

11

Media



Game of Thrones

11.1 Extreme streaming

GOALS ■ Talk about television viewing habits ■ Use reported speech

Vocabulary & Reading television viewing habits

- 1a** Work with a partner. Match programme types 1–6 to things you might see or hear on the programme, a–f.
- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 home improvement programme | a match highlights |
| 2 cookery programme | b amusing dialogue |
| 3 sitcom | c celebrity chef |
| 4 current affairs programme | d DIY tips |
| 5 drama series | e in-depth news analysis |
| 6 sports programme | f a gripping plot |
- b** With a partner, think of more programme types. Which type do you watch most/least often? Why?
- 2** Read the article and make notes under these headings:
- 1 what binge-watching is
 - 2 why people binge-watch
 - 3 attitudes to binge-watching
 - 4 how we watch TV series nowadays
- 3** Work with a partner. Look at the highlighted words in the article and guess what they mean. Then use them in the correct form to complete the sentences.
- 1 The internet has _____ our way of viewing TV.
 - 2 I like dramas with _____ characters, not two-dimensional ones.
 - 3 We watched three movies _____ on Saturday afternoon.
 - 4 The figures _____ that fewer people watch live TV than before.
 - 5 The company did a _____ to find out what customers wanted.
 - 6 Most DVRs have a feature which _____ you to skip the _____.
- 4** Discuss with a partner. Have your viewing habits changed in the last few years? How and why?

Binge-watching: how the hungry habit is transforming TV

Have you ever wasted a sunny day indoors with curtains closed, watching your favourite drama series for hours on end? Or gone to bed way too late because you *had* to watch 'just one more' episode? If so, you're not alone. 'Binge-watching' – watching several episodes of a show at a time – is on the rise. According to a recent **survey**, in which over 15,000 people were asked about their TV viewing habits, 91% said they frequently binge-watched and 40% said that they had binge-watched a show the previous week.

When asked why they binge-watched, respondents said it was because they felt social pressure to be up to date with the story. Some said watching several episodes **back-to-back** makes it easier to follow the sometimes very **complex** storylines. Dramas were the most binge-watched shows, followed by sitcoms, reality shows and news programmes.

'The couch potato has woken up.'



Modern Family

Grammar & Speaking reported speech

- 5 Read the rules about reported speech in the Grammar focus box. Then look back at the article and underline examples of rules 1–6.

GRAMMAR FOCUS reported speech

- 1 If we report what someone said in the past, we usually change the verb by moving it back one tense into the past.
'The programme's just finished.' He said the programme had just finished.
- 2 If what the person says is still true, tense change is optional.
She said she rarely has/had time to watch TV.
- 3 If the reporting verb is in the present, we don't change the tense.
He says he'll watch it later.
- 4 We often need to change time references.
yesterday – the day before, the previous day
tomorrow – the next day, the following day

Reported questions

In reported questions, the subject goes before the verb. We don't use auxiliary verbs or question marks.

- 5 To report questions we usually use *ask/want to know/wonder* with a question word.
I asked where he was.
- 6 We use *if* or *whether* to report *yes/no* questions.

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New technologies, such as DVR (digital video recorders) and streaming, have **transformed** our viewing habits, **enabling** us to watch what we want, when and where we want, all of this without the annoying distraction of **commercial breaks**. Cost is also a factor, with a monthly subscription to Netflix costing just a fraction of a DVD box set.

The survey also **indicates** an interesting shift in opinion towards binge-watching. When respondents were asked whether they thought binge-viewing was a negative thing, only one-third said it was, whereas when asked the same question a year ago, the majority of people (two-thirds) considered it a bad thing.

This more positive attitude towards TV viewing may be because of the improved quality of the dramas. In the past, TV dramas were seen as culturally inferior to, say, the novel. This is no longer true. Social anthropologist Grant McCracken, who was involved in the research, says we watch TV differently now. In the past, binge viewers were known, disapprovingly, as 'couch potatoes' who spent hours and hours watching TV very passively. Now, however, since people are actively choosing what they watch, they watch with more purpose. He says that younger viewers, especially, watch more critically, frequently commenting on the quality of the acting, the casting, the camera angles. He believes the couch potato has woken up.

- **binge** to do too much of something you enjoy, especially eating; *binge-watch* first entered the Oxford Dictionary in 2014
- **couch** another word for *sofa*.

- 6 Work with a partner. Change the conversation between Elena (E) and Lucas (L) to reported speech.

- E You look tired. Are you OK?
L I didn't get much sleep last night.
E Did you go out?
L No. I was watching *Sherlock*. I ended up watching all the episodes back to back.
E Can I borrow it some time?
L Sure. I'll bring it in for you tomorrow.

Elena told Lucas he looked tired and asked ...



- 7a **TASK** Prepare a questionnaire to find out about TV viewing habits. Use the ideas below and your own ideas.

- How/watch?
- Binge-watch?
- Alone or with others?
- Favourite programmes?

- b Work with a partner and take it in turns to ask your questions. Make a note of the answers.
- 8a Work with a different partner. Tell your partner about your first partner's TV-viewing habits and ask the same questions to your new partner.
- A I asked Kenji if he had ever binge-watched a drama series. He said that he had once stayed up all night watching *Homeland*. What about you, have you ever done that?
B Yes, I have. Once I ...
- b How similar are your new partner's TV viewing habits to your first partner's viewing habits?

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