

## Reality TV

### Task 1 – TV programmes

Look at the list of TV programmes.

- Which do you like best?
- Which do you not like at all?
- Can you think of any other types of programme on your national TV?
- Is there a lot of one type of programme?
- Is TV the same as ten years ago? How is it different?

<i>Soap operas</i>	<i>Documentaries</i>	<i>News and current affairs</i>	<i>Drama</i>	<i>Cartoons</i>
<i>Detective series</i>	<i>Films</i>	<i>Music shows</i>	<i>Game shows</i>	<i>Chat shows</i>
<i>Children's TV shows</i>				

### Task 2 – Your tastes and interests

Think about the types of programme you watch.

- Which do you prefer?
- What types of programme are most popular in your country?
- What types of programme does your nation make well?
- Do you buy in programmes from abroad?

Programmes about...

Music	Social issues	History
Nature	Money and consumer goods	Travel and foreign cultures
Politics	Animals	Cooking
Fashion	People and their lives	Gardening and DIY
Sport	Space and Astronomy	Homes and house design
Art and design	Crime and crime investigation	Religion and beliefs
Science and Technology	Spies	Others

### Task 3- Reality TV

Read the text 'Reality TV' and find

- The most popular factual programme in 2003
- The most popular type of programme
- Words which mean
  - The people who watch television
  - TV / Telly / Television
  - TV programmes which use real people
  - To be on the TV

#### Reality TV

In January 2004 the TV industry awards in the UK gave more awards to one programme than any other programme on TV. Channel 4's very popular Wife Swap was voted the best popular factual programme and the best selling programme abroad.

Wife Swap takes two married women from very different social backgrounds. The wives change roles for two weeks and viewers watch to see how their husbands and children react. It attracts more than 5 million viewers and involves real people in their own homes. It is just one of the many programmes using real people in a documentary-style format. These documentaries are called fly-on-the-wall programmes because the viewer sees everything with a secret camera.

This real TV or Reality TV is very quickly taking up a lot of programming in the UK. These programmes are hugely popular. At their best, they give us a good look into the lives of different people in our country. At their worst, they are a very cheap way to make programmes and sometimes involve people making total fools of themselves. Is it your dream to get on telly? It seems that plenty of people will do anything to be famous or to get on the box for 20 minutes

### Task 4 – Your favourite programme

Describe your favourite programme. Say why you think it is so good. Include

- information about the type of programme
- the people in the programme
- the time you watch it
- the types of episode you have enjoyed most

### Task 5 – A Nation of Square Eyes

Recent surveys in the UK show that adults watch more than 4 hours of TV a day. Nearly 80% of 12 to 15 year olds have a TV screen in their bedroom and people can choose from many channels, including free terrestrial digital channels, satellite and cable.

Some people have called the UK a nation of square eyes because people watch so much TV.

### **Class survey: Are you a class of square eyes?**

Think of questions to find out:

- The amount of TV students watch on an average day or week
- The favourite types of programmes
- The number of TVs in their house
- Their experience of interactive TV

### **Task 6 – Choose a programme**

Read the descriptions of Reality TV programmes showing in the UK.

- Which programme would you prefer to watch and why?
- Which programmes do you not like? Why?
- Have you got any similar programmes in your country?
- Do you think they are a good thing or a bad thing?

#### **Reality TV programmes in one season**

There are at least 2 of these programmes on every day

#### **Interactive programmes**

- **I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here:** A group of 10 minor celebrities live in the Australian jungle and their adventures and daily tests are broadcast live. Viewers can vote to remove a celebrity and can text their comments during the live show. The person who stays in the jungle longest wins a lot of money. This programme is shown 7 days a week for up to 3 hours.
- **Fame Academy:** A group of wannabe singers are put in a large house in North London for 10 weeks and they prepare songs and sing every week. Viewers at home can vote for the best singers until there is a final programme with 2 finalists. The winner gets a recording contract and wins a year as a pop star. Over 8 million viewers watched the last final.
- **Shattered:** A group of young people live in a house for a week and must stay awake. Each day there are tests to see how well they can function. They must leave the house if they fall asleep. Viewers vote and text their comments every day.

### Makeover programmes

- Changing Rooms: 2 couples exchange houses and redecorate a complete room. The programme shows the reaction of each couple when they see their home transformed.
- Faking it: A member of the public is chosen to learn a new job and then they must convince a panel of judges that it really is their job. Previous challenges involve someone who cannot cook becoming a top chef in 4 weeks and a motorcycle courier learns the skill of playing polo to pretend he is a professional polo player.
- Celebrity Fit Club: A group of overweight celebrities go on a diet together and are filmed every week doing fitness challenges and talking about what they eat.
- A Place in the Sun: This show follows people as they buy their holiday home in a hotter climate. There are lots more programmes like this with people starting a new life in another European country.
- Relocation Relocation: This show follows people deciding on a new place to live in the UK. They are filmed during the process of changing town and house.

### Fly-on-the-wall-documentaries

- Boss swap: Two Managers change jobs and try to run a different company. The camera follows them as they try to make good working relationships with their new employees.
- Club Reps: This series follows the lives and work of holiday representatives working abroad. You see every detail of their private and working lives. It is sometimes very shocking.
- Airport: The television cameras film all day and night in an airport for many weeks. Different airport workers are filmed doing their jobs and talking to passengers.
- The Salon: The television cameras film all day in a hairdressing salon over a long period of time.
- Learner Drivers: This show follows people as they learn to drive. People are filmed while they fight with their driving instructors, test the patience of other motorists and pass or fail their driving exam.

### Task 7 – Discussion questions

People are watching more TV. Interactive TV, digital TV and the Internet mean that people spend more time looking at screens.

- Think of two positive effects of having more TV programmes on offer

- Think of two negative results for people watching more TV
- Is having a TV in your bedroom a bad thing?
- Is it possible for people to have too much choice?

Many Reality TV programmes exploit people. Some people are prepared to do anything to win the money. The TV programme Shattered was criticised for putting the contestants in a very dangerous situation. It is dangerous to go without sleep for a long time.

- Do you think there should be more control over the types of contests on TV?
- Are the people on the show Shattered really being exploited?
- Do you have shows in your country which go too far or ask people to do dangerous things?
- Are some things too private to show on TV?
- Are you happy to see more of these shows?

Reality TV is not the best type of programming on UK TV. There are many excellent dramas, documentaries and comedy programmes. Viewers complain that the good programmes are decreasing and the channels are putting on too many Reality TV programmes.

- What do you think of the balance of programmes in your country?
- Is there a good mix?
- Do some types of programme dominate?
- Are there any types of programme you would like to see more of?