ENGLISH

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NAME_____GRADE_____DATE_____

Sylvia Earle

A message from Life co-author, Helen Stephenson

I remember learning at school that about three-quarters of the Earth's surface was covered in water. I thought this was amazing. It was too big an idea for me to understand. On the other hand, I grew up quite close to the sea. I was very familiar with the view of the sea on the horizon. Later, when I grew up, I didn't like living in places that were too far from the sea, and, in fact, I have lived my whole life (apart from a brief period) in coastal places. I have, sadly, got used to seeing polluted coastlines, but I still find it hard to imagine that we can really destroy the oceans. This article talks about that idea.

Sylvia Earle: National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence

Sylvia Earle was called a "Hero for the Planet" by *Time* magazine. She's an oceanographer, explorer, author, and lecturer.

Sylvia Earle is one of the world's most famous marine scientists and a National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence. She loves to go diving in the ocean. She has spent a lot of her life both in and under the waves. Earle has led more than a hundred expeditions and she set a record for solo diving in 1,000-metre-deep water. In total, she has spent more than 7,000 hours underwater.

Earle describes the first time she went to the ocean: 'I was three years old and I got knocked over by a wave. The ocean certainly got my attention! It wasn't frightening, it was thrilling. And since then, I have been fascinated by life in the ocean.'

In the past, Earle was the chief scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the USA. Now one of her jobs is with Google Earth's Ocean. Earle's special focus is on developing a global network of areas on the land and in the ocean. This network will protect and support the living systems that are important to the planet. She explains why this is important: 'When I first went to the Gulf of Mexico in the 1950s, the sea looked like a blue infinity. It seemed to be too large and too wild to be damaged by the action of people. Then, in a few decades, not thousands of years, the blue wilderness of my childhood disappeared. By the end of the 20th century, about 90 percent of the sharks, tuna, turtles,

whales and many other large creatures had disappeared from the Gulf. They had been there for millions of years.'
Some people don't understand why the ocean is so important to life on Earth. Earle explains that 'the ocean is the foundation of our life support system. The ocean is alive. The living things in the ocean generate oxygen and take up carbon. If we don't have the ocean, we don't have a planet that works.'
The Gulf of Mexico has had many problems, especially after the Deepwater Horizon Oil disaster of 2010, but Earle says, 'In 2003 I found positive signs in clear, deep water far from the mouth of the Mississippi River. It was full of life. Large areas of the Gulf are not damaged. Protecting the most important places will be good for the future of the Gulf and for all of us.'

Keywords: In your virtual notebook copy these words and paste an image to describe them.

carbon (n) a chemical element that is present in all animals and plants and in coal and oil
creature (n) any living thing that is not a plant
deep (adj) a long way down from the surface to the bottom of something
diving (n) the sport or activity of working or looking around underwater, using special breathing equipment
generate (v) to produce something
marine (adj) relating to the sea or to animals and plants that live in the sea
ocean (n) one of the five very large areas of sea on the Earth's surface
oxygen (n) a colourless gas that exists in large quantities in the air. All plants and animals need oxygen in order to live.
planet (n) a large round object in space that moves around a star. The Earth is an example of a planet.
take up (phr-v) if something takes up air, food or liquid, it uses it in its body. Plants use carbon to live.
wave (n) a line of higher water that moves on the surface of the sea which is caused by the wind or tide making the water rise and fall
wild (adj) natural and not used by people
wilderness (n) a large natural area of land or sea that is not used by people

Reading comprehension:

Read the article and choose the correct option.

1 Who does Sylvia Earle currently work with?

the US government

Google

an oil company

2 When did she first go to the Gulf of Mexico?

when she was three

in 2003

in the 1950s

3 What percentage of animal life had disappeared from the Gulf of Mexico by the year 2000?

20 percent

50 percent

90 percent

4 When was there a big oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico?

2000

2003

2010

Read the article again and choose the correct option.

5 Which of the statements about Sylvia Earle is NOT true?

She's an experienced expedition leader.

She holds a record for the longest time under water.

She does one of her favourite activities in her work.

6 What does she say about her first experience of the sea?

She was afraid of the waves.

She enjoyed it very much.

She was too young to remember it.

7 The work that Earle is currently doing is based ...

all over the world.

in North America.

in the Gulf of Mexico.

8 According to Earle, sixty years ago ...

it was difficult to imagine that the oceans were in danger.

the problems with the sea were too big to solve at that time.

the marine environment wasn't as important as it is now.

9 Which statement is NOT true?

Not everybody agrees that the sea is very important.

The ocean is essential to life on Earth.

We get resources we need from the sea.

10 According to Sylvia Earle ...

it will be too difficult to clean up the Gulf of Mexico.

it's possible to protect marine areas.

parts of the Mississippi River are healthy.