

# Film and TV

## TV / Nature documentaries

### Teacher's notes



**Age:** Teenager/Young adults

**Level:** Upper intermediate (B2)

**Time:** 90 minutes + 30 optional minutes for webquest

**Activity:** In this lesson, students will:

1. practise speaking about animals and environmental problems;
2. improve listening comprehension of real-life English from TV nature programmes;
3. utilise new language to complete a webquest and give a presentation.

**Language focus:** speaking, listening, vocabulary

**Materials:** one copy of the worksheet per student, a PC or projector, an internet connection in the classroom (the optional webquest activity will require the use of smartphones)

#### Notes:

1. **WARNING:** This lesson refers to two online video taken from TV series based on nature. While these videos don't contain explicit material, the first video may be mildly shocking as it shows an encounter between a man and a wild bear. You should watch the videos before the lesson to judge whether they are appropriate for the particular group of students.
2. This lesson contains exercises which focus on listening, speaking, reading and vocabulary. If you wish to maximise class time for listening and speaking, you could ask students to complete the reading and vocabulary exercises as preparatory homework before the lesson. It would then only be necessary to quickly correct these parts in class. The exercises which could be done as preparatory homework are marked with a symbol:

#### 1. Speak (5 minutes)

**Aims:** to personalise the topic of the lesson, to provide spoken practice, to identify target language which students might already know

**Procedure:** Ask students to briefly discuss the questions in pairs. Monitor their responses. If there are students who are not interested in nature/wildlife, encourage them to explain why. At the end of the activity give some feedback, drawing attention to good language which students used. Focus particularly on language that was used which will be useful for the lesson (animal behaviours, features of nature, etc).

#### 2. Listen and speak (15 minutes)

**Aims:** to provide listening practice of understanding a TV show, to provide spoken practice of language related to wildlife and animal behaviours, to introduce the topic of human effects on the environment

**Procedure:** Play the video ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKzfXKx5AJI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKzfXKx5AJI)). Ask students to briefly compare answers to the four questions in pairs. Play it again and let students decide their final answers in pairs. Elicit the answers. Ask students to briefly discuss the final questions in pairs. Give feedback. Focus on ideas which students have mentioned which will be relevant to later activities (human factors altering the natural behaviours of animals, environmental problems, etc).

#### Key:

- a. *The European brown bears are bigger.*
- b. *No, because the bear will run faster than you.*
- c. *No, because the bear will just see you as meat (bears eat animals which are already dead).*
- d. *The best thing is to distract the bear and then escape.*

#### 3. Read and vocabulary (10 minutes + 5 minutes)

**Aims:** to practice thorough understanding of a short text, to practise word formation, to introduce new vocabulary related to wildlife and conservation

**Procedure:** Tell students that they are going to read a short text which describes some unusual animal behaviour. The text is missing some words. Tell students to first read the text quickly (one minute) to get a general idea of it. They should not complete any of the gaps. Elicit the

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general idea of the text (*groups of young elephants were killing rhinos, the elephants were all orphans and had no role models*). Now tell students to read the text in more detail and try to complete the gaps. Encourage them to look at the words before and after each gap to decide whether they need noun/verb/ adjective/adverb. Tell students to compare answers in pairs. Then elicit the correct answers to the gaps. Tell students to quickly complete the Vocabulary exercise in pairs, highlighting that all the missing words are from the Reading text. Elicit the correct answers, focusing on correct pronunciation.

**Key:**

**a. Read**

1. endangered
2. extinction
3. aggressive
4. depth
5. authorities
6. dramatic
7. impressive
8. significant

**b. Vocabulary**

1. wildlife
2. endangered
3. ranger
4. conservation
5. extinction
6. hunter
7. horn
8. resources

### 4. Listen and speak (15 minutes)

**Aims:** to provide further listening practice of understanding a TV show, to provide spoken practice of language from previous activities related to wildlife/conservation, to introduce the topic of climate change

**Procedure:** Play the video ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwZH\\_aT0FGI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwZH_aT0FGI)). Ask students to briefly compare answers to the four questions in pairs. Play it again and let students decide their final answers in pairs. Elicit the answers. Ask students to briefly discuss the final questions in pairs. Give feedback, focusing especially on language related to climate change.

**Key:**

- a. *Maybe she is washing her fur or maybe she just does it for enjoyment.*
- b. *Two months old.*
- c. *She has lost 50% of her weight during the winter.*
- d. *The ice on the sea melts. This makes it more difficult to travel to areas with seals which polar bears hunt for food.*

### 5. Vocabulary and speak (25 minutes)

**Aims:** to focus on more vocabulary related to wildlife as well as introduce expressions for talking about climate change, to consolidate and provide spoken practice of language from this lesson related to the environment, to practise expressing opinions

**Procedure:** Tell students that they are going to read and discuss six opinions related to wildlife and the environment. Ask students to read the six opinions then in pairs match the vocabulary to the definitions. Elicit the correct answers to the matching exercise. Clarify any doubts which students might have about the meaning of the 'opinion' texts. Tell students that they have about 10 minutes to talk in pairs and say whether they agree/disagree with each opinion or whether the opinion is true for their home country or home city. Before starting, you could focus on typical 'opinion' expressions (e.g. 'As far as I'm concerned ...', 'The way I see it ...', 'It seems to me that ...', etc). Provide feedback.

**Key:**

**a. Vocabulary**

<i>fossil fuels</i>	<i>natural substances like oil or gas which are burned to create energy</i>
<i>the greenhouse effect</i>	<i>the trapping of the sun's heat in the atmosphere</i>
<i>to cut down on</i>	<i>to reduce</i>
<i>emissions</i>	<i>gases or fumes that travel into the air</i>
<i>in captivity</i>	<i>to be confined; not free</i>
<i>the great outdoors</i>	<i>nature; the wild; a non-urban space</i>
<i>unspoiled</i>	<i>to be natural and not touched by humans</i>
<i>carbon footprint</i>	<i>the amount of carbon which an individual generates from using fuels</i>
<i>dairy</i>	<i>products made from milk</i>
<i>take advantage of</i>	<i>exploit, use something/someone for a specific purpose</i>

**b. Speak**

students' own answers



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#### 6. Webquest (30 minutes)

**Aims:** to consolidate language from the lesson related to wildlife and human influence on nature, to promote autonomous learning by asking students to research topics online in English, to practise giving a presentation of research/findings

**Procedure:** Divide students into groups of four. Make sure that each group has at least one strong student. Assign a phenomenon (A–D) to each group. For classes with more than 16 students, you will need to assign the same phenomenon to more than one group. For groups smaller than 16, you might want to only use two or three phenomena. Tell students to follow the worksheet instructions for step 2. Give them about 10 minutes. Monitor their progress. For weaker groups, help them to understand difficult words/ideas and direct them towards websites with clear explanations. For stronger groups, encourage them to elaborate on the information by looking on various websites. Make sure that all members of the group understand the phenomenon that they will need to explain. Form new groups as outlined in Step 3. Give each speaker about two minutes to explain their phenomenon. Encourage the use of online photos/video and promote questions from the rest of the group. Give feedback on speaking.

#### Key:

Each phenomenon is well described on many websites, for example in the links below:

[www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1232933/Blue-whale-songs-getting-deeper-say-baffled-scientists.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1232933/Blue-whale-songs-getting-deeper-say-baffled-scientists.html)

*(Basic info: The voices of blue whales have dropped several octaves in the past 40 years. This could be because climate change has made the sea more acidic or because there are more male whales than before so they don't need to be as loud to attract a mate.)*

<http://all-that-is-interesting.com/the-island-of-drunk-monkeys>

*(Basic info: On a Caribbean island, monkeys became addicted to alcohol from fermented sugar cane in the wild. These days they prefer to steal alcoholic drinks from tourists. The monkeys show different categories of behaviour like social drinking, binge drinking, etc.)*

[www.jasonsteelwildlifephotography.yolasite.com/uk-scorpions.php](http://www.jasonsteelwildlifephotography.yolasite.com/uk-scorpions.php)

*(Basic info: Due to warmer winters and lots of trading with other countries, many scorpions now live in the UK. They can be found mainly in dockland areas in South East England. They can sting people but are not very dangerous.)*

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ant\\_mill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ant_mill)

*(Basic info: Certain colonies of ants are blind and move according to pheromones which makes each follow the ant in front of them. Sometimes their communication gets confused and the ants form a spiral, moving for days in a small circle until they drop dead. This could be caused by electrical interference from mobile phones.)*

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### Worksheet

#### 1. Speak

Discuss the questions below with your classmate.

Do you spend much time in nature? Explain.

Do you tend to have close relationships with animals? Explain.

Describe a dangerous animal which you have seen in a movie or on TV.

#### 2. Listen and speak

You are going to watch a video from the series *Bear Grylls: Escape from Hell* (Discovery). The presenter meets a wild bear in a forest in Europe, while another man explains his previous experience of escaping a bear in California.

Before you watch, brainstorm as a class:

What is the best way to escape a bear in the wild?

Now watch the video and answer the questions below. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKzFXKx5AJI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKzFXKx5AJI)

- What is the main difference between Californian black bears and European brown bears?
- Is it a good idea to run away from a bear? (explain)
- Is it a good idea to make the bear think that you're dead? (explain)
- What is the best way to escape a bear?

Discuss with your classmate:

- Many viewers of this video thought that the bear had been trained and that this video didn't represent a 'normal' encounter between a person and a bear. What do you think?
- Some people think that documentaries about wildlife do more harm than good. Why is this?
- In many countries, the number of bears living in the wild has decreased a lot. What factors have caused this?

#### 3a. Read

Read the text below and complete the gaps by modifying the word in brackets. The first gap has been completed as an example.

##### South Africa's problem with teenage elephants

Several years ago, South African authorities discovered a strange phenomenon in many of its wildlife parks: dead rhinos. This was a major worry as the rhino was an 1. endangered (DANGER) species and wildlife rangers had spent years developing conservation efforts to save rhinos from 2. \_\_\_\_\_ (EXTINCT). The dead rhinos were always found with their



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### Worksheet

horns still attached so authorities were able to eliminate the possibility that they had been killed by hunters. The real killers soon became clear: groups of teenage elephants. It was first a mystery why young elephants were forming groups in order to attack and kill rhinos. There was no clear reason for this 3. \_\_\_\_\_ (AGGRESSION) behaviour as elephants and rhinos are not natural enemies and don't tend to compete for territory or resources like food and water. Zoologists were both confused and concerned and began to study the phenomenon in 4. \_\_\_\_\_ (DEEP). It quickly became clear that these troubled teenage elephants had something in common: they were all orphans. Their parents had been killed either by hunters or by state 5. \_\_\_\_\_ (AUTHORISE) who had been trying to control elephant numbers in the 1990s. It was a sad story familiar to humans: angry teenagers without role models. The government began a 'Big Brother' programme in which adult male elephants were sent to the areas with the troubled teens. It was found that the adult males had a 6. \_\_\_\_\_ (DRAMA) arrival: they fought with the younger elephants so as to establish a new hierarchy in the group. The adults became the new group leaders and the results were 7. \_\_\_\_\_ (IMPRESS). There was a 8. \_\_\_\_\_ (SIGNIFY) decrease in rhino deaths across the country with one wildlife park reporting a complete resolution of the problem.

### 3b. Vocabulary

Find the words to complete the gaps. All of the words come from the previous article.

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ park is a large area where animals are protected but don't live in cages.
2. The orangutan is one of the most \_\_\_\_\_ species on the planet. There are fewer than 50,000 in the whole world.
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a person whose job is to take care of a park, a forest or an area of countryside.
4. To prevent the disappearance of a species, we need to make \_\_\_\_\_ efforts.
5. The World Wildlife Foundation is an organisation that works hard to save animals in danger of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. A person who catches and kills animals in the wild is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. An elephant has long, white tusks which are often sold for ivory. A rhino has a \_\_\_\_\_ on its face which is often sold as an ornament or medicine.
8. One of the effects of climate change is that certain areas have less water and plants so many animals need to compete for \_\_\_\_\_ like food and water.

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### Worksheet

#### 4. Listen and speak

Now watch this video from the series Planet Earth (BBC). It shows some polar bears in the Arctic seeing the first sunshine in spring. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwZH\\_aT0FGI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwZH_aT0FGI)

(\*vocabulary note: 'a den' = a bear's underground home; 'a cub' = a young bear)

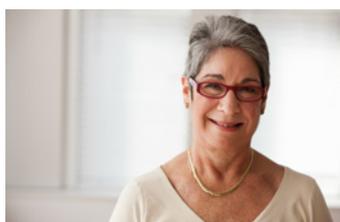
- Why does the mother move through the snow in an unusual way?
- How old are the cubs?
- What information do we hear about the mother's weight?
- What problem do polar bears have in spring?

Discuss with your classmate:

- The internet is full of videos of cute animals. Can you think of other online videos of animals which have become popular?
- The World Wildlife Foundation describes the current status of polar bears as 'vulnerable'. What factors have caused this to happen?

#### 5a. Vocabulary

Below are the opinions of six people. First read each opinion, and then match the words in the table to the correct definitions.



Bertha (65) – Vancouver, Canada

It makes me so angry when certain people say that climate change doesn't exist. The facts are clear: burning **fossil fuels** creates carbon dioxide, causing **the greenhouse effect**. The climate in my country has changed a lot over the last few decades.

I'm really proud of my country. We've **cut down on** our carbon **emissions** by 20% in the past ten years. The air in my city is now much cleaner than years ago.



Olivia (40) – Stockholm, Sweden



Steve (39) – London, UK

I took my five-year-old son to the zoo last month. Never again! They're such sad places, seeing the animals **in captivity**. I know they say that zoos can benefit certain species, but that's not the impression that I got.

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My dream holiday is to go on safari. Forget Disney World and five-star beach hotels, my perfect trip would be two weeks in a little cabin in **the great outdoors** surrounded by **unspoiled** nature.



Patricia (25) – Dublin, Ireland



Mark (22) – Manchester, UK

I'm really conscious of my **carbon footprint**. I try to generate as little carbon as possible in my daily life. I would never make an unnecessary journey by plane or buy my own car. It's everybody's responsibility to think about these things.

I've been a vegan for seven years. That means that I don't eat any meat, eggs or **dairy** and I never buy animal products. Humans don't have the right to **take advantage of** animals. It's bad for the animals and bad for our environment.



Simon (33) – Detroit, USA

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| fossil fuels          | exploit, use something/someone for a specific purpose                |
| the greenhouse effect | gases or fumes that travel into the air                              |
| to cut down on        | to be natural and not touched by humans                              |
| emissions             | to be confined; not free   |
| in captivity          | products made from milk  |
| the great outdoors    | natural substances like oil or gas which are burned to create energy |
| unspoiled             | nature; the wild; a non-urban space                                  |
| carbon footprint      | to reduce  |
| dairy                 | the amount of carbon which an individual generates from using fuels  |
| take advantage of     | the trapping of the sun's heat in the atmosphere                     |



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#### 5b. Speak

Now talk with your classmate about whether you agree or disagree with each opinion. Try to use vocabulary you have studied in this lesson.

#### 6. Webquest (optional)

Divide into four groups. Each group is going to investigate a different animal phenomenon.

##### Step 1

Your teacher will tell you which phenomenon corresponds to your group.

Group A: The voices of whales are getting deeper

Group B: Monkeys on the island of Saint Kitt's have become addicted to alcohol

Group C: Many scorpions now live in the UK

Group D: Ants are forming 'death spirals'

##### Step 2

You have ten minutes to research this phenomenon on your smartphone. Work together as a group. Make some notes which will allow you to:

- Describe the phenomenon
- Describe some possible theories for the cause of the phenomenon

##### Step 3

Form new groups of four people, in which each member has researched a different phenomenon. Each member should explain the results of their research and answer any questions that your groupmates may have. Use online photos or videos if they are relevant.