

Read the text about a woman who has had an unusual career. Then choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) for questions 1-6. Put a cross (☒) in the correct box on the answer sheet. The first one (0) has been done for you.

Meeting a shark hunter

When I tentatively ask 79-year-old Valerie Taylor if she still scuba-dives, she erupts with incredulous horror. "Oh my God, yes! What else would I do? I dive as often as I can. I'm just back from a five-week trip around the Indian Ocean." This is a woman who began her underwater career as a teenage spearfishing champion before becoming one half of a famous and glamorous husband-and-wife marine cinematography duo, so understandably the idea of a week above water must seem unnatural.

It is 41 years since the work of Valerie and her late husband Ron Taylor caught the eye of a 27-year-old wunderkind director called Steven Spielberg, who hired them to film footage for one of his first major film projects, *Jaws*. This week marked the 40th anniversary of the blockbuster's first theatrical release, which would propel their work into the public consciousness in a way that neither Valerie nor her husband could have ever predicted.

But the silver screen was far from Valerie's mind when she first started diving. Her illustrious and thrilling career began simply because her London-born father suffered from stomach ulcers and required a meat-free diet. "We had a waterfront home in Sydney and my brother and I snorkelled with spears to catch fish to eat," she explains. "Spearfishing and diving was very male-dominated at the time; I didn't know any other female divers. But I was a spearo, and I was good."

In her late teens she joined the St George Spearfishing Club in Sydney, where she met Ron, the man she would later marry and work alongside for decades, until his death three years ago from leukaemia. In addition to spearfishing, Ron was an underwater cinematographer, and the couple swiftly realised there was money to be made in filming Valerie underwater.

"What documentary-makers really loved was footage of a beautiful young blonde in a bikini swimming with marine animals," says Valerie with a chuckle. "And they weren't interested in coral or swordfish; they wanted me with sharks, manta rays, anything big or dangerous."

The Taylors' first major underwater film production, *Shark Hunters*, was sold to Australian and American television in 1963. "Ron and I sensed that marine animals just need to be treated with respect and then they will give you space," says Valerie.

Indeed, in all her decades diving with sharks, the Australian has only been bitten on a couple of occasions. "Nothing major," she shrugs. "He couldn't take a chunk out of me because I'd just hang onto his nose."

I observe that she relays a tale of a tussle with a shark the way most people might describe a run-in with a dog, and she smiles. "I'm not very good with dogs, actually," she admits. "If I had to fight for my life with something, I'd rather fight with a shark. Dogs rip your throat out. Sharks don't know about throats."

In 1969 Valerie took up underwater photography and swiftly became a world star of the genre, eventually appearing on the cover of *National Geographic*. With their own underwater cinematography company, Ron and Valerie were much in demand for documentary and feature film footage.

0 **Valerie explains that scuba-diving**

- A gives her a regular income.
- B determines her choice of holiday destination.
- C is her main purpose in life.
- D might seem unusual for somebody her age.

1 **Steven Spielberg's movie**

- A marked the beginning of the cooperation between Valerie and Ron.
- B made people aware of what Valerie and Ron were doing.
- C resulted in Spielberg becoming a close friend of the Taylors.
- D started a successful partnership between the Taylors and Spielberg.

2 **When Valerie was growing up, underwater sports were**

- A reserved for men.
- B regarded as inappropriate for women.
- C uncommon among women.
- D socially unacceptable for women.

3 **Valerie and Ron discovered that**

- A there was financial benefit to be gained from their combined skills.
- B underwater filming was a trend among film-makers.
- C male audiences were looking for attractive women in risky situations.
- D people liked films that showed sea creatures.

4 **Valerie and Ron realised that sea creatures**

- A prefer to be among their own kind.
- B react to appropriate behaviour.
- C need a lot of room.
- D hardly ever attack humans.

5 **According to Valerie, one particular kind of fish**

- A can be fought off easily.
- B has a good sense of smell.
- C has put her at risk many times.
- D has never caused her serious injury.

6 **Valerie would rather be confronted with a big fish because**

- A she considers it harmless.
- B she dislikes a particular pet.
- C it tends to flee rather than attack humans.
- D it applies a different pattern of attack than one pet.

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0	A	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	<input type="checkbox"/>	C	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	A	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	<input type="checkbox"/>	C	<input type="checkbox"/>	D	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	A	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	<input type="checkbox"/>	C	<input type="checkbox"/>	D	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	A	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	<input type="checkbox"/>	C	<input type="checkbox"/>	D	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	A	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	<input type="checkbox"/>	C	<input type="checkbox"/>	D	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	A	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	<input type="checkbox"/>	C	<input type="checkbox"/>	D	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	A	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	<input type="checkbox"/>	C	<input type="checkbox"/>	D	<input type="checkbox"/>

Von der
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