TELEVISION

"All television is educational television. The question is: what is it teaching?"

Nicholas Johnson, former commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission

1. Television Discussion

1. How often do you watch TV? When do you usually watch TV?
2. What are some of the most popular TV shows from your country? Which foreign TV shows are popular in your country?
3. What are some of your favourite TV shows? What are some good documentaries that you have watched? What are the best dramas that you have watched? What are your favourite game shows?
4. Do you like reality TV shows? What type of person applies to go on a reality TV show? Would you be interested in taking part in one of these programmes?
5. What were your favourite TV shows when you were a child? What are kids watching today?
6. How is TV different today compared to when you were younger? Is it better or worse?
7. Have you ever appeared on TV? Has anyone you know? Would you like to appear on TV?
8. Do you have the TV on while you are eating a meal? How about when friends and family come to your house?

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2. Television Vocabulary

- **to binge watch** (verb) – *to watch many episodes of a tv series in one session.*
- **telly, gogglebox, idiot box** (nouns) – *slang words for television.*
- **soap (opera)** (noun) – *a daily tv show about the lives of the same group of characters.*
- **sitcom** (noun) – *short for situational comedy; a comedy tv show about the same group of characters, usually in the same setting.*
- **episode, season, series** (nouns) – *an individual programme of a tv show (episode); a collection of episodes released in the same period (season in American English; series in British English although 'season' is now commonly used in British English); a tv show (series).*
- **spinoff** (noun) – *a tv show featuring a character or characters from another tv show or film; a tv show derived from another tv show or film.*

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun):

1. *Cheers*, set in the fictional bar of the same name, is a popular _____ which follows the humorous interactions of a group of regulars that drink in the bar.
2. Did you see the latest _____ of *Game of Thrones*? I can't believe how little Jon Snow actually knows!
3. *Emmerdale* is a _____ that follows the lives of various families that live in a small village in the Yorkshire Dales.
4. I had the best weekend ever! I _____ the entire first, second and third seasons of *Twin Peaks* and even managed to fit *Fire Walk With Me* in!
5. *The Mandalorian* is a _____ from the *Star Wars* films and follows the story of a lone bounty hunter a few years after the events of *Return of the Jedi*.
6. There's nothing but rubbish on the _____ these days.

Television vocabulary comprehension questions

1. Do you binge watch TV shows? Why has this become more popular? Is there anything wrong with binge watching TV shows?
2. Why do you think some people call TV the 'idiot box'?
3. What are some popular soap operas from your country? Do they tend to focus on the lives of rich and glamorous people, or do they focus on the lives of ordinary people? Do you like watching soaps?
4. Do you like watching sitcoms? What are some of your favourites? Why are American sitcoms so popular around the world?
5. What are the most famous series of all time? Do you have a favourite episode of a TV show? Have you ever been disappointed in the last season of a series?
6. What spinoffs can you think of? What spinoffs would you like to see in the future?

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3. Video: The Greatest TV Shows

You are going to watch a video by WatchMojo called "Top 10 TV Shows Everyone Should Watch At least Once."

Watch the video here: https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-television/

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. What did the company in *The Office* sell?
   a) stationary b) office furniture c) paper
2. Which country was the original *Office* from?
   a) France b) Germany c) United Kingdom
3. What proportion of people disappeared in *The Leftovers*?
   a) 1% b) 2% c) 3%
4. Where did people enjoy discussing theories about *Lost*?
   a) chatrooms b) internet forums c) social media

Sentence completion

5. *The Simpsons* is one of the most _____ TV shows of all time.
6. Both _____ can enjoy *Avatar: The Last Airbender*.
7. The creator of *The Wire* was previously a crime reporter for _____.
8. It is difficult to _____ *Twin Peaks* as it is incomparable to any other TV show ever made.

Short answer

9. Which book series was *Game of Thrones* based on?
10. *The Sopranos* details the lives of whom?
11. What type of TV show *is I Love Lucy*?
12. *Breaking Bad* is the TV equivalent of a page-turner as it has so many what?

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4. Television Conversation Questions

1. What streaming platforms do you know about? Do you use any of these? Are streaming services better than TV? Which platform has the best shows?
2. Is it better to have a variety of streaming services or would it be better if all TV shows were on just one platform?
3. How is the news on TV different to the news in newspapers or websites?
4. Do children watch too much TV these days? What effect does TV have on kids? Do parents use the TV like a babysitter?
5. Is there too much violence and sexual content on TV these days? How does this affect society? Has TV made society more violent?
6. What kind of stereotypes are common to see on TV programmes?
7. How does TV influence people's lives? How did TV change the world? How would the world be different today had TV not been invented?
8. How will TVs be different in the future? How will the TV industry be different in the future?

5. Television Writing Task

Write about your favourite TV show. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- What the show is and what the general theme is.
- Your favourite characters.
- Why it's your favourite show.

Alternative exam practice question:

TV shows made in the 21st century are much better than those made in the 20th century. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

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