

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 a world-famous ocean scientist and a National Geographic Explorer-in- Residence. When she was younger, she spent a lot of time under the sea. She loved diving in the ocean. Earle was the leader on more than a hundred expeditions. She also set a record for solo diving in 1,000-metre deep water. In total, she spent more than 7,000 hours underwater.

Earle describes the first time she went to the ocean: 'I was three years old and a big wave knocked me over. I wasn't frightened, I was excited. That was the beginning of my interest in the ocean.'

In the past, Earle was the chief scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the USA. Then she worked with Google Earth's Ocean. Earle's special interest is the development of a network of areas on the land and in the ocean. This network can protect the life systems that are important to the Earth. She explains why this is important: 'When I went to the Gulf of Mexico in the 1950s, the sea was a big blue infinity. I didn't understand that the sea was in danger from the actions of people. That was an impossible idea. Then, after thirty years (only thirty, not a thousand!), the blue paradise disappeared. At the end of the 20th century, there were only about 10 percent of the sharks, whales and other animals in the Gulf.'

Why is the ocean important to life on Earth? Earle says, 'The ocean is alive. The living things in the ocean generate oxygen and take up carbon. Our planet doesn't work without the ocean.'

There are still many problems in the Gulf of Mexico, especially after the Deepwater Horizon Oil disaster of 2010. But Sylvia Earle says, 'Many years ago, my team and I were in the Gulf. We found positive signs in clear, deep water far from the mouth of the Mississippi River. It was full of healthy sea life. We can protect the ocean and our future.'

If you want, you can listen to the recorded version of this text (there are some small variations in some words) > go to the "Audios" folder > *Sylvia Earle-Text_audio.mp3*

Reading comprehension

A) Read the article and choose the correct option.

1- Which of the sentences about Sylvia Earle is **false**?

- a) She is a scientist.
- b) She is an explorer.
- c) She is a sportswoman.

2- What is the article about?

- a) Earle's work at National Geographic
- b) the importance of the oceans
- c) the size of the oil industry

3- Which place is the main focus of the article?

- a) the Gulf of Mexico
- b) the Mississippi River
- c) the Pacific Ocean

B) Read the article again and choose the correct option.

4- What **did** Sylvia Earle **like** doing in the sea?

- a) diving
- b) fishing
- c) swimming

5- What happened when Earle was three?

- a) She fell in the sea.
- b) She learned to swim.
- c) She went in a boat.

6- Which sentence is true?

- a) Earle has an important job at the NOAA.
- b) Earle was into computer networks.
- c) Earle wants to protect places in the sea and on the land.

7- When **did** Earle **go** to the Gulf of Mexico?

- a) about seventy years ago
- b) at the end of the 20th century
- c) when she was fifty

8- What does Earle say happened in the Gulf of Mexico?

- a) It was impossible to dive there.
- b) Lots of the animals disappeared.
- c) The blue colour of the water changed.

9- What does she say about the ocean?

- a) All life on Earth needs the ocean.
- b) It's an interesting place to work.
- c) She felt alive in the ocean.

Grammar focus: *The past simple*

The highlighted verbs in the text refer to the past. We use the **simple past** to talk events and situations that are **finished**. The different colours correspond to different forms:

- **The past of the verb to BE:** am, is / are (affirmative, negative and interrogative)
- **The past of regular verbs** (affirmative form)
- **The past of Irregular verbs** (affirmative form)
- **Negative and interrogative forms** (of regular and irregular verbs – **except the verb to be** because it functions both as an auxiliary and a verb)

Go back to the text and complete the table:

The past of TO BE: am, is / are

Affirmative (+)	Negative (-)	Interrogative (?)
I / he / she / it _____ in danger.	I / he / she / it _____ in danger.	Was I /he /she/ it in danger?
You / we / they _____ in the Gulf.	You / we / they weren't in the Gulf.	Were you / we / they in the Gulf?
<u>Existence in the past:</u> There was a scientist diving in the ocean. There _____ many sharks.	There wasn't any pollution in the ocean. There weren't many sharks.	Was there any pollution in the ocean? Were there many dead animals after the oil spill?

- a Complete the article about a successful team using *was*, *were*, *wasn't* or *weren't*.

Cool Runnings X

People ¹ _____ surprised to see a bobsleigh team from Jamaica at the 1988 Winter Olympics in Canada. It ² _____ very easy for the team to practise in Jamaica before the Olympics because there ³ _____ no ice and there ⁴ _____ no bobsleighs for them to use. They ⁵ _____ successful in their races, but they ⁶ _____ very popular with the people watching because they tried so hard. There ⁷ _____ a film telling their story in 1993 called *Cool Runnings* and it ⁸ _____ a huge success, making \$150,000,000 around the world.

- b 6.1) Listen and check your answers. (Audio 6.1)

PRONUNCIATION the past of *to be* (Audio 6.2)

6.2) Listen to the questions and short answers. Are *was*, *were*, *wasn't* and *weren't* stressed in the questions or in the answers?

- 1 A *Was* there a bobsleigh team at the Olympics?
B Yes, there *was*.
- 2 A *Was* it easy for them to practise?
B No, it *wasn't*.
- 3 A *Were* there bobsleighs for them to use?
B No, there *weren't*.
- 4 A *Were* they popular?
B Yes, they *were*.

Short grammar videos (optional)

- Past of BE: <https://youtu.be/O3FdGPehN-E>
- Introduction to the uses of the simple past: <https://youtu.be/R9pPXxRbdtY>

Vocabulary practice *Saying numbers*

1 Match the numbers from the article with the things they refer to.

a hundred	a time period
7,000	a year
1,000	
three	century
1950s	expeditions
90	hours
20th	metres
2010	percent
	years old

2 Complete the sentences with words from the second column in Exercise 1.

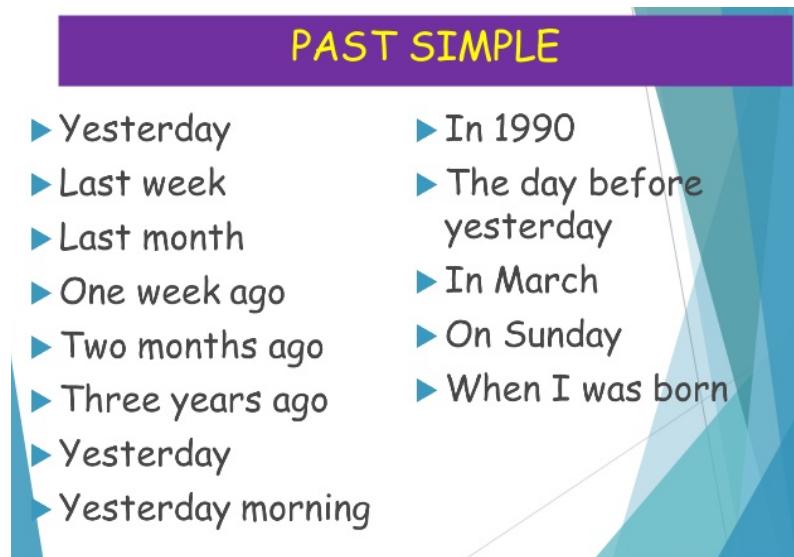
- 1- Water covers 71 _____ of the Earth's surface.
- 2- The first explorers sailed around the world at the beginning of the 16th _____.
- 3- The record for the longest scuba dive is over 49 _____.
- 4- The film Jaws, about a shark, came out in the _____ 1975.
- 5- Usain Bolt is one of the fastest men over 100 _____.

Revision: different uses of cardinal numbers and ordinal numbers: go to “Language bank” folder

> “Saying numbers” > check: *Numbers_measures.pdf / Large numbers.pdf*

Time expressions

The underlined phrases in the article about Sylvia Earle are called **time expressions**. They are used to set a time frame to indicate that the events happened in the past. Here are more:



Prepositions of time: *in*, *on*, *at*

Look at these time expressions and complete the rules (1-4) with *in*, *on* or *at*.

*in 1952 - in July 2010 - three days later - on Saturday -
in the middle of the night - at the last second - on 2nd May
at four o'clock in the afternoon - in the morning - at midday*

- 1) We use _____ with months, years, seasons, decades, centuries and parts of the day.
- 2) We use _____ with days, dates and special days such as *her birthday*, *New Year's Day*.
- 3) We use _____ with times and special expressions such as *night*.
- 4) We don't use _____, _____ or _____ with time expressions such as *yesterday*, *last week*, *two days later*, *a week ago*.

MORE USEFUL PHRASES: Referring to dates and time periods

- **On** 25th May, 1810 / Saturday, 25th May
(read: Saturday *the twenty fifth of May*)
- **In** 1810 / the (middle of the) 19th century / the 70s / the Middle Ages
- **During** the (first/ second half of the) 15th century / the 90s (the nineties) / the Renaissance
- **At the end of** / **By the end of** the 21st century
- **From** 1902 **to** 1904 / **From** the 5th **to** the 7th century
- **Between** 1990 **and** 1995 / **Between** the 18th **and** the 20th century

Saying years:

SAYING YEARS

Before 2000, say the year in two figures, e.g.
1349 (*thirteen forty-nine*), 1906 (*nineteen oh six*)
Say 2000–2009 as one number, e.g. 2004 (*two thousand and four*).
After 2010, you can say the year in two figures
or as one number, e.g. 2012 (*two thousand and twelve* or *twenty twelve*).

1 Listen to some facts about the history of London and write down the years and dates you hear. (audio 4.1)

- E.g.: 1-The Great Fire of London was in 1666.
- 2- The plague, also known as the Black Death, killed thousands of people in London in _____.
- 3- The _____ (1700s) is another way of saying the _____ century.
- 4- Many of London's buildings are Victoria, from the _____ century.
- 5- Elizabeth II became Queen in _____.
- 6- London was called 'swinging London' in the _____ (____s).
- 7- The Millenium Dome and the London Eye both opened in the year _____.
- 8- The Olympic Games were held in London in _____ and _____.

2 | Write the year in words.

1. 1995 nineteen ninety-five
2. 2012 _____
3. 1989 _____
4. 2004 _____
5. Our independence was in _____
6. This year is _____.

3 Answer: When were you born? (answer in four ways: preposition + date/ year/ decade/ century)

- a) I was born _____ (date)
- b) I was born _____ (year)
- c) I was born _____ the..... (decade)
- d) I was born _____ the..... century. (here we use an ordinal number)

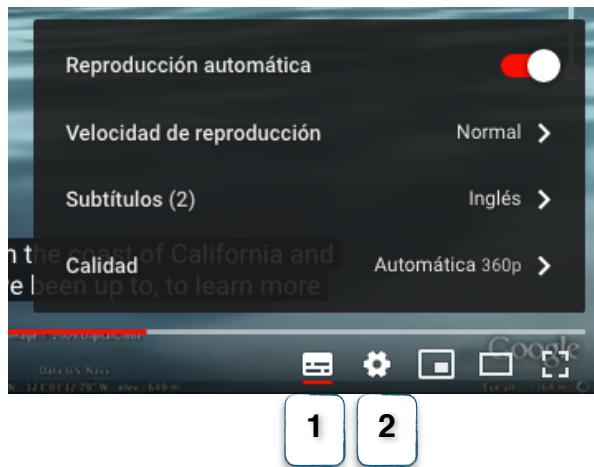
After reading...

If you're still interested in Sylvia Earle's work on Google Earth's Ocean, you can check out her website <https://mission-blue.org/2013/07/john-hanke-a-few-words-about-sylvia-earle/> and watch this short video where she introduced the first version of this app:

https://youtu.be/6ATw1f_qcEg

Activity: Watch the video and answer: what can you find by exploring the oceans through Google Earth?

- 1** - If you want to slow down the video (if you find the people are speaking too fast), click on the ‘cog’/ ‘gear’ icon and choose another speed.
- 2** - To check your answers, you can watch the video with closed captions in English (click on the “CC” icon)



Answers:

Page 2:

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. c) | 6. c) |
| 2. b) | 7. a) |
| 3. a) | 8. b) |
| 4. a) | 9. a) |
| 5. a) | |

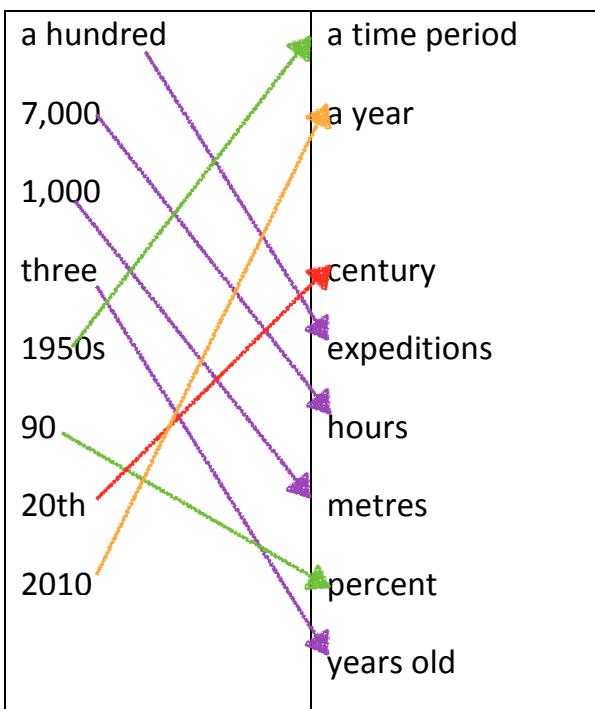
Page 3:

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<u>Existence in the past:</u> There was a scientist diving in the ocean. There <u>were</u> many sharks.	There wasn't any pollution in the ocean. There <u>weren't</u> many sharks.	Was there any pollution in the ocean? Were there many dead animals after the oil spill?

Pronunciation:

Was, were, wasn't and weren't are stressed in the answers.

(in the case of *was* and *were* they are stressed because they are at the end. If they're in the middle of a sentence they can't be stressed).



Page 4

- 2) 1- percent 2- century 3- hours 4- year 5- metres

Page 5:

- 1) We use IN with months, years, seasons, decades, centuries and parts of the day.
- 2) We use ON with days, dates and special days such as *her birthday, New Year's Day*.
- 3) We use AT with times and special expressions such as *night*.
- 4) We don't use IN, ON or AT with time expressions such as *yesterday, last*

Page 6:

1)

4.1

- 1 The Great Fire of London was in 1666.
- 2 The plague, also known as the Black Death, killed thousands of people in London in 1348.
- 3 The seventeen hundreds is another way of saying the eighteenth century.
- 4 Many of London's buildings are Victorian, from the nineteenth century.
- 5 Elizabeth II became Queen in 1952.
- 6 London was called 'swinging London' in the sixties.
- 7 The Millennium Dome and the London Eye both opened in the year 2000.
- 8 The Olympic Games were held in London in 1948 and 2012.

2)

2. twenty twelve OR two thousand and twelve
3. nineteen eighty nine
4. two thousand and four
5. eighteen sixteen
6. twenty twenty OR two thousand and twenty