

Reality TV

Topic

TV programmes, reality TV

Aims

- To learn and practise vocabulary related to television and TV programmes
- To practise speaking
- To practise question formation
- To practise writing skills

Age group

12- adult

Level

B1/ B2

Time

60 – 90 minutes

Materials

1. Reality TV student worksheet
2. Internet links: <http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/reality-tv> Guardian page on reality TV shows
<http://bigbrother.channel5.com/> - Celebrity Big Brother website
<http://realitytvteenagegirls.weebly.com/> - Article about negative effects of reality TV on teenagers

Introduction

This is a series of activities to discuss preferences in TV programmes and the viewing habits in your students' country and includes two texts. It also considers the merits and dangers of 'Reality TV' formats. The depth of discussion depends on the level of your class.

Write the names of a couple of Reality TV programmes from your host country, if they exist. 'Big Brother' may be a good choice. Ask: What are these? Who watches these programmes? Can you describe the programme? Do you like this type of programme? If students have knowledge of these programmes ask them if they have ever voted or sent a text message to a programme. Have they ever been on a website for a programme?

Make it a mystery style introduction with a set of clues. For example: Nearly 80% of teenagers in the UK have one of these in their bedroom. Some people will do anything to get on it. Some people think it is a bad influence on young people.

What is it?

Start by describing what you saw on TV last night. Mention a couple of programmes and say if you enjoyed them. Grade your language to suit the level of your class. Then ask: 'What did you see? Did you watch TV last night? Have you got a TV?'

Procedure

<p>1. Task 1 – Television programmes</p>	<p>If your students are an intermediate level you can elicit some types of programme before you give out the task. 'I saw a game show last night. What other types of programme are there on TV?'</p> <p>Ask a couple of people around the class and then put students in pairs to tell each other which programmes they like best. Encourage higher levels to use degrees of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I really love, • I'm not too keen on • I can't stand <p>Run through these with your own tastes to give an example.</p> <p>The questions lead on to the idea of programming. Invite more fluent students to suggest ways that their TV is developing. You can feed in useful vocabulary and preview ideas at this stage. Don't do this with pre-intermediate students as it will overload them.</p>
<p>2. Task 2 –Your tastes and interests</p>	<p>You could introduce the idea of different tastes by using an example of your own family. Perhaps you don't like gardening but your dad loves it so you go to your room to watch other types of programme. Expand on how much you like certain subjects and give a good idea to more advanced students. A simple sentence will do for lower levels: <i>'I'm</i></p>

very interested in the Moon and Mars so I like programmes about Space.' 'I love rock music so I like music shows.'

Put students in pairs or small groups to discuss their tastes. Then ask each pair or group to think of 3 types of programme that are very popular.

Hold a feedback session. This introduces the idea of the dominance of one type of programme.

At this stage you could introduce some information about the UK. Cookery and travel programmes are very popular. There are also a lot of programmes about moving home, decorating homes, buying homes or gardening.

3. Task 3 – Reality TV

Put students in pairs to do this task. Make sure students understand the terms '**swap**' and '**fly-on-the-wall**' before you continue. Help lower levels guess the meaning of '**the box**'

You could discuss the implications of '**Wife Swap**' with higher levels. Do you think the couples will agree with each other? Do you think this programme sounds silly? Why are so many viewers interested in it? Is there no privacy?

4. Task 4 – Your favourite programme

This can be a written or an oral task. Put students in pairs to tell each other about their programmes. If appropriate to the class you can get pairs to write a programme description together if they agree. Build a model on the board for lower levels to follow. Use an example of your own favourite.

5. Task 5 – A Nation of Square Eyes

Use the information on the UK to elicit the sorts of questions that might have been in the UK survey. Prompt lower levels with : How often? How much? How many?
Lower levels can work in pairs or small groups to think of questions for their survey or they can work with you if this is too challenging.

Then they can do a full class survey. Put all questions on the board and ask them to go round and get the answers. Instead of a whole class survey this can be a small group survey or pair interview.

Higher levels should be allowed more freedom to experiment with questions and encourage them to think of more types of information.

This whole class task might not be appropriate to your situation. You can do the survey with a show of hands: Ask; 'Who watches TV more than 2 hours a day?' 'Less than 2 hours?' etc.

6. Task 6 – Choose a programme

The text for this task can be modified to suit your needs.

With lower levels only give out 3-4 programme descriptions. To make this more i

interesting photocopy each description and give groups of 3-4 students one description each. Ask them to read the description and try to explain the programme to their group. They can then all read the descriptions.

For higher levels you could do a pre reading exercise. Give the descriptions without the titles of each programme. Call out the programme title and get the students to match them to a description.

To make a reading and speaking game for higher levels you can give half the class programme titles and the other half descriptions. The students with the titles must try to imagine what their programme is about and make questions to find out more about it.

The students with the descriptions read and learn their programme. Take away the slips of paper. Ask the students with just a title and questions to go round asking them until they find their partner. The first pair to find each other are the winners.

Put students in pairs or groups to discuss the task questions. Tell them that it is also possible that they do not like any of the programmes. That's OK.

Hold class feedback on the last 2 questions. You could also ask them if they would agree to go on one of these types of programme.

This topic could form the basis of a presentation next lesson or a written essay. If students need exam practice they can write to a newspaper giving their views on the state of TV in the digital age.

**7. Task 7 –
Discussion
questions**

These discussion questions for higher levels can be group or class debates. If dealing with a large number of students vary the discussions by giving each group a different set of questions. Then ask a group secretary to report back to the whole class. This provides more extended speaking practice. In a very good class keep 2 sets of questions per group in case they exhaust a topic and need to move on to another.

Contributed by

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