

# Sir David Attenborough

David Attenborough is a wildlife film-maker and naturalist (a scientist who studies animals and their behaviour). He has been making television programmes for over 60 years and many people think he is a national treasure.



## Early Life

- David Frederick Attenborough was born in London on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1926.
- He lived on the campus of University College, Leicester as his father was a principal there.
- He lived with his parents, Mary and Frederick, and his two brothers, Richard and John.

As a child, David loved science and nature: he collected fossils, rocks, and bird eggs. After finishing school, he studied natural sciences at Cambridge University. After finishing university, he was called to do two years' service in the Royal Navy in North Wales.

## Television

In 1952, David joined the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) as a producer. In 1954, he began working on a programme called 'Zoo Quest'. This programme showed animals in their natural environment – something that was unusual at the time.

David left the BBC in 1972 so he could create his own shows. In 1979, he started a series called 'Life on Earth' which also became popular. Over 30 years, he made nine different 'Life' programmes.

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.

When David joined the BBC, he didn't own a television.

## The Life Collection

- 1979 - Life on Earth
- 1984 - The Living Planet
- 1990 - The Trails of Life
- 1993 - Life in the Freezer
- 1995 - The Private Life of Plants
- 1998 - The Life of Birds
- 2002 - The Life of Mammals
- 2005 - Life in the Undergrowth
- 2008 - Life in Cold Blood

### His Achievements

Attenborough has earned many awards throughout his career. Not only has he received a knighthood from the Queen, but he has also had several species of plants, insects and birds named after him.

Sir David Attenborough is raising awareness of plastic pollution and other environmental issues that are damaging our planet.

### Did You Know...?

He was born 17 days after Queen Elizabeth II.



# Questions

1. How long has David Attenborough been making television programmes for? Tick **one**.

- 50 years
- 60 years
- 60 months
- 50 months

2. What did he study at university?

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3. What is the name of the programme David worked on in 1954? Tick **one**.

- Life on Earth
- Life in Cold Blood
- Zoo Quest
- Animal Quest

4. What is the name of David's father? Tick **one**.

- Frederick
- John
- Richard
- David

5. Tick the boxes to say whether the sentences are **true** or **false**.

Sentence	True	False
David liked to show animals in their natural habitat.		
David made seven different 'Life' programmes.		
Planet Earth is the biggest wildlife documentary ever made.		
The last 'Life' series he made was called 'Life in Cold Blood'.		

6. What did David receive from the Queen?

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7. Why do you think David is raising awareness about the damage plastic pollution is doing to the planet?

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# Answers

1. How long has David Attenborough been making television programmes for? Tick **one**.

- 50 years  
 **60 years**  
 60 months  
 50 months

2. What did he study at university?

**Natural Sciences**

3. What is the name of the programme David worked on in 1954? Tick **one**.

- Life on Earth  
 Life in Cold Blood  
 **Zoo Quest**  
 Animal Quest

4. What is the name of David's father? Tick **one**.

- Frederick**  
 John  
 Richard  
 David

5. Tick the boxes to say whether the sentences are **true** or **false**.

Sentence	True	False
David liked to show animals in their natural habitat.	✓	
David made seven different 'Life' programmes.		✓
Planet Earth is the biggest wildlife documentary ever made.	✓	
The last 'Life' series he made was called 'Life in Cold Blood'.	✓	

6. What did David receive from the Queen?

**David received a knighthood from the queen.**

7. Why do you think David is raising awareness about the damage plastic pollution is doing to the planet?

**Pupil's own response that refers to the text, such as: 'I think David Attenborough is raising awareness of plastic pollution because pollution is bad for the planet. It is destroying the homes of different creatures and hurting them. I think this is important to him because he cares about animals and wants them to live.'**

# Sir David Attenborough

David Attenborough is a wildlife film-maker and naturalist (a scientist who studies animals and their behaviour). He has been making television programmes for over 60 years and is considered by many to be a national treasure.

## Early Life

David Frederick Attenborough was born in London on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1926. He lived on the campus of University College, Leicester as his father was a principal there. He lived with his parents, Mary and Frederick, and his two brothers, Richard and John.



As a child, David loved science and nature: he collected fossils, rocks, and other items, such as bird eggs. After finishing school, he continued his fascination by studying natural sciences at Cambridge University. After finishing university, he was called to do two years' service in the Royal Navy. He spent those two years in North Wales.

## Television

In 1952, David joined the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) as a producer. In 1954, he began working on a series called 'Zoo Quest'. This was filmed in many interesting places and showed animals in their natural environment. This was quite unusual at the time and the show was incredibly popular

### The Life Collection

- 1979 - Life on Earth
- 1984 - The Living Planet
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- 1993 - Life in the Freezer
- 1995 - The Private Life of Plants
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- 2002 - The Life of Mammals
- 2005 - Life in the Undergrowth
- 2008 - Life in Cold Blood

When David joined the BBC, he had only seen one television programme.

David left the BBC in 1972 so he could write and produce his own shows. In 1979, he started a series called 'Life on Earth' which also became popular. As well as making many other shows throughout his career, he continued to make other 'Life' programmes. Each one focused on a different plant or animal group. In 2008, he finally completed the collection with 'Life in Cold Blood' – a series about reptiles.

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.

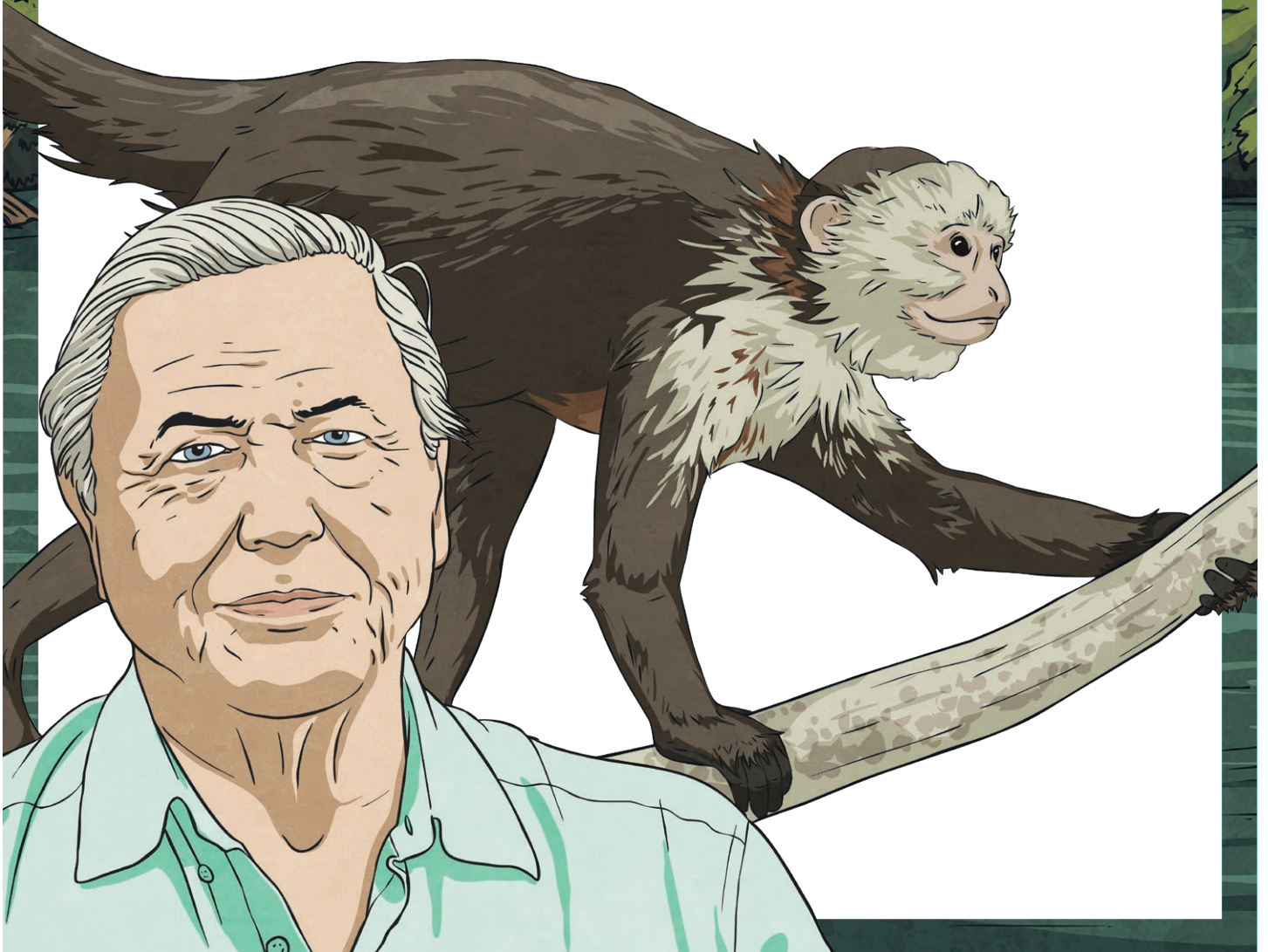
### His Achievements

Attenborough has earned many awards throughout his career. Not only has he received a knighthood from the Queen, but he has also had 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. He is a leading figure in the fight against plastic pollution and other environmental issues that are damaging our planet.

### Did You Know...?

David wouldn't say he is an animal lover. He says he is 'fascinated' by them.



# Questions

1. When was David born? Tick **one**.

- 6<sup>th</sup> May 1928
- 8<sup>th</sup> May 1925
- 5<sup>th</sup> May 1926
- 8<sup>th</sup> May 1926

2. Why did David live on the campus of University college, Leicester? Tick **one**.

- His father studied there.
- They didn't have a house.
- His father was a principal there.
- David wanted to learn so they lived there.

3. What did David collect as a child?

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4. Use the information in the text to order the statements. The first one has been done for you.

- 1 David studied natural sciences at Cambridge University.
- David began working on 'Life on Earth'.
- David left the BBC.
- David joined the BBC as a producer.
- David created a show called 'Zoo Quest'.

5. What is the name of the show that was the first to air in high definition on the BBC?

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6. When did David complete the 'Life Collection'? Tick **one**.

- 2005
- 2008
- 2002
- 2009

7. Why do you think David was knighted by the queen?

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8. Why do you think David is fighting against plastic pollution?

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# Answers

1. When was David born? Tick **one**.

- 6<sup>th</sup> May 1928
- 8<sup>th</sup> May 1925
- 5<sup>th</sup> May 1926
- 8<sup>th</sup> May 1926**

2. Why did David live on the campus of University college, Leicester? Tick **one**.

- His father studied there.
- They didn't have a house.
- His father was a principal there.**
- David wanted to learn so they lived there.

3. What did David collect as a child?

**David collected fossils, rocks and bird's eggs as a child.**

4. Use the information in the text to order the statements. The first one has been done for you.

- 1 David studied natural sciences at Cambridge University.
- 5 David began working on 'Life on Earth'.
- 4 David left the BBC.
- 2 David joined the BBC as a producer.
- 3 David created a show called 'Zoo Quest'.

5. What is the name of the show that was the first to air in high definition on the BBC?

**Planet Earth**

6. When did David complete the 'Life Collection'? Tick **one**.

- 2005
- 2008**
- 2002
- 2009

7. Why do you think David was knighted by the queen?

**Pupil's own response that refers to the text, such as: 'I think David was knighted by the queen because he has taught so many people lots of things about nature. He has also earned lots of other awards so he is good at what he does.'**

8. Why do you think David is fighting against plastic pollution?

**Pupil's own response that refers to the text, such as: 'I think David Attenborough is fighting against plastic pollution because pollution damaging the planet. It is destroying the homes of different creatures and hurting them. I think this is important to him because he cares about animals and wants them to live.'**

# Sir David Attenborough

David Attenborough is a wildlife film-maker and naturalist (a scientist who studies animals and their behaviour). He has been making television programmes for over 60 years and is considered by many to be a national treasure.



## Early Life

David Frederick Attenborough was born in London on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1926. Growing up, he lived with his parents (Mary and Frederick) and his two brothers (Richard and John) on the campus of University College, Leicester, as his father was a principal there. In 1939, the Attenborough family fostered two German-Jewish girls called Irene and Helga, who became like sisters to David.

As a child, David loved science and nature: he collected fossils, rocks, and other specimens, such as bird eggs. After finishing school, he went to Cambridge University to study natural sciences. Once he graduated, he was called to do two years' service in the Royal Navy. He spent those two years in North Wales.

## Television

In 1952, David joined the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) full time as a producer. In 1954, he began working on a series called 'Zoo Quest'. This was filmed in many interesting places and showed animals in their natural environment. Something that hadn't been done much before. The show was incredibly popular.

David left the BBC in 1972 so he could write and produce his own shows. In 1979 he started a series called 'Life on Earth' which became popular. He continued to add to his 'Life Collection' for over 30 years, with each series focusing on a different plant or animal group. In 2008, he finally completed the collection with 'Life in Cold Blood' – a series about reptiles.

Throughout the years, he has also worked on many other television shows, such as 'Wildlife on One', which ran for over 25 years.

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.

David created a new style of wildlife programme - one which focused heavily on the animals, rather than the presenter. He would spend very little time on screen in shows and instead would narrate over the footage. As the footage was so important, he strived to get never before seen shots of creatures in the wild and his team created ground-breaking methods to do this.

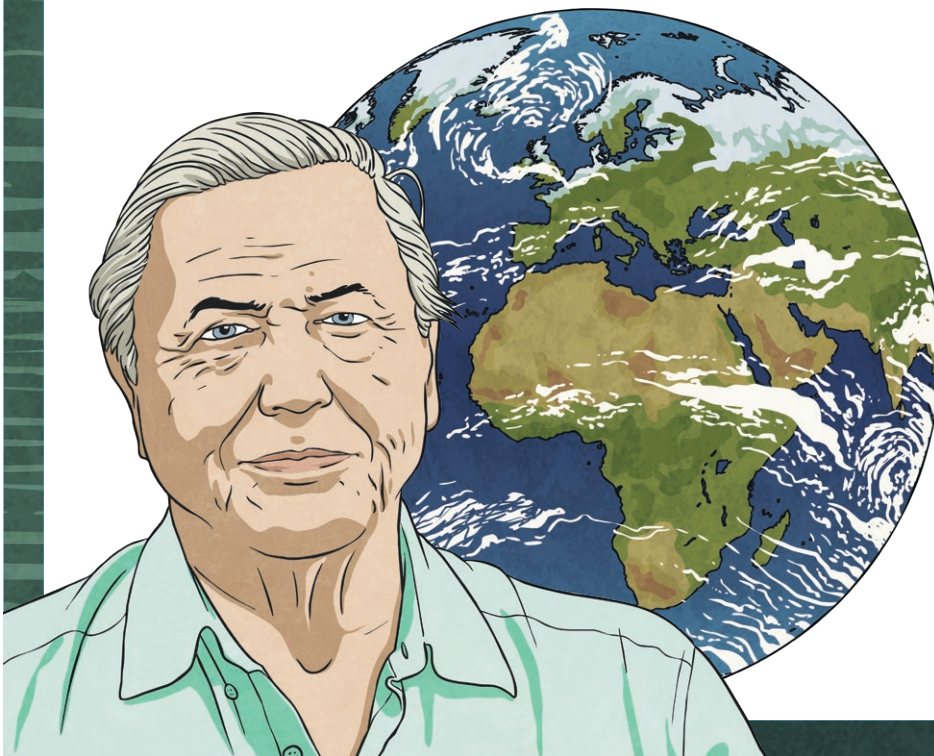
### His Achievements

Attenborough has earned many awards throughout his career. Not only has he received a knighthood from the Queen, but he has also had 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. He is a leading figure in the fight against plastic pollution and other environmental issues that are damaging our planet.

### Did You Know...?

- When David joined the BBC, he had only seen one television programme.
- He was born the same year as Queen Elizabeth II.
- He is one of the most well-travelled people on the planet. For one of his documentaries, he travelled a whopping 256,000 miles – that's the same as travelling around the world ten times!



# Questions

1. When was David Attenborough born?

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2. ‘...he collected fossils, rocks, and other specimens, such as bird eggs.’ Which is closest in meaning to the word **specimens**? Tick **one**.

- items of interest
- spectacles
- precious
- careful

3. Where did David serve in the Royal Navy?

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4. Explain in your own words how David’s style of wildlife programme was different to programmes at the time.

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5. Why did David leave the BBC in 1972?

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6. Tick the boxes to say whether the sentences are **true** or **false**.

Sentence	True	False
It took over 30 years for David to complete his ‘Life Collection’.		
‘Wildlife on One’ ran for under 25 years.		
David had only seen two television programmes when he started working at the BBC.		
David hasn’t travelled much in his lifetime.		

7. What do you think the phrase ‘national treasure’ means and why do you think David is considered to be a ‘national treasure’?

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8. Why do you think David is fighting against plastic pollution?

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# Answers

1. When was David Attenborough born?

**David was born on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1926.**

2. ‘...he collected fossils, rocks, and other specimens, such as bird eggs.’ Which is closest in meaning to the word **specimens**? Tick **one**.

**items of interest**

spectacles

precious

careful

3. Where did David serve in the Royal Navy?

**North Wales**

4. Explain in your own words how David’s style of wildlife programme was different to programmes at the time.

**Pupil’s own response, such as: David’s style of wildlife programme was different to others at the time because he focused more on the animals themselves, showing them in their natural environment. He also spent a lot of time not on the screen in his programmes, and would narrate over the videos of the animals. His team used to get unusual shots of animals too.**

5. Why did David leave the BBC in 1972?

**He left the BBC in 1972 so he could write and produce his own shows.**

6. Tick the boxes to say whether the sentences are **true** or **false**.

Sentence	True	False
It took over 30 years for David to complete his ‘Life Collection’.	✓	
‘Wildlife on One’ ran for under 25 years.		✓
David had only seen two television programmes when he started working at the BBC.		✓
David hasn’t travelled much in his lifetime.		✓

7. What do you think the phrase ‘national treasure’ means and why do you think David is considered to be a ‘national treasure’?

**Pupil’s own response that refers to the text, such as: ‘I think ‘national treasure’ means something that is treasured or precious to the nation. I think David is considered by**

**many to be a national treasure because he has taught so many people lots of things about nature. He has also been on television for 60 years so lots of people will have seen his work and he is very good at what he does as he has earned lots of awards.'**

8. Why do you think David is fighting against plastic pollution?

**Pupil's own response that refers to the text, such as: 'I think David Attenborough is fighting against plastic pollution because pollution damaging the planet. It is destroying the homes of different creatures and hurting them. I think this is important to him because he cares about animals and wants them to live.'**