Vocabulary

*Before reading, translate these words.*

Internment

Pursue

Prolific

Climate change denier

Discourse

Environmentalist

Carbon footprint

Order of Canada

Humble

biography

David Suzuki was born in Vancouver, British Columbia on March 24th, 1936. He actually has a twin sister named Marcia. During World War 2, Suzuki’s family was placed in an internment camp. There were fears of Japanese spies, so over 22,000 Japanese Canadians (90%) were placed in internment. The imprisonment of Japanese Canadians is something that a lot of Canadian try to forget or ignore. Suzuki’s father was sent to a labor camp and one of his sisters was born in the internment camp. Suzuki could not speak Japanese like the other kids in the camp, so he spent his time learning about (and exploring) nature. After the war, all Japanese people were forced to move east of the Rocky Mountains. The Suzuki family moved to Ontario.

Suzuki moved to the United States to pursue his education. Eventually, he received his Doctor of Philosophy degree in zoology from the University of Chicago in 1961. He worked in laboratories, was an assistant professor, and became a full professor in the genetics department of the University of British Columbia. He remained a professor there from 1963 to 2001.

However, Suzuki is mostly known for the television program, *The Nature of Things*. He had a few other programs before *The Nature of Things*, but he didn’t find success until the show hired him in 1979. The goal of the program was to explain science to the public in a way that they could understand. *The Nature of Things* has been shown in 50 countries and has won many awards.

In addition to *The Nature of Things*, Suzuki has been involved in many other science-based entertainment. On IMDB, he has 9 acting credits and has appeared as himself in 110 programs. He is also a prolific author. He has written 52 books (including 19 for children).

While he may be more famous from his appearance in media, he is also a spokesperson on global climate change. He is passionate about it. He believes that there is overwhelming evidence to show that climate change is happening. He says that climate change deniers tend to not be climate scientists, but they affect the public discourse by focusing on the media, general public, and politicians. His website, davidsuzuki.org, is focused on climate change as well as other environmental issues.

Suzuki has received some criticisms for his lifestyle because he has a large carbon footprint. He acknowledged it and made changes to reduce his carbon footprint. He stopped vacationing overseas and tries to arrange his speeches so that he doesn’t have to travel too much. He also tries to use video conferencing rather than in-person meetings to help reduce his carbon footprint.

Suzuki is passionate about environmentalism. He seems like a humble person despite being internationally praised. He has been given 29 honorary degrees from universities in Canada and around the world. He has also won many awards and honors for his work in environmentalism including the Order of Canada.

Questions

1. Where was David Suzuki born?
2. Why was he placed in an internment camp?
3. Find the Rocky Mountains on a map of Canada. Why do you think Japanese-Canadians were forced to move East of the Rockies?
4. What television show is Suzuki known for?
5. What is the goal of the tv show?
6. David Suzuki is an environmentalist. What is he passionate about?
7. How has he reduced his carbon footprint?
8. How does video conferencing reduce his carbon footprint?
9. How can you decrease your carbon footprint?
10. Do you agree with Suzuki about climate change? Whose fault is it?