Wildlife Filmmakers

Richard and Sonia Muller make documentaries about wildlife, particularly dangerous animals, like the big cats found in Africa. Film-making for them is a way to bring the message of the importance of understanding wildlife to international audiences, with their last film, *Staying Alive*, exploring relationships between lions and other wildlife in one African region. When Richard and Sonia were invited to help with a special project run by a wildlife organisation that was providing information about the falling numbers of big cats, especially lions, they immediately agreed to take part.

Richard grew up near a wildlife park and as a child was keen on filming what he saw. The couple were introduced at university in Cape Town, and quickly realised how much they had in common. They were both curious about the natural world and Sonia soon discovered a similar talent for filmmaking. As a child in South Africa Sonia often ran off alone to explore the wild areas surrounding her home, despite her parents' fears.

When asked what they found hardest about their work, Sonia and Richard have the same answer - leaving an area and finishing a project. Sonia adds that the hours required can be hard, and things like the heat, dust, and bugs make it very tiring. The excitement of her work comes from not knowing what will happen, perhaps even discovering something new for science, while Richard takes most interest in spending time with individual animals, getting to know their character.

The pair visit schools around the world, and notice that students with access to lots of information don't always have as much understanding about geography as students in countries where access is limited. "Students without the internet constantly available actually look at maps, they want to find out where they are and often end up with a better idea of place," Richard says. A major part of their work is explaining to students the importance of a fuller understanding of various environments by studying the climate, animals and culture of a specific location.

If you'd like a similar career, Richard suggests studying various different areas of biology, rather than learning about the latest film-making technology, as an understanding of the natural world will last forever. The couple also give general advice for those wanting to help protect the environment. Sonia explains that it's important to allow yourself to concentrate. "Turning off personal electronic items gets you closer to the natural world," she says.

"You can watch nature, instead of listening for your mobile phone." Most importantly they agree that if urgent action isn't taken, more animals might be lost. However, the fact that more teenagers are getting involved offers some hope for the future.

Questions 11 – 20

Look at the sentences below about two wildlife filmmakers.
Read the text on the opposite page to decide if each sentence is correct or incorrect.
If it is correct, mark **A**
If it is not correct, mark **B**

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11 Richard and Sonia's most recent film compared lions' behaviour in different parts of Africa.

A **B**

12 It was Richard and Sonia's idea to set up a special project to research the lions in Africa.

A **B**

13 Meeting each other as students was the start of Sonia developing a new interest.

A **B**

14 Sonia's parents encouraged her to discover the natural environment around her childhood home.

A **B**

15 They agree that an uncomfortable working environment is the worst part of their job.

A **B**

16 They have different ideas about what is the most enjoyable part of their job.

A **B**

17 They found people with fewer opportunities to use technology have a better understanding of geography.

A **B**

18 Richard advises students of wildlife to keep up to date with the most recent filmmaking techniques.

A **B**

19 Sonia suggests that some modern technology can make the type of work they do harder.

A **B**

20 The couple believe that people must act quickly to prevent wildlife from disappearing.

A **B**