

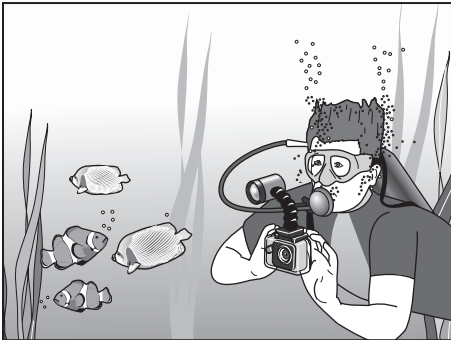


Exercise 4

Read the article about a photographer called Ahmed Ibrahim, who takes pictures of life under the sea, and then answer the questions.

Underwater photography

by Ahmed Ibrahim



I work as an underwater photographer, taking pictures of life beneath the surface of our oceans. I've always been fascinated by both photography and the underwater world, so it's no surprise I've ended up doing what I do. Although my mother and father's preference was painting rather than photography, my sister and I were always encouraged to discover our own individual ways of expressing ourselves, rather than simply sharing in their passion. I'm sure that if they'd pushed us in a particular career direction, I wouldn't be as content with life as I am now.

The first thing I became obsessed with was filmmaking, saving up for a whole year to buy a video camera! I was always rather dissatisfied with each film I made, though, and it took me a while to realise why. I'm the sort of person who likes everything to be perfect – if something isn't absolutely right, I never feel at peace. In a 20-minute video, however expertly it's filmed, I would be sure to find something I wasn't totally happy with. A photo, on the other hand, is taken in an instant, and if it's no good, I just delete it and try again. So I changed to photography, even though I had to invest in a different camera.

What started as a hobby is now a full-time profession, which I've been lucky enough to do worldwide. Although it's an incredibly difficult place to work, the region I return to most often is Antarctica. I've finally learned how to prevent my cameras freezing when it's -30°C , but the wind can unexpectedly go from 10 to 100 kilometres per hour in just a few minutes, often accompanied by snow, something I'll never get used to. Antarctica is vast, so I can spend most of a three-week project looking for the whales I've come to photograph without seeing a single one. But a single high-quality image of a whale underwater makes it all worthwhile.

I also love hot places and my family and I have recently made our home on the Caribbean island of Bonaire after living in New York for many years. My wife's in the same profession as me, and we're both drawn to the fast pace of city life. Coming up with original proposals for potential photography work was actually quite hard, though, because we were so cut off from the natural world. Living on Bonaire has solved that problem, although it now takes longer to reach the locations we're working in.

So what do I hope to achieve through my photography? Well, it's my belief that a large proportion of the world's population is losing touch with nature, partly through increased numbers living in urban, rather than rural, environments. If my photos help to restore those links for just one person, then I've succeeded. After all, the more people there are who respect nature, the less damage they'll do to it. There are some extraordinary creatures living in our seas that deserve to be known about and protected.

I'd therefore be delighted if anyone reading this decided to become an underwater photographer too. I'll save you some time looking for underwater photography courses by informing you that, apart from a few very basic qualifications, there are none. Taking pictures underwater is, by its very nature, far riskier than taking them on shore. So put your time initially into making sure you're totally comfortable operating in challenging underwater environments; it's your ability to manage there that'll keep you out of danger and eventually allow you to take memorable photographs.



Question 10

What does Ahmed suggest about his childhood?

- A** He is grateful for being raised in a creative household.
- B** He tended to ignore any careers guidance he was given.
- C** He felt inspired by the example his parents set.

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