's own response, such as: The year that David Attenborough was born is significant because it is the same year that Queen Elizabeth II was born.

2. How many children did David Attenborough's parents have? Tick **one**.

- two
- four
- three**
- one

3. Explain how Attenborough's studying of the natural world was interrupted in 1947.

Pupil's own response, such as: Attenborough's studying of the natural world was interrupted in 1947 when he was called to serve in the Royal Navy. He had hoped that this would allow him to explore nature around the world but he stayed in North Wales instead.

4. What significant event happened in Attenborough's life in 1950?

He married Jane Oriel.

5. **Find and copy** a word which means **dedicated**.

devoted

6. In what year did 'Zoo Quest' first air? Tick **one**.

- 1952
- 1954**
- 1947
- 1950

7. What was Attenborough's first independent programme?

Life on Earth

8. Explain why 'Planet Earth' was a pioneering documentary.

Pupil's own response, such as: 'Planet Earth' was pioneering documentary because it was the first to be shown in high definition (HD) which gave viewers a more realistic idea of what the places that he was filming in was actually like.

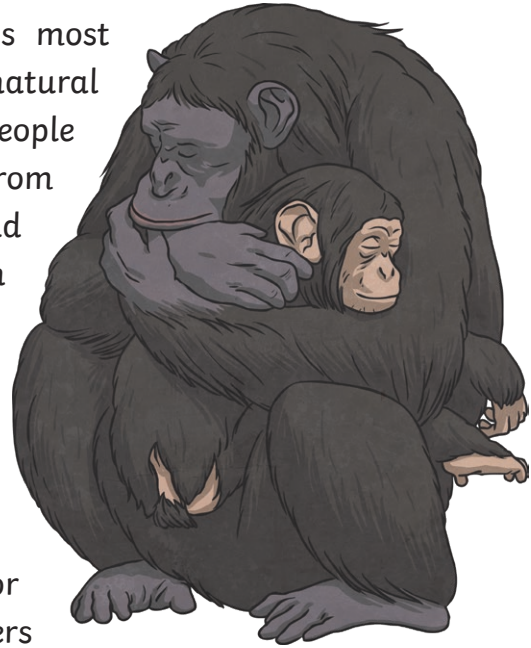
9. How is Sir David Attenborough continuing to teach people about the environment in his older years?

Pupil's own response, such as: Sir David Attenborough is still teaching people about the environment by raising awareness about things, such as plastic pollution, which are having a devastating effect on our planet. He is also teaching us about the importance of making changes and protecting our planet before it is too late.

Sir David Attenborough

Sir David Attenborough is one of Britain's most famous and best loved TV presenters. He is a natural historian who has introduced generations of people to a variety of unknown species of animals from around the world. He has a distinctive and widely recognisable narrator's voice which people have come to both imitate and love.

David Frederick Attenborough was born 8th May 1926 in Isleworth, West London (the same year as Queen Elizabeth II). He had two brothers, the eldest of whom became an Academy Award-winning actor and director (Richard Attenborough). David and his brothers were raised on the campus of University College in Leicester where their father was a university principal and writer.



Attenborough developed a fascination of the natural world and animals and by the age of seven, had gathered an impressive collection of bird eggs and fossils. Once he had finished school, David was awarded with a scholarship to study the natural sciences at the University of Cambridge. After graduating however, David was conscripted to serve for two years in the Royal Navy. He spent two years on a ship in North Wales and did not get to see the world as he had hoped.

In 1950, Attenborough married Jane Oriel and they had two children together. Sadly, Jane died in 1997 from a brain haemorrhage.

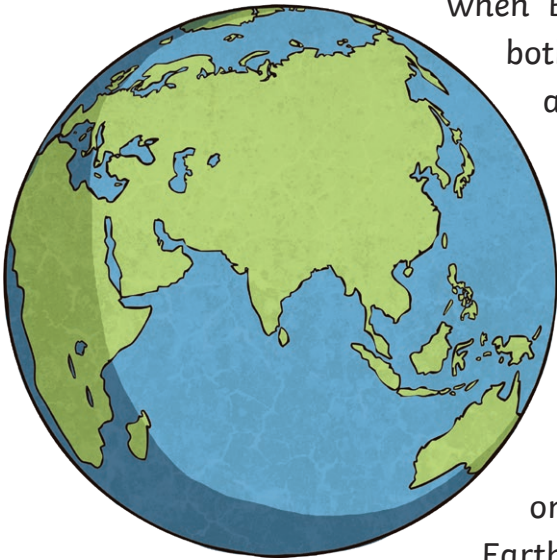
After the war ended, Attenborough returned to London and started working as an editor for an educational publisher. Shortly after, he began a training program with the BBC and in 1952, began working as a producer for the television station. This was the beginning of a remarkable career in television.

Interesting Fact

When David Attenborough started working at the BBC, he had only ever seen one television programme. He didn't even own a TV!

To begin with, however, it was not all plain sailing at the BBC. There were few programmes devoted to the natural sciences and those that involved animals did not film them in their natural environment. This troubled Attenborough and so in 1954, he launched a series titled 'Zoo Quest'. 'Zoo Quest' filmed animals both in captivity and the wild, enabling viewers to see animals in their natural habitat in sometimes far off and exotic locations. The show was incredibly successful.

After leaving the BBC to study social anthropology at the London School of Economics, Attenborough was asked to return in 1965 when BBC Two was created. Here, he worked as both controller and director of programming and continued to bring viewers educational and fascinating programmes about nature and history. However, in order to follow his dreams into the wild, Attenborough resigned from the BBC once again in 1972.



Attenborough began to write and produce TV series' independently as a freelancer. His most successful of all was his program 'Life on Earth' which first aired in 1976. 'Life on Earth' was a series of 96 episodes that explored wildlife and the evolution of nature around the world.

At the height of its popularity, around 500 million people tuned in to watch the show.

More recently, Attenborough's 'Planet Earth' has become the biggest wildlife documentary ever made and was the first show to air in HD (High Definition) on the BBC.

Attenborough has gained many awards throughout his career. He has at least 31 honorary degrees from British universities, has won several BAFTAs and Emmys and in 1985, he received a knighthood from the Queen, earning the title of Sir David Attenborough. Most fittingly of all perhaps is that Sir David Attenborough has several species of plants, insects and birds named after him such as the *Nepenthes attenboroughii* – a giant carnivorous plant that devours animals such as rats.

Did You Know...?

There is only one animal that Sir David Attenborough does not like... rats!



Sir David Attenborough is truly a great Briton and has made huge and significant contributions to our understanding of nature and the need to care for it. Despite being in his mid-nineties, Attenborough is a leading figure in the fight against plastic pollution, deforestation and other issues that are having an irrevocably damaging impact on our planet.

The question is, are we happy to suppose that our grandchildren may never be able to see an elephant except in a picture book?



Questions

1. **Find** and **copy** a word which means to **copy**.

2. What career did David's brother, Richard Attenborough, pursue? Tick **one**.

- Historian
- Archaeologist
- Actor
- Scientist

3. What sad event occurred in Attenborough's life in 1997?

4. When did Attenborough first start working for the BBC? Tick **one**.

- 1947
- 1950
- 1954
- 1952

5. What difficulties did Attenborough face when he first started working for the BBC?

6. What did Attenborough study at the London School of Economics?

7. Explain how we know that Attenborough was well-thought of at the BBC.

8. Explain what freelance work Attenborough did.

9. If you were Sir David Attenborough, which of your achievements would you be most proud of and why?

10. Explain what you think Attenborough meant when he said,

The question is, are we happy to suppose that our grandchildren may never be able to see an elephant except in a picture book?

Answers

1. **Find** and **copy** a word which means to **copy**.

imitate

2. What career did David's brother, Richard Attenborough, pursue? Tick **one**.

- Historian
- Archaeologist
- Actor**
- Scientist

3. What sad event occurred in Attenborough's life in 1997?

His wife, Jane, died.

4. When did Attenborough first start working for the BBC? Tick **one**.

- 1947
- 1950
- 1954
- 1952**

5. What difficulties did Attenborough face when he first started working for the BBC?

Pupil's own response, such as: When he first started working for the BBC there were hardly any programmes about nature or animals on TV so he had to start his own. He also had only seen one television programme before so may have found it hard to understand what types of programmes work on TV.

6. What did Attenborough study at the London School of Economics?

Social Anthropology

7. Explain how we know that Attenborough was well-thought of at the BBC.

Pupil's own response, such as: We know that Attenborough was well-thought of at the BBC because when BBC Two started, Attenborough was asked to come back and work as a controller and director of programming.

8. Explain what freelance work Attenborough did.

Pupil's own response, such as: Attenborough started to write and produce his own, independent TV series' such as 'Life on Earth' when he worked freelance.

9. If you were Sir David Attenborough, which of your achievements would you be most proud of and why?

Pupil's own response, such as: If I were Sir David Attenborough, I would be most proud of the fact that several species of plants, insects and birds have been named after me. This means that my name would live on for generations to come and people would know that I had made a difference by discovering or working with these things.

10. Explain what you think Attenborough meant when he said,

The question is, are we happy to suppose that our grandchildren may never be able to see an elephant except in a picture book?

Pupil's own response, such as: I think that Attenborough was trying to warn us that if we do not take care of nature and our planet, then one day, children will only be able to see elephants in picture books and not in real life because they will be extinct.