

Lesson plan: Reality TV

Learning objectives:

- Find out about reality TV in the UK.
- Learn country specific vocabulary.
- Develop conversational skills and dialogues.
- Practice teamwork.
- Use creativity to develop a reality TV show and pitch it.
- Skill practice: reading, writing, listening and writing.

Steps:

1. The teacher writes the name of a few British reality TV shows on the board and asks the students if they know these shows.

She asks: *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 the teacher asks them if they have ever voted or sent a text message to a programme. Have they ever been on a website for a programme?

2. The students write down a list of reality TV shows from their country (in groups).
3. They discuss the following questions in groups and feedback to the class.
 - What reality TV programmes do you know?
 - Which ones do you watch?
 - Which ones do you really hate?
 - Which ones are popular and why do you think this is?
4. The teacher writes the following titles on the board and elicits from the students what they think the reality TV shows might be about as a whole class:
 - ✓ *Coppers*
 - ✓ *Wife Swap*
 - ✓ *Strictly Come Dancing*
 - ✓ *World’s strictest parents*
 - ✓ *Come dine with me*
 - ✓ *I’m a celebrity get me out of her*
 - ✓ *X-factor*
 - ✓ *The only way is Essex*
 - ✓ *Love island*
 - ✓ *Take me out*
 - ✓ *Big Brother*
 - ✓ *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*
5. The teacher plays the opening theme from each show but doesn’t show them the screen, she gets them to guess which show it is from.

6. Students complete the worksheet filling in the gaps.
7. Students try to match all the colloquialisms they have heard with their meanings.
8. Students watch a clip from Wife Swap and get them to predict what might happen next:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A19Mec_uPaQ&feature=emb_logo
9. Students think and create a reality show and pitch it to a “board of directors” - made up of the students

Worksheet: Reality TV

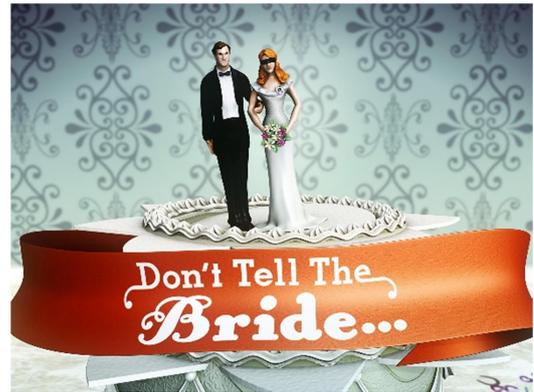
Fill in the gaps with a suitable word from the list below!

Teenagers, vote, remote, lives, find, house, allowed, spend, Latin, cooking, record, celebrities, everything, dating, wives, date, vote, women, behaviour, celebrities, nightlife, allowed, bodies, ten, score, ballroom, singing, evade.

1. *Wife Swap* is a show where two families from different backgrounds swap, kids and home for 2 weeks.
2. *Strictly Come Dancing* is a show where.....team up with dance professionals and compete in a and dance competition.
3. *World’s Strictest Parents* is a show where British..... and sent to live with strict families, in an experiment to try and change their
4. *Come Dine with Me* is a show where four people each take turns during the week to cook and the other participants mark them out of The person with the highest wins £1000.
5. *I’m a Celebrity Get me out of here* involves living in a jungle without any comforts and against each other in order to win.
6. *X-Factor* is a competition where contestants compete against each other to win a deal.
7. *The Only Way is Essex* is a show which follows the of rich young people living in Essex as they enjoy the local and luxurious holidays.
8. *Take Me Out* is a show where one man aims to obtain a date with one of thirty single They all have a light and turn off this light if they don’t like the man.
9. *Naked attraction* is a show where a clothed single people chooses a from a selection of six naked people, whose and then faces are gradually revealed.
10. *Big Brother* is a show where 10 strangers live in a for 3 months with no contact from the outside world, viewers at home off someone each week.
11. *Hunted* is a show where fourteen British citizens go on the run for 28 days, they must capture from a team of investigators. They are not any supplies, a phone or money.
12. *Don’t Tell the Bride* is a show where the groom to be is given £10,000 to on their wedding and he must plan without his bride to be knowing anything about it.
13. *The Island with Bear Grylls* involves contestants going to a Pacific island and they have to survive for 30 days and the hidden prize of £10,000.

Reading: Reality TV

Reality television is a genre of television programming which, it is claimed, presents unscripted dramatic or humorous situations, documents actual events, and features ordinary people rather than professional actors. It could be described as a form of artificial or "heightened" documentary. Although the genre has existed in some form or another since the early years of television, the current explosion of popularity dates from around 2000. Reality television covers a wide range of television programming formats, from game or quiz shows.



Critics say that the term "reality television" is somewhat of a misnomer and that such shows frequently portray a modified and highly influenced form of reality, with participants put in exotic locations or abnormal situations, sometimes coached to act in certain ways by off-screen handlers, and with events on screen manipulated through editing and other post-production techniques. Part of reality television's appeal is due to its ability to place ordinary people in extraordinary situations. For example, on the ABC show, *The Bachelor*, an eligible male dates a dozen women simultaneously, travelling on extraordinary dates to scenic locales.



Reality television also has the potential to turn its participants into national celebrities, outwardly in talent and performance programs such as *Pop Idol*, though frequently *Survivor* and *Big Brother* participants also reach some degree of celebrity. Some commentators have said that the name "reality television" is an inaccurate description for several styles of

program included in the genre. In competition-based programs such as *Big Brother* and *Survivor*, and other special-living-environment shows like *The Real World*, the producers design the format of the show and control the day-to-day activities and the environment, creating a completely fabricated world in which the competition plays out.

Producers specifically select the participants, and use carefully designed scenarios, challenges, events, and settings to encourage particular behaviours and conflicts. Mark Burnett, creator of *Survivor* and other reality shows, has agreed with this assessment, and avoids the word "reality" to describe his shows; he has said, "I tell good stories. It really is not reality TV. It really is unscripted drama."

Reading comprehension: Reality TV

Read the questions and choose the right answer!

1 - In the first line, the writer says 'it is claimed' because they.....

- a- everyone agrees with the statement
- b- agree with the statement
- c- no one agrees with the statement
- d- - they want to distance themselves from the statement

2 - Reality television has.....

- a- always been this popular
- b- has been popular since well before 2000
- c- has only been popular since 2000
- d- has been popular since approximately 2000

3 – Japan is.....

- a- is the only place to produce demeaning TV shows
- b- has produced demeaning TV shows copied elsewhere.
- c- produced Big Brother.
- d- invented surveillance focused productions

4 - People have criticised reality television because.....

- a- it is demeaning
- b- it uses exotic locations
- c- the name is inaccurate
- d- it shows reality

5 - Reality TV appeals to some because.....

- a- it shows eligible males dating women
- b- it uses exotic locations
- c- it shows average people in exceptional circumstances
- d- it can turn ordinary people into celebrities.

6 - *Pop Idol*.....

- a- turns all its participants into celebrities
- b- is more likely to turn its participants into celebrities than Big Brother
- c- is less likely to turn its participants into celebrities than Big Brother
- d- is a dating show.

7 - The term 'reality television' is inaccurate.....

- a- for all programs.
- b- just for Big Brother and Survivor.
- c- for talent and performance programs
- d- for special-living-environment programs.

8 - Producers choose the participants.....

- a- on the ground of talent
- b- only for special-living-environment shows
- c- to create conflict
- d- to make a fabricated world.

9 - Paul Burnett.....

- a- was a participant on Survivor
- b- is a critic of reality TV
- c- thinks the term 'reality television' is inaccurate.
- d- writes the script for Survivor.

10 - Shows like *Survivor*....

- a- are definitely reality TV
- b- are scripted.
- c- have good narratives.
- d- are theatre.

Vocabulary: Reality TV

Instructions for the teacher

- First the students have to try and guess what the vocab means, cut up and match

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=9&v=A19Mec_uPaQ&feature=emb_logo

- Show students video of part 1 of wife swap UK until 00:38 (this is just the introduction of the two participating families).
- Put them in groups and have them make predictions about what sort of problems and conflicts the two families are going to have and also to make comparisons between the two families. Students report back to class.
- Now show students the whole of part 1, it’s about 10 minutes. Before showing them tell them to listen out for the expressions you have pre-taught then go through them afterwards. Students report back the context of each one of the pieces of vocabulary.
- Ask students what they thought of the show:
 1. Was it entertaining?
 2. Do you want to know what happens next?
 3. Which family did you prefer?
 4. Which family would you prefer to spend a week living with?

a country pile	a big country house / mansion
To go to the dogs	to deteriorate / get into a bad state.
I can't hack it	I can't bear it / I can't cope with it / I can't tolerate it
Council house	a government owned house rented by low-income families
To do jack sh*t	To do nothing
To be on benefits	to be receiving financial help from the state
To be stuck in a rut	expression meaning to be in a boring lifestyle that never changes
to roam	to walk / move with no fixed objective
A Hoover	a vacuum cleaner
A man/woman of leisure	a person who spends all their time doing things they enjoy, usually a rich person.
A hooker	a prostitute
To see eye to eye	To agree
Slack/slovenly	lazy
Give him an inch and he'll take a mile	expression meaning that someone will exploit you / take advantage of you if you give them the opportunity

→ Links to reality TV show clips:

Wife swap US trailer- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCoyDvJtggY>

Strictly Come Dancing- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lmzawC-7QU>

Take me Out- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rvi-e8xD2eo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WoftpfgnJ10>

Don’t tell the bride- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmNWAMrxGBo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NokN7wDKlvs>

Snog marry avoid- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ts20b0cgkfc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbBxjVkyzE4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uv5LrZo7htI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64T120HWHXQ>

Designing your own reality TV show

Pitch their idea to a board of directors (teachers and classmates) and the class votes on which one gets commissioned:

- Name of your show
- Setting
- Premise, what is the story about?
- What is the final goal/aim?
- Is there a prize at the end of the show?
- What will viewers enjoy about this show?
- Will there be an element of audience interaction (eg. Telephone voting, app)
- Will there be any moments that cause conflict/tension?
- What sort of people will you have taking part in the show?
- Why should this show get commissioned?