

Reading skills practice: Two remarkable people – exercises

Can a person change the world? Find out about two people who have done some extraordinary things in their attempt to do just that.

Preparation

Match the vocabulary with the correct definition and write a–h next to the numbers 1–8.

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|--------|----------------------|----|--|
| 1..... | a coral reef | a. | to some degree |
| 2..... | somewhat | b. | to spread rubbish across an area |
| 3..... | to litter | c. | an area of coral that can be seen just below the sea |
| 4..... | to bleach | d. | to remove the colour of something or make it lighter |
| 5..... | the summit | e. | to spread things in an untidy way |
| 6..... | reluctant | f. | before a particular time or event |
| 7..... | to strew | g. | the highest point of a mountain |
| 8..... | prior to (something) | h. | unwilling to do something |

Two remarkable people

Keeping an eye on the health of our seas

You might be forgiven for thinking that Lewis Pugh is somewhat out of his mind, particularly since he once swam in water so cold at the North Pole that the cells in his fingers burst. The extreme swimmer then went on to almost drown while swimming in a glacial lake on Mount Everest because of the thin air, and more recently has become the first person to swim long distances across seven seas including the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Black Sea. His motive is crystal clear: to draw the attention of politicians and leaders to the degradation of the environment, particularly our oceans, before it is too late. Lewis would like to see the number of marine protected areas in the world increase from 3 per cent to 10 per cent in an attempt to reverse the damage caused by human activity such as overfishing, polluting and littering. During his expeditions, Lewis has witnessed this environmental destruction first-hand. He's swum over coral reefs bleached by the increase in water temperature, and observed underwater deserts beneath the shallow waters of the Red Sea, devoid of life and strewn with plastic. Pugh believes that nature can recover if it is given space to do so, but the clock is ticking. If we don't start looking after our seas, we may soon have an unsolvable problem on our hands.



Hula-hooping for human rights

Wasfia Nazreen first came across a hula hoop as a young girl, when she saw a foreign child who was visiting her native Bangladesh playing with one. Wasfia reluctantly stood by and watched, as in her country it was believed that girls should not play with hula hoops or ride bikes. Now Wasfia is one of the few people in the world to have climbed the Seven Summits, including Everest and Kilimanjaro, and the first to have hula-hooped on each peak. Her reason for doing so: to empower women and girls in a country which discourages them from doing sport. Wasfia has dedicated her life to supporting human rights and has witnessed numerous international humanitarian projects in her homeland to educate and train women and girls, but once too often they have been left with nothing when such projects have stopped running. Wasfia saw that Bangladesh needed to stand up for itself and so she brought together two of her passions, mountaineering and human rights, in order to try and change attitudes towards women in her country. She originally took up climbing while working on humanitarian campaigns in Tibet and Nepal, as in a coastal, primarily flat country like Bangladesh most people have never set eyes on a mountain. Her campaign seems to be doing the trick as fellow countrymen and women are sitting up and taking notice along with the rest of the world.



1. Check your understanding: grouping

Write sentences a–i in the correct group.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. He/She is concerned about human rights. | f. He/She is concerned about the environment. |
| b. He/She came close to death. | g. He/She disagrees with his/her country's beliefs. |
| c. He/She has done something nobody has done before. | h. He/She carried out his/her feat in seven significant places around the world. |
| d. He/She wants change on a national level. | i. He/She is very clear about what needs to be done. |
| e. He/She wants change on an international level. | |

Lewis Pugh	Wasfia Nazreen	Both

2. Check your understanding: true, false or not given

Read the sentences and write *True* if the information can be found in the text, *False* if the information says the opposite to the text or *Not given* if the information cannot be found in the text.

- Wasfia wanted to play with the foreign child's hula hoop.
- Some of Wasfia's childhood friends secretly rode bikes.
- Wasfia hula-hooped her way up each mountain.
- There has been little effort made to help girls and women in Bangladesh until now.
- The writer believes that the people of Bangladesh are proud of Wasfia's achievements.
- Wasfia learned to climb in Bangladesh.

3. Check your vocabulary: multiple choice

Circle the correct meaning of the phrase in CAPITALS.

1. If someone is OUT OF THEIR MIND, it means they're ...
a. intelligent. b. crazy. c. unconscious.
2. If something is CRYSTAL CLEAR, it's ...
a. very easy to understand. b. meaningless. c. illogical.
3. If you witness something FIRST-HAND, ...
a. you touch something before you see it. b. you're the first person to see it. c. you see it yourself.
4. If THE CLOCK IS TICKING, ...
a. time has stopped. b. there's plenty of time. c. time is running out.
5. If something has happened ONCE TOO OFTEN, it means it's happened ...
a. only once. b. too many times. c. not often enough.
6. If you've NEVER SET EYES ON SOMETHING, it means ...
a. you don't want to see it. b. you refuse to look at it. c. you've never seen it before.
7. If something DOES THE TRICK, ...
a. it creates a problem. b. it gives people false hope. c. it has the effect that was needed.
8. If people SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE, ...
a. they show interest or surprise. b. they write down an important message while seated. c. they change their opinion about something.

Discussion

What do you think about Lewis's and Wasfia's actions? What national or international problem would you like to draw people's attention to?