

TV 3.4

Is TV bad for children?

**Language focus**  
discussing advantages and disadvantages

**Key vocabulary**  
*eyesight, informed, nutritionalist, obesity, optician, psychologist, sociologist*

**Skills focus**  
reading and speaking

**Multiple intelligences**  
linguistic and interpersonal

**Level**  
upper intermediate

**Time**  
60 minutes

**Preparation**  
one photocopy of Part A for every 2 or 3 students; one photocopy of Part B, cut into role cards, for every group of 5 students

Warm-up

- 1 Write up on the board *Television is bad for children*. Ask students to think about whether they agree or disagree with the statement. Brainstorm ideas and opinions with the whole class. Collect ideas on the board.
- 2 Briefly revise expressions for giving opinions and agreeing and disagreeing. Write useful expressions on the board e.g. *On the one hand / On the other hand, That's true, but ..., Although X is an advantage, we should also consider Y* etc.

Main activity

- 1 Put students into pairs or groups of three, and give each pair or group Part A of the activity sheet. Ask them to read the facts and arguments, and sort them into two groups: those that suggest TV is bad for children and those that suggest that TV is good for children.
- 2 Check answers, then ask students which of the facts and opinions they find most surprising, and which they find most interesting.

Answers  
TV is good for children: 2, 5, 6  
TV is bad for children: 1, 3, 4

- 3 Ask students if they ever watch discussion programmes on the television. Elicit that such programmes have an interviewer, then a mixture of people in favour of an idea and against it.
- 4 Explain to students that they are going to act out a discussion programme about television. Explain that each student will get a role card and they will have to 'be' that person. One person in the group will be the interviewer.
- 5 Put students into groups of five. Give each group a set of role cards and ask them to share them out.
- 6 Ask all the students with role-play card A to come and sit together, all those with card B to sit together, etc. Tell them they have five minutes to brainstorm things they can say during the discussion. Encourage them to use the facts and arguments they looked at earlier to support their arguments.
- 7 The interviewers should spend this time planning what questions they want to ask, and how they will organise the discussion.
- 8 Put students back into their groups of five to act out the programme. You could film some of the discussions so that students can watch them later and evaluate how well they put forward their arguments.

Follow-up

- If students are preparing for exams, ask them to write up their ideas in an essay entitled: *Watching television is harmful to children – discuss*.
- Alternatively, you could have a class discussion in which students express their own opinions and arguments.

**TV 3.4** Is TV bad for children?

**A**

- 1 Doctors say that television viewing among children is associated with irregular sleep patterns. This can make children tired and unable to concentrate.
- 2 A leading sociologist says that television has become an important part of children’s social lives. It is one of the subjects that children talk about most often, and so it helps them to make friends.
- 3 Scientists tell us that TV viewing is now considered a cause of obesity. Sitting in front of a screen takes up a large part of children’s lives and has replaced physical activity for many of them. Scientists warn that this will have serious consequences for their health later in life. Nutritionists agree that watching TV encourages bad eating habits.
- 4 Opticians say watching TV for long periods can lead to permanent eyesight damage.
- 5 A new study by psychologists says that families often meet up to watch TV together. It seems that TV can encourage families to spend time together and discuss things.
- 6 Some teachers have said that children who watch quality TV programmes about history, science and geography are much more informed about the world, and so more likely to do well at school.

✂

**B**

✂

<p><b>A Doctor – agree</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>TV is very bad for children’s eyesight and they don’t do enough exercise.</li><li>Children need more exercise.</li><li>Watching TV encourages children to eat junk food, which adds to weight problems.</li><li>Watching TV can cause problems with eyesight in children.</li></ul>	<p><b>B Teenager – disagree</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>TV makes life less boring.</li><li>You need to relax after a hard day at school.</li><li>You can learn a lot from documentaries and science programmes.</li><li>TV inspires you when you see famous people being interviewed.</li></ul>
<p><b>C Parent – agree</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>You never see your children because they are always in their rooms watching TV in the evening.</li><li>They don’t want to do anything with you.</li><li>Your children pick up bad language from TV.</li><li>They should spend more time on homework and sports.</li></ul>	<p><b>D TV Producer – disagree</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>You produce many educational programmes.</li><li>There is a lot of TV specially designed for children and teenagers.</li><li>Parents can guide children not to watch inappropriate programmes.</li><li>TV is an important part of the modern world.</li></ul>

**E Interviewer**  
It is your job to ask questions, make sure everyone has a chance to speak and keep everyone under control.