

Topic: ENTERTAINMENT

READING COMPREHENSION:

SOAP OPERAS

Read and listen to the following text about soap operas and do the comprehension exercises below.

Watching TV is a very popular **pastime** in the UK. But what kind of programmes do British people like to watch? Well, the most-watched TV programmes every week are very popular dramas that are usually on at least four times every week. They are dramas based in one **neighbourhood** that try to **depict** ordinary life in the UK - we call these dramas 'soap operas' or 'soaps'.

In the early days of TV, there were often dramas on during the day. Back in those days, it was traditional for the husband to go out to work and for the wife to stay at home and look after the house and the children. Most of these daytime dramas were aimed at entertaining the **housewives** who would traditionally be at home, probably doing the washing. Companies selling **washing powder** would **advertise** their products at times when these dramas were on, and sometimes those companies would even sponsor the drama. **Hence** the word 'soap'.

So what about the word opera? Well, that's because these dramas are often an exaggeration of real life. They are supposed to represent ordinary lives but, to make them entertaining, lots of dramatic events, like murders, divorces, **affairs** etc., all happen probably much more regularly than they would in a normal neighbourhood.

Most soap operas these days are shown in the evening. Each show will have several different storylines happening **at once** that continue over several shows. The same **cast members** will appear in every show, too.

There are lots of different soaps on in the UK on different channels but there are three main popular ones. 'Coronation Street' has been on since 1960. It is set in a suburb of Manchester and it's supposed to represent working class life in the north of England. Then there's 'Eastenders' which started in 1985, set in the East End of London, and 'Emmerdale', which is set on a farm in Yorkshire, in the north of England.

VOCABULARY EXERCISES:

1. Match words from the text to their corresponding meaning.

A. pastime	1. <i>laundry detergent</i>
B. neighbourhood	2. <i>actors in a particular film or TV series</i>
C. to depict	3. <i>an area where people live rather than work or do shopping</i>
D. housewives	4. <i>thus, therefore</i>
E. washing powder –	5. <i>to describe, to show</i>
F. advertise	6. <i>show short television commercials</i>
G. hence	7. <i>what you do outside work for enjoyment,</i>
H. affairs	8. <i>at the same time</i>
I. at once	9. <i>intimate relationships outside marriage</i>
J. cast members	10. <i>women who work at home, doing the cleaning, cooking, etc.,</i>

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
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READING COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

1. TRUE or FALSE. Circle the correct answer

- True / False 1. People don't like to watch TV in the UK.
- True / False 2. The word 'soap' in 'soap opera' refers to washing powder used by housewives to do the washing.
- True / False 3. The word 'opera' in 'soap opera' refers to the classical singing you hear in the dramas.
- True / False 4. Soap operas have lots of continuing storylines happening over a few shows.
- True / False 5. Coronation Street has been on British TV since 1985.

2. Answer the following questions using your own words?

- What type of programmes do British people prefer to watch?
- Why did sponsors advertise soap on TV during the mornings?
- To what extent are soap operas different from normal life?
- What are the 3 most popular soap operas in British television?

ANSWERS

A. VOCABULARY EXERCISES

A 7	B 3	C 5	D 10	E 1	F 6	G 4	H 9	I 8	J 2
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B. READING COMPREHENSION

1. TRUE or FALSE

False

True

False

True

False

2. ANSWER THE QUESTIONS (possible answers)

- a. *British people prefer to watch soap operas*
- b. *Sponsors used to advertise soap in the mornings because most women were at home doing their housework and watching TV.*
- c. *Soap operas are usually more exaggerated than normal life*
- d. *The three most popular soap operas are Coronation Street, Eastenders and Emmerdale.*

VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES

ENTERTAINMENT: cinema, literature and TV programmes

A. Match the words in column A with their definitions in B

1. breaking news	a. the first page of a paper, usually carrying the most important story
2. chat show	b. the title at the top of an article
3. credits	c. a small-format paper, with short, sensational stories
4. front page	d. the songs and background music to a film
5. headline	e. words on the screen at the end that tell you who played who, and who was the cameraman, set designer, etc.
6. tabloid paper	f. TV or radio series about a particular group of characters who deal with situations in a humorous way.
7. story	g. a TV or radio programme in which famous people talk about themselves or their work
8. sit-com	h. a news article or report
9. soundtrack	i. new information to be given to the audience
10. the latest release	j. a new film

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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B. Which type of film or TV programme are the following definitions referring to?

- This film has great special effects and it is set in the distant future. _____
- This film is based on a novel by Jane Austen and has been filmed on location in Hampshire. _____
- It is a fantastic new computer-generated cartoon, where Eddie Murphy puts the voice to the donkey. _____
- It is usually about nature and the life of animals. _____
- A series of programmes which usually deal with sentimental family matters. _____
- A short announcement concerning some on-going international or local news. _____

C. Which professions related to films and journalism are being defined. Choose from the box below; there are more words than the ones you need.

actor	cameraman	cast	censor	correspondent
	co-star	critic	director	editor
				journalist

1. *a person who* controls the camera during filming. _____
2. a person who edits or the head of a newspaper or newspaper department _____
3. an actor in a supporting role to the main star. _____
4. a person who writes articles, esp. stating opinion, about art, music etc _____
5. a person who writes a letter to a paper or writes articles for a paper _____
6. *an* official with the power to stop publication of certain articles. _____
7. *the people in the film* _____



ANSWERS:

A.

1 i	2 g	3 e	4 a	5 b	6 c	7 h	8 f	9 d	10 j
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B.

1. A sci-fi film
2. A costume drama
3. An animated film
4. A wildlife documentary
5. A soap opera
6. A news bulletin

C.

1. A cameraman
2. An editor
3. A co-star
4. A critic
5. A journalist
6. A censor
7. The cast

ACTIVITIES ON PREFERENCES, WISHES & REGRETS

➤ EXPRESSING PREFERENCES:

A. Rewrite the second sentence using the word in bold.

1. Dany thinks American movies are better than European ones.

PREFER: Dany _____

2. He likes blockbusters more than any other type of film

'D RATHER: He _____

3. Do you want to go to the cinema rather than watch a dvd at home?

LIKE: Would _____

4. My sister doesn't want to answer that question

'D RATHER: My sister _____

5. Let's go out!

PREFER: I _____

B. What would you say in the following situations? You can write more than one possible answers if you want.

1. A friend is keen on watching football . You enjoy going to the cinema.
2. It's raining. Your mate suggests going to eat out. You want to stay home and read

➤ EXPRESSING WISHES AND REGRETS:

A. Choose the correct verb tense:

1. I wish I **listened** / **had listened** to what you told me last night.
2. She's so sad. If only I **knew** / **would know** what was wrong.
3. John's so embarrassed. If only Mary **didn't tell** / **hadn't told** them his secret.
4. I can't hear you. I wish you **would speak** / **will speak** louder.
5. I wish they **went** / **would go away**.

B. Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in brackets:

1. I was so excited about the football match. I wish my team (WIN) _____
2. The pupils are bored. They wish the lesson (END) _____ soon.
3. This question is difficult. If only I (KNOW) _____ the answer
4. He asked if he could borrow my car. I wish he (NOT ASK) _____
5. My house is far away from my school. If only I (LIVE) _____ closer

ANSWERS:

➤ EXPRESSING PREFERENCES:

A.

1. *Dany prefers American movies to European ones.*
2. *He'd rather watch blockbusters than any other type of film*
3. *Would you like to go to the cinema or watch a dvd at home?*
4. *My sister would rather not answer that question*
5. *I prefer to go out.*

B.

1. *I'd rather go to the cinema than watch a football match*
I prefer to go to the cinema to watch a football match
I like cinema better than football
2. *I'd rather stay home than eat out.*

➤ EXPRESSING WISHES AND REGRETS:

A.

1. *had listened*
2. *knew*
3. *hadn't told*
4. *would speak*
5. *would go*

B.

1. *had won*
2. *would end*
3. *know*
4. *hadn't asked*
5. *lived*