

# The Keartons: first professional wildlife photographers

# READING

# LEVEL

# Advanced

**NUMBER  
C1 3013R EN**

# LANGUAGE

## English

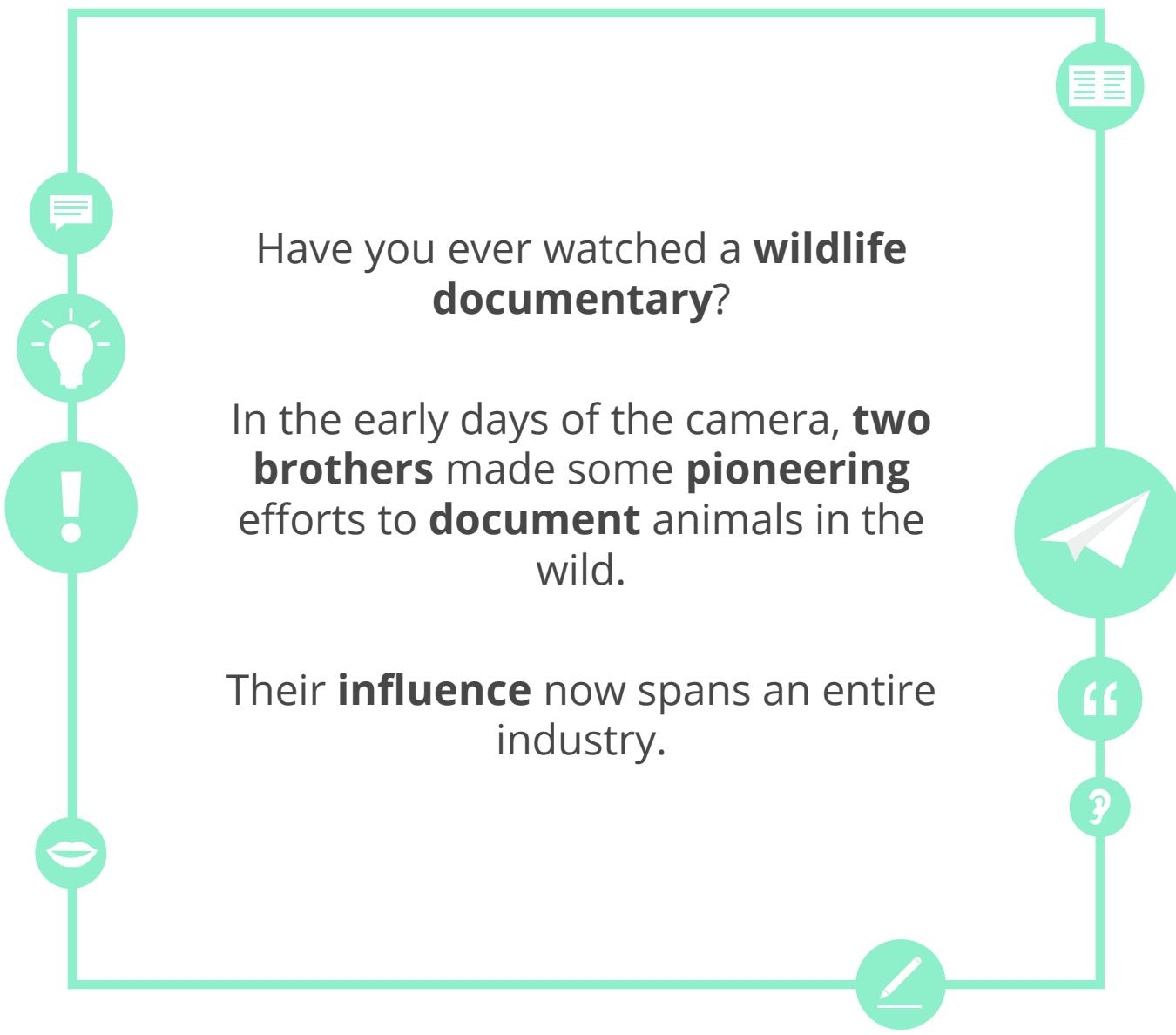




## Goals

- Can read and understand a lengthy text about the first professional wildlife photographers.
- Can present my own ideas about wildlife and conservation in detail.





Have you ever watched a **wildlife documentary**?

In the early days of the camera, **two brothers** made some **pioneering** efforts to **document** animals in the wild.

Their **influence** now spans an entire industry.



## Wildlife photography

**What do you know already about wildlife photography?**

**Are you familiar with any wildlife documentaries? Tell your teacher.**





## Adjectives

Capturing photos of animals in the wild can be a very challenging task. What are some of the difficulties and complications involved in this task?

environment

animal behaviour



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## Vocabulary



Most people have an **innate** love for stories.

Joseph moved to the city after becoming interested in the **burgeoning** art scene.



Gaudi was a **contemporary** of other architects working in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A good **vantage point** always gives you the best views.





## Vocabulary



The young group's first release presents a fresh and **innovative** approach to jazz.

We go birdwatching on the moors each Saturday with a group of **naturalists**.



The chameleon is well known for its ability to **camouflage** itself.

He is a well-known **taxidermist** in London.





## The Keartons: first professional wildlife photographers



The wildlife documentary genre has perhaps been one of the most popular and most widely enjoyed forms of film since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is an **innate** curiosity in humankind about the natural world on earth, especially as we move farther and farther away from nature as cities expand and technology advances; but how was this fascinating genre born?



## The Keartons: first professional wildlife photographers



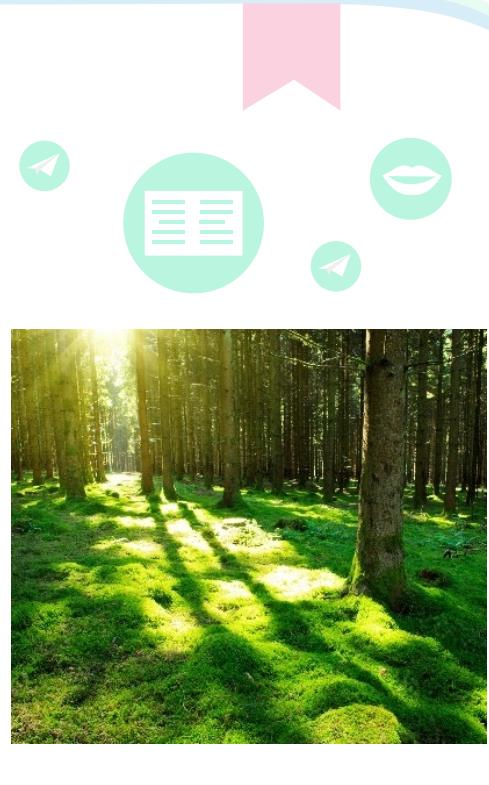
In the dying days of the 19<sup>th</sup> century wildlife photography was a **burgeoning** field and more than anyone it was the Keartons who popularised animal photography in the Victorian age, laying the influence for all who would follow. The Kearton name became known when the brothers Richard and Cherry took the first photographs of an active bird's nest on April 10 1892.



## The Keartons: first professional wildlife photographers

From their home in north Yorkshire, the pair used a cheap box camera to capture the earliest images of a range of insects, birds and mammals. Like their **contemporaries** the Wright Brothers, they embraced new horizons of technology to explore a previously undocumented environment.

Pioneers in nature photography, the brothers were among the first to apply this new technology to the natural world. Their efforts heaving around weighty plate glass technology to the perfect hidden **vantage points** were tireless and resulted in some of the finest early visual records of wildlife in the world.





## Choose the best answer

1. There is an \_\_\_\_\_ curiosity in humankind about the natural world on earth.  
a. inward      b. unrelated      c. innate      d. unassuming
  
2. Two brothers popularised wildlife photography in the dying days of the  
\_\_\_\_\_ century.  
a. 20th      b. 19th      c. 18th      d. 17th
  
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ used innovative techniques to capture photographs of wild animals.  
a. Keatons      b. Keatings      c. Keartons      d. Keitins
  
4. Richard and Cherry were notable for taking the first pictures of an active bird's  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
a. nest      b. den      c. branch      d. community



## Choose the best answer

1. The brothers undertook their first experiments from their home in north \_\_\_\_\_.  
**a. Wales      b. Cumbria      c. Yorkshire      d. Devon**
  
2. Using new \_\_\_\_\_ of technology, the brothers captured some of the first photographs of mammals, birds and insects.  
**a. opportunities      b. horizons      c. prototypes      d. borders**
  
3. The Keartons were considered \_\_\_\_\_ in the development of wildlife photography.  
**a. panoramas      b. presidents      c. pioneers      d. populators**
  
4. Using hidden \_\_\_\_\_ points gave them the benefit of surprise over their subjects.  
**a. vintage      b. vantage      c. vitriol      d. various**



## Tell your teacher

You recently met a knowledgeable and inviting group of naturalists in your town. They invited you on a birdwatching trip last weekend, which you found surprisingly interesting.

Describe the birds you saw on your trip to the teacher.





## Over to you

**The Kearton brothers were pioneers of wildlife photography. The Wright brothers were pioneer aviators. Think of a pioneer in a field you are interested in and write a short paragraph about their influence.**

Sports?

Technology?



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## The Keartons: first professional wildlife photographers



The brothers were among the first to utilise the technology of the camera to document the natural environment. Richard and Cherry became well known as naturalists; they **devoted themselves** to publishing the first nature book to be illustrated with natural photography. *With Nature and a Camera* was the result of their **dedicated** focus and labour. Richard focused on the texts, **penning** numerous best selling books on their exploits and giving public lectures to spread and popularise what was a burgeoning discipline.



## The Keartons: first professional wildlife photographers

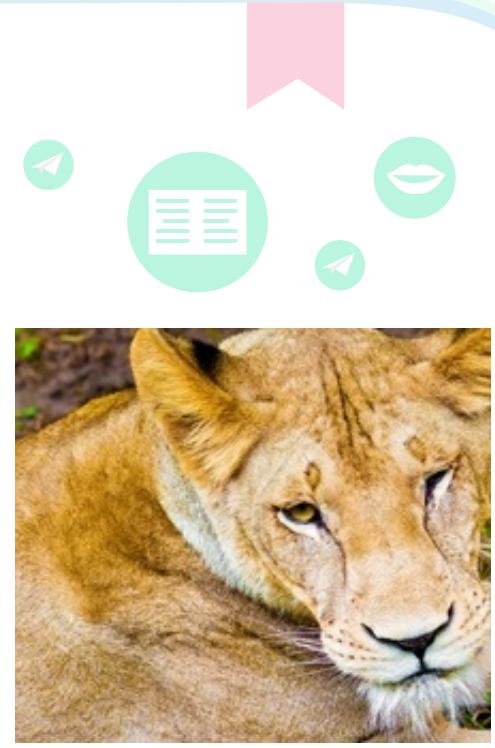


Richard and Cherry kept a visual record of the **avian** ecosystem, but also maintained field recordings. Cherry Kearton made the first phonograph recording of birds in the wild in 1900, recording the call of the nightingale and song thrush.



## The Keartons: first professional wildlife photographers

Cherry was devoted to the photography, becoming known as the first individual to capture film footage of African game and wildlife closer to home. He became one of the pioneers of wildlife documentary films, paying visits to exotic locations all over the world and capturing footage of the natural environment. Eventually he would star in his productions himself – this positioned him as possibly the first ever wildlife presenters.





## New words

**to devote oneself**

Joy **devoted herself** to making positive change in her society, no matter what the cost.

**to pen**

Arthur Conan Doyle is most famous for having **penned** the set of Sherlock Holmes stories and novellas.

**avian**

I love bird watching, visiting aviaries...I am interested in all things **avian**!

**dedicated**

I really enjoyed that grammar class – I have such a **dedicated** German teacher!



## Tell your teacher

You have been given a grant to produce your own wildlife documentary. It is time to plan the details.



Geographical  
location?

Crew members  
to hire?

Species?

A deeper  
message to  
your audience?



## Conservation

The work of the Keartons contributed significantly to the development of conservation. Are there any conservation projects or causes which are important to you? Discuss them with your teacher.



I am passionate about ...

This project is important because ...



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## Evolution of an industry

**What are some ways in which wildlife photography and filmmaking has evolved since the Kearton's time?**





## Write a letter

**Write a letter to be sent back in time to the Kearton brothers. Let them know about all the innovations and technology that naturalists and wildlife documenters have access to today. They will surely be interested to hear how their legacy has developed in the 100+ years since they began!**

A large rectangular box with a thin black border, designed to look like a piece of lined paper. Inside the box are ten evenly spaced horizontal grey lines, intended for the user to write their letter on.



## The Keartons: first professional wildlife photographers



The Kearton name is still built on their pioneering photographs and visual records of birdlife, but they used other **innovative** techniques to get closer to their **quarry**. Richard convinced his family's butcher to skin an ox, and sent its hide to a **taxidermist** in London. The skin of the creature was used as a **vessel** and a disguise. Hidden inside the fake ox, the brothers would set up in a position that allowed them to get close and personal to birds' nests. They were the inventors of 'the hide' – a tactic of **concealment** where the approach was to blend in with the natural environment.

From a hole in the flank of the ox, the lens of the camera could peek out, covertly avoiding the view of the birdlife they were shooting.



## The Keartons: first professional wildlife photographers

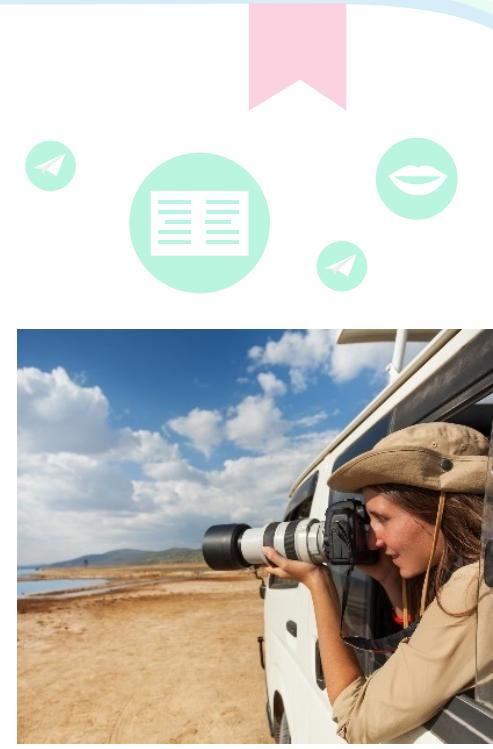
This disguise set the trend for an industry, teaching every generation afterward how to capture wildlife in its natural and undisturbed state. Whenever modern wildlife photographers make use of sophisticated **camouflage** to blend into the natural environment, they are continuing a tradition begun with the Kearton's experiments at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.





## The Keartons: first professional wildlife photographers

Their **cunning** ruses were many and various. They wore masks chiseled from wood to conceal their facial features in the undergrowth and also built artificial dens from locally sourced materials. The **ingenuity** of their design and attention to detail reflected their passion for the natural world. The brothers were also vocal conservationists, spreading awareness about environmental issues. Their care, dedication and respect came during a period when many wildlife filmmakers showed little concern about conservation, and even hunted avidly.





## New vocabulary

### quarry

The cat stalked its **quarry** quietly, waiting for the mouse to stop for a moment.

### to conceal

Worried someone would discover her secret, Natasha **concealed** her diary in her pillowcase.

### cunning

The thieves pulled off their **cunning** plan and managed to steal the painting.

### vessel

The water drained from the bottle, leaving it an empty **vessel**.

cunning

ingenuity

**Ingenuity** refers to something which is inventive or imaginative in its design or construction.

Someone who is **cunning** makes use insight, craft and trickery to realise their ends.



His **cunning** plan was a masterstroke of **ingenuity**.



## Camouflage



Can you think of other ways people or animals use camouflage in different situations?



## Describe

**What would it have been like taking photographs from inside the fake ox? Write a brief description in first-person of your experience inside the hide.**



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## An interview

**Imagine you are Cherry Kearton. You are speaking to a modern audience on the topic of your work, and conservation today. Consider the questions below.**

How were you so successful in your work?

What would you suggest to young people who are interested in working in conservation, or with wildlife today?

Why is conservation so important?

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Talk with your teacher

Wildlife documentaries are one of the most effective ways of spreading public awareness of conservation.



Agree?



Can you think of another way?



## Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

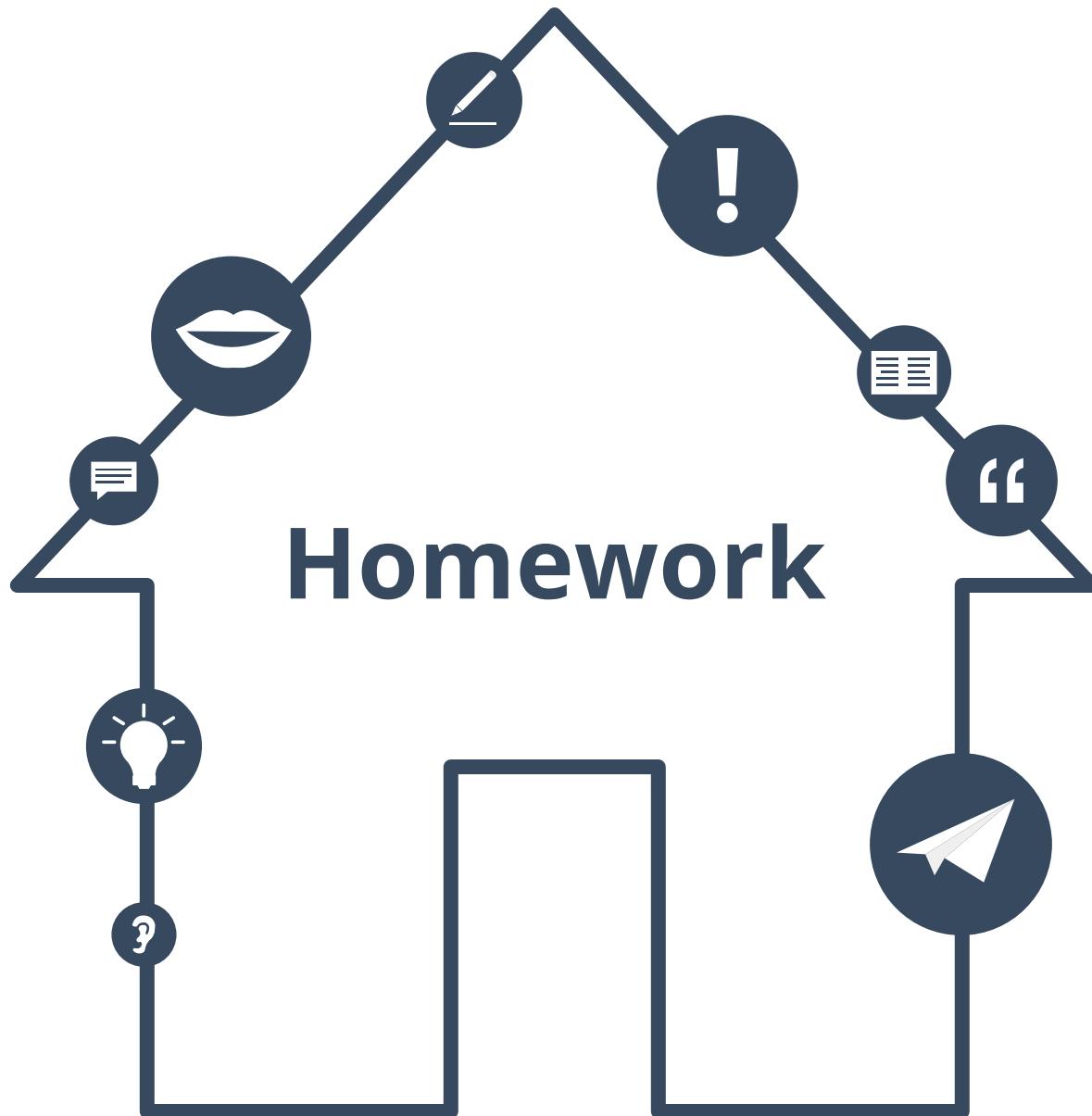
Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





## Answer key

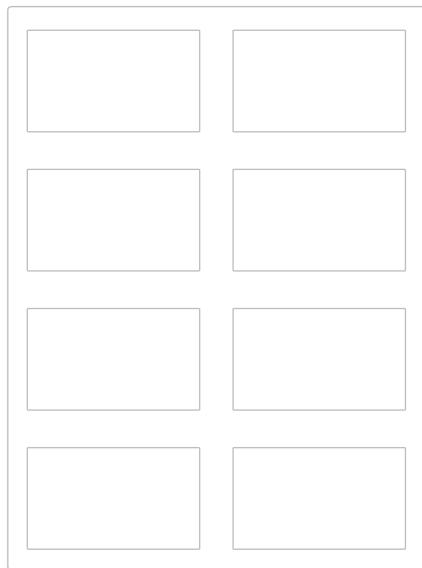
Activity p.11  
1C, 2B, 3C, 4A  
Activity p.12  
1C, 2B, 3C, 4B





## Important vocabulary

Create flashcards for the new vocabulary in today's lesson.  
Ensure you write the definition on the back of the card.





## Write a text

Today, wildlife documentaries are wildly popular with the public, and spread an important message of conservation. Their popularity today would be unimaginable without the pioneering work of the Kearton brothers.

Write a paragraph about why the Kearton's were so successful at their work – why did their photographs engage the public and influence new generations of wildlife documenters?





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