



Episode 17: Watching TV

Hi! If this is your first time listening to our podcast, this is an opportunity for upper level English learners to practice listening skills and learn new vocabulary by listening to authentic conversations. For more information about ways to use this podcast, download notes for [students](#) or [teachers](#).

In today's episode Donielle and Khrystyna discuss watching TV, favorite shows, and viewing habits.

Here are a few words and phrases about TV shows and watching TV that you may find useful:

rerun	an episode that is shown after it originally aired. For example, during the summer, certain shows may be on break, so there are no new episodes, and the network will often show reruns in that time slot.
sitcom (short for situational comedy)	a funny TV show with a realistic setting, like an apartment with roommates, office, restaurant, etc. with a regular cast of characters.
streaming	TV shows or movies on demand via the Internet
spin-off	A new show created from the popularity of another show and includes one or more characters from the original show (Ex. <i>Better Call Saul</i> is a spin-off of <i>Breaking Bad</i>)
spoiler	information given about what happens in a TV show, which may spoil your enjoyment of it if you have not seen it but are planning to
binge watch	watch multiple episodes of a series one after another
channel surfing	changing frequently from one channel to another
[be a] couch potato	sit for long periods of time on the couch, just watching TV
cliffhanger	a dramatic suspenseful ending to a season, where you have to wait in anticipation for the next season to find out what happens
have [tv] on in the background	not actively watching a show, but having it on for background noise while you do something else.
try to/can't get into it	Try to like a show, but it's unable to hold your interest
mockumentary	a show or movie that is filmed in the style of a serious documentary
guilty pleasure	something, such as a TV show or music that is of low quality and harshly criticized, but you still enjoy it, even though you may be judged for liking it
jump the shark	reach a point in a show at which ridiculous events/plotlines are included because they have run out of ideas, indicating of a decline in quality.

See the following pages for vocabulary and language focus from this episode.



Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation

dubbed	When the audio track is replaced by actor's voices in a different language
telenovelas	Latin American version of soap operas (soap opera = long running serial drama around a particular set of characters, typically aired during weekdays)
we're (all) set	Everything is ok the way it is; nothing else is needed.
clean up	make things clean, presentable and neat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After we have dinner, I <u>clean up</u> and then sit down to watch TV.
"blankie"	an informal way to refer to a blanket, often used by children or as a way to express the idea of comfort and coziness
choice paralysis	the theory that the more options people have to choose from, the harder the decision becomes – we can't make up our minds (also called the paradox of choice)
rave [about something]	talk with extreme enthusiasm about something you enjoy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone <u>raves about</u> that show.
[a show] was dragging	It seemed to go slowly because it was boring. (said of movie, show, play, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We enjoyed the series at first, but after a few seasons, we felt <u>it was dragging</u>.
period drama	a drama that is set in a particular historical period
catch up [on something]	do something that you missed or that you're late in doing; get current on something <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I haven't finished watching the last season; I need to <u>catch up</u> before the new season starts.
sleep with one eye open	To stay awake or sleep very lightly so as to remain vigilant, cautious, or alert. (in this case said humorously because of Donielle's habit of sleeping with crime shows on)
pick up [something]	to acquire some knowledge incidentally or casually <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can often <u>pick up</u> words and expressions by watching sitcoms.
quirky	unusual or unconventional in an interesting or appealing way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> She has a <u>quirky</u> sense of humor.
give it a shot	try doing something for the first time, usually for fun
vice versa	what you have said is also true in the opposite order. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I watch shows with my husband because he likes them, and <u>vice versa</u>.
could do without [something]	prefer not to have or do something; or it is of no benefit to you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He <u>could probably do without</u> some of the true crime shows.
[to be] dated	old fashioned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I Love Lucy</i> is more than 60 years old, so <u>it's dated</u>, but it's just as funny today as it was then.

Learning English with Television Shows

A great way to use television shows as a learning tool is to pick a short one (so sitcoms are perfect for this) and watch it 2 times. Watch it the first time without subtitles. This will challenge you to listen carefully to understand as much as possible. If you miss a lot, it's ok. Then watch the episode a second time with English subtitles. You will realize what you missed, or what you misheard the first time. If you watch it the first time with subtitles, you won't really know how much you are understanding from listening alone, or what you are able to piece together with the help of the subtitles.

Following are some of the sitcoms mentioned in the episode (in order of their premiere date). For even more suggestions, including other television show genres, [this article](#) may be helpful.

I Love Lucy (1951)	A middle-class housewife, with the help of her friend, gets into hilarious situations to the never-ending frustration of her Cuban band leader husband.
The Golden Girls (1985)	Four mature women with very different personalities live together in Miami and face the issues of aging in America while sharing funny experiences together.
Seinfeld (1989)	Comedian Jerry Seinfeld plays a fictionalized version of himself where the show focuses on his personal life and experiences with 3 quirky best friends.
The Simpsons (1989)	Animated series that centers on a family and their life in a typical American town, serving as a satirical parody of a middle class American lifestyle.
Frasier (1993)	Spin-off of very popular sitcom Cheers; a successful Boston therapist moves to Seattle for a new life and job where he gives advice as a radio talk show host.
Friends (1994)	Six close friends living in New York City go through just about every imaginable life experience together.
That 70's Show (1998)	Set in the 1970's, the show centers around a group of teenage friends, their adventures/mishaps, and coming of age in a fictional American Midwest town.
The Big Bang Theory (2007)	An unlikely and funny friendship between brilliant but socially awkward scientists and their outgoing neighbor.

Join the Conversation

- Do you enjoy watching TV? Do you ever watch shows in English? What are some of your favorite shows?
- What is your favorite genre of show? Which of the following do you like to watch? Which do you not like to watch?
comedy - drama - reality - news - true crime - talk shows - sci-fi - sports - game shows
- Does everyone in your home have similar TV watching habits and preferences? Who usually takes control of the remote?
- What English language television shows are popular in your country of origin? What do you think of those shows?
- How has watching television evolved over the years? What do you think the future of television looks like? Will it continue to evolve, and if so, in what ways?

Thanks for checking out our podcast!

We are enjoying these discussions, and we hope that you are finding them helpful!



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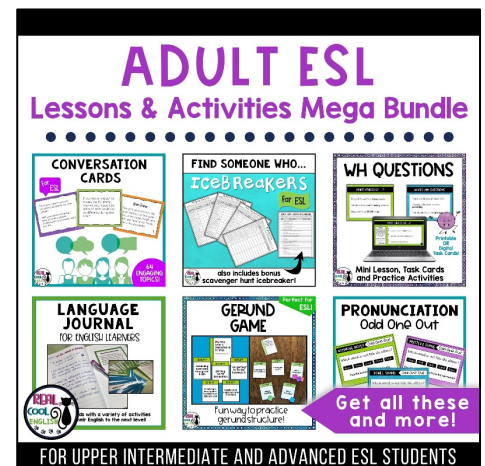
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