

UNIT 4 - TELEVISION AND CINEMA

Lesson 2: Soaps, Realities, and Talent Shows

Look at the following definitions and then listen carefully to the **AUDIO TEXT about Soap Operas (Text 1)** (ATTENTION!: The written text is part of the programme: you will find it in the KEYS)

pastime – what you do outside work for enjoyment, e.g. a hobby
neighbourhood – an area where people live rather than work or do shopping
to depict – to describe, to show, to represent
housewives – women who work at home, doing the cleaning, cooking, etc., and who usually have no other job
washing powder – laundry detergent; a cleaning substance in powder form used for washing clothes
sponsor – here, pay for filming
hence the word ‘soap’ – this is how the word 'soap' became part of the expression
an exaggeration – showing or representing something in a more dramatic, serious or shocking way than it really is
affairs – here, intimate relations outside marriage
at once – here, simultaneously, at the same time
cast members – actors in a particular film or TV series
it is set in a suburb of Manchester – the action takes place in an area near Manchester (people from **suburbs** usually work in the city which they are close to, however there are usually very few or no businesses within a suburb itself)

Exercise 1:

Are these sentences true or false? Or is the answer not given in the text? Circle the correct answer.

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

Exercise 2:

a) See if you can match these commonly used TV related expressions with the correct definition

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. a couch potato | a. someone who is always watching the TV (the telly) and can't live without it |
| 2. reality TV | b. another word for television |
| 3. channel hopping
watching TV | c. someone who sits on the sofa all day eating and |
| 4. a telly addict
situations | d. TV programmes following real people in real life |
| 5. the box | e. going from channel to channel with the remote control (the remote) and being unable to decide what to watch |

b) Now try and complete the following sentences with one of the above TV expressions

1. “_____ is boring. I can see people in real life situations every day – I would much rather watch a drama.”
2. “What’s on _____ tonight?”
3. My brother is such _____. All he does is sit at home and watch TV.
4. The problem with TV these days is that there are too many channels to choose from. I’m always _____ and I can never decide what to watch.
5. I love watching TV – I watch it all the time. I don’t think I could live without it – I need to watch it for at least three hours every night. I’m such _____.

Exercise 3: Try to find the words associated with television in the puzzle below. There are 10 words to find. Words can be written horizontally (→), vertically (↓) or diagonally

p	r	o	g	r	a	m	m	e	f	z	t
a	g	h	t	e	l	j	d	w	e	o	e
o	d	u	s	m	b	a	e	c	i	m	l
c	a	s	s	o	a	p	p	h	e	u	l
d	e	p	i	t	e	d	r	a	m	a	y
e	i	u	c	e	o	q	l	n	t	a	a
p	r	o	g	s	z	r	e	n	i	o	u
i	g	i	a	n	w	p	y	e	a	s	d
c	a	s	t	d	f	k	v	l	s	r	r
t	s	a	d	f	p	v	e	o	i	a	h
e	e	n	w	x	t	r	t	s	a	n	e
t	o	o	a	d	v	e	r	t	i	s	e

remote	cast	channel	telly	depict	drama
programme	storyline	advertise	soap		

VIDEO TEXT (Text 2): Look at the video showing Susan Boyle's performance during the **talent show** *Britain's Got Talent* 2009.

Exercise 4: Answer the following questions related to the video

1. Is Susan Boyle from a big city in the North of England?
2. How old is she?
3. What's her dream?
4. Whom would she like to become successful as?
5. How does the first judge define her performance?
6. How long has the show been going on?
7. What does the second judge say about listening to her performance?
8. Which animal is she compared to by the third judge?
9. How many 'yes' does she collect?

Text 3 - Read and listen to *Susan Boyle: an unlikely superstar*

Less than a few weeks ago Susan Boyle was a virtual unknown. However, since auditioning for Britain's Got Talent, a televised talent competition, she has experienced a stratospheric rise to fame. A YouTube video of her audition has been watched by more than 26 million people, making it one of the most watched videos on the internet in recent times. It is undeniable that technology such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter has helped to spread the word about Susan's performance.

So just what is it about Susan that the people find so fascinating? Arguably, it is the fact she is such a class act. However, many have suggested that her biggest appeal lies in her unassuming persona.

Susan's persona and appearance have been somewhat controversial and the initial reaction to her audition has made many people question whether they are guilty of judging a book by its cover. With her plain Jane, middle-aged looks and her no-nonsense approach to life, Susan is perhaps the most unlikely star to be discovered of late. Commenting on her rise to fame, Max Clifford, a renowned PR guru, said that the massive public interest in her is partly due to people having to challenge their own assumptions and prejudices.

So what's next for Susan? For the moment, she is preparing for her next appearance on *Britain's Got Talent* and she is the odds-on favourite to win. Looking forward, with talk of record contracts and celebrity duets, it is very likely that we'll soon be seeing a Susan Boyle album in the charts!

Exercise 5: Match terms and definitions

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. a virtual unknown | a) a quiet character, or person who shows no desire for attention or admiration |
| 2. experienced a stratospheric rise to fame | b) here, a performer who has a very good singing voice and a tasteful manner |
| 3. to spread the word about | c) here, most likely |
| 4. a class act | d) ordinary, average, not very attractive or interesting female (a set informal saying) |
| 5. unassuming persona | e) showing dislike for something or someone for no good reason |
| 6. are guilty of judging a book by its cover | f) became widely known very quickly |
| 7. plain Jane | g) somebody who is respected for their knowledge of a particular subject (here public relations, or PR) |
| 8. no-nonsense approach | h) not at all famous |
| 9. PR guru | i) being realistic, practical and/or serious about |
| 10. odds-on favourite | j) to make many people aware of/know about |

Exercise 6: Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? Or is the answer not given (NG)?

1. Susan Boyle is a long-established British superstar.
2. Susan Boyle is a contestant on a TV talent show.
3. A video of Susan Boyle has been watched by millions of people on the internet.
4. Susan Boyle is a glamorous young woman.
5. Susan Boyle is a favourite to win the TV show Britain's Got Talent.

Exercise 7: a) Look at the expressions below. Try to match the idiom to its definition

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| (i) judging a book by its cover | (a) being exceptional at what you do |
| (ii) as pleased as Punch | (b) not being very attractive |
| (iii) a plain Jane | (c) being very happy |
| (iv) a class act | (d) making assumptions based on how something or someone looks |

b) Now complete the sentences below by using one of the expressions above

1. Susan is very proud of her success on the show; in fact she is _____.
2. Susan is a truly talented singer; in fact she is _____.
3. Susan has been described as _____. However, this is one of her most appealing qualities.
4. During Susan's audition, people had to admit they were somewhat guilty of _____.

HOMEWORK

PRE-READING

What do you know about 'Big Brother'?

Do you know where the expression comes from?

Is there a 'Big Brother' show in your country?

What is it like?

Exercise 8: Fill the gaps using these key words from the text

celebrity investigate viewer contestant racism
complain petition slum fake tolerant

1. A _____ is a very poor area of a city with houses in very bad condition.
2. A _____ is a person who watches television programmes.
3. A _____ is someone who pretends they have skills they do not really have.
4. A _____ is a document which many people sign asking the authorities to do something.
5. A _____ is a famous person, especially in entertainment or sport.
6. A _____ is someone who takes part in a contest or a competition.
7. _____ is a situation where people do not respect other people because they belong to a different race.
8. If you _____ about something, you say that it is bad or wrong.
9. If you are _____, you accept other people's beliefs and way of life.
10. If the police _____ something, they try to find out exactly what happened.

Exercise 9: Look in the text and find this information as quickly as possible

1. What is Celebrity Big Brother?
2. What TV station broadcasts Celebrity Big Brother?
3. How many people signed the online petition against the programme?
4. How many people watched the Tuesday night edition of the programme?
5. How many complaints will the police investigate formally?
6. How many viewers have made complaints?

Text 4 - Racism, ratings and reality TV: now Big Brother creates a diplomatic incident

Complaints over Channel 4 show hit record 22,000. Police to investigate abuse of Bollywood film star.

by Owen Gibson, Vikram Dodd and Randeep Ramesh in Delhi. January 18, 2007

'Celebrity Big Brother' is a reality TV programme shown on British television. It is now in its fifth year. In the programme a group of 'famous' people live together in a specially constructed house for several weeks. They have no contact at all with the outside world (no telephones, television, newspapers etc.) and cameras film everything they do and say. In the last two years the number of people watching the programme has fallen. But the number of people watching this year's programme has suddenly risen. Why? Some people believe several of the contestants behaved in a racist way towards another contestant. This has led to street demonstrations in India, shock and anger in the government and a police investigation.

People have always disagreed about the programme, which is shown on Channel 4, but this is the first time it has caused an international argument. 22,000 viewers have made official complaints about the programme; the Indian government has criticised it and UK police said they would investigate reports that three white contestants had behaved in a racist way towards Indian film actress Shilpa Shetty.

Last night Channel 4 broadcast an angry argument between Shetty and Jade Goody, who earned millions of pounds after appearing on the non-celebrity version of the programme several years ago. Speaking to another contestant, Cleo Rocos, after the argument, Shetty said: "I'm representing my country. Is that what today's UK is? It's frightening. It's quite a shame actually." Rocos said: "I don't think there's anything racist in it." But Shetty replied: "It is racist, I'm telling you." Later, another contestant Danielle Lloyd, who is a fashion model, said that Shetty should go back home.

India's Information and Broadcasting Minister said, "If there has been some racism in the programme, it is not only an attack on women but also on the colour of her skin and her country." Apart from the 22,000 complaints made by viewers, another 20,000 people signed a petition organised by the newspaper Eastern Eye.

The local police said they were going to investigate 30 complaints. A spokesman said: "We are investigating reports of racist behaviour in the Big Brother house, and we will look at videotapes of the programme." The managers of Channel 4 and the show's producers met yesterday to discuss the situation, but privately they may be very pleased. 4.5 million people watched Tuesday's programme, one million more than on Monday.

The problems began after several arguments involving Goody, her boyfriend Jack Tweed, Lloyd and a former pop singer Jo O'Meara. At one point Goody, after an argument with Shetty, said: "You need to learn to speak properly. You need a day in the slums. You're a fake."

Channel 4 said that it wasn't racism but the result of class and cultural differences. But in India, the row has united all the major political parties. Communists, Hindu nationalists and the ruling Congress party have all demanded action. "[Big Brother] is holding a mirror to British society. This is not a one-off situation. We should thank Channel 4 for showing us the real face of Britain," Mahesh Bhatt, a film director, told the Guardian.

Fans of Shilpa Shetty protested on the streets in Patna, eastern India. In Bangalore, British politician Gordon Brown had to answer questions from journalists about a reality TV programme he said he had never seen. "I understand that in the UK thousands of viewers have complained about the programme," he said. "I want people to see Britain as a fair and tolerant country." A spokesman for Tony Blair later said that the UK does not tolerate racism in any way. Goody said about Shetty: "She makes me feel sick", while another contestant continually called her "the Indian". Later Lloyd said that Shetty "wants to be white" and called her a "dog". After Shetty cooked a chicken dinner, Lloyd said: "They eat with their hands in India, don't they. Or is that China?" She also said: "You don't know where those hands have been."

Exercise 10: Match the beginnings and endings to make complete sentences about the text

1. 22,000 viewers have complained about Big Brother because...
2. The managers of Channel 4 may be pleased because...
3. Shilpa Shetty believes that...
4. Cleo Rocos believes that...
5. Channel 4 said that...
6. Tony Blair's spokesman said that...
 - a. ...the behaviour of some of the other contestants was racist.
 - b. ...it was the result of class and cultural differences.
 - c. ...there wasn't anything racist in it.
 - d. ...they believe some of the contestants have behaved in a racist way.
 - e. ...the UK does not tolerate racism in any way.
 - f. ...more people are watching the programme.

Exercise 11: Fill in the gaps with prepositions.

Check your answers in the text

1. shown _____ television
2. contact _____ the outside world
3. disagree with someone _____ a subject
4. complain _____
5. behave _____ a racist way
6. attack _____ the colour of her skin
7. an argument _____ someone about something
8. the result _____ class differences

Exercise 12: Complete the table

Verb	Noun
1. complain	
2. demonstrate	
3. criticise	
4. investigate	
5. behave	
6. argue	
7. discuss	
8. disagree	

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