

TELEVISION: HOW IT AFFECTS US

A. Reading

General Comprehension

In this section you are given a text to read. You should first read it through, even if you do not understand it all, looking especially at the way it is set out in paragraphs. This will give you a general idea what it is about and how it is arranged.

Now look at the following questions and read the passage through to find the answers. Remember that you do not need to understand every word in order to answer the questions. You will probably need to read it several times.

1. What is the text about?
2. What does the writer say about television?
3. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?
4. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?
5. Why does the writer use the phrase *on the other hand* to begin the second paragraph?



How does television affect our lives? It can be very helpful to people who carefully choose the shows that they watch. Television can increase our knowledge of the outside world; there are high-quality programs that help us understand many fields of study: science, medicine, the arts, and so on. Moreover, television benefits elderly people who can't often leave the house, as well as patients in hospitals. It also offers non-native speakers the advantage of daily informal language practice; they can increase their vocabulary and practice listening.

On the other hand, there are several serious disadvantages to television. Of course, it provides us with a pleasant way to relax and spend our free time, but in some countries, people watch the "boob tube" for an average of six hours or more a day. Many children stare at a TV screen for more hours each day than they do anything else, including studying and sleeping. It's clear that the tube has a powerful influence on their lives and that its influence is often negative.

Recent studies show that after only thirty seconds of TV, a person's brain "relaxes" the same way it does just after the person falls asleep. Another effect of television on the human brain is that it seems to cause poor concentration. Children who view a lot of TV can often concentrate on a subject for only fifteen to twenty minutes; they can pay attention only for the amount of time between commercials!

Another disadvantage is that TV often causes people to become dissatisfied with their own lives. Real life does not seem as exciting to these people as the lives of actors on the screen. To many people, TV becomes more real than reality, and their own lives seem boring. Also, many people get upset or depressed when they can't solve problems in real life as quickly as TV actors seem to. On the screen, actors solve serious problems in a half-hour program or a thirty-second commercial.

Detailed Comprehension

Now read the passage carefully, looking up anything you do not understand, and answer the following questions.

1. To what kind of people can television be very helpful?
2. In what ways can television programs benefit people?
3. Who can't often leave the house?
4. How can television programs benefit non-native speakers of a foreign language?
5. Why are children's studying and sleeping activities affected by television?
6. Why does television seem to cause poor concentration?
7. Why does television often cause people to become dissatisfied?
8. Why do some people find their lives boring?
9. In what situation do people get upset?
10. Why do actors on the screen can solve serious problems quickly?

B. Vocabulary

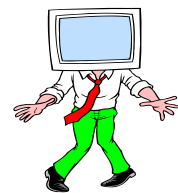
Prefixes

In the above text we can find the words *minicomputer* and *microcomputer*, which have the same base, that is, *computer*. The prefix *mini-* is used before nouns to form nouns which refer to something which is a smaller version of something else. The prefix *micro-* is used to form nouns that refer to something that is a very small example or fraction of a particular type of thing. Therefore a minicomputer is a small computer and a microcomputer is a very small computer. Can you show the meaning of each of the following words?

- | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| <i>minibus</i> | <i>minicab</i> | <i>miniskirt</i> | <i>minitour</i> | <i>minicompo</i> |
| <i>microbiology</i> | <i>microchip</i> | <i>microcosm</i> | <i>microfilm</i> | <i>microorganism</i> |

There are other prefixes that add meaning to a word, and they are added not only to a noun. They can be added to other words of different parts of speech. Look at the following examples.

Base	Word	Prefix	Meaning
write	rewrite	<i>re-</i>	'again'
historic	prehistoric	<i>pre-</i>	'before'
war	postwar	<i>post-</i>	'after'
social	antisocial	<i>anti-</i>	'against'
spell	misspell	<i>mis-</i>	'wrongly'
stop	nonstop	<i>non-</i>	'without'
agree	disagree	<i>dis-</i>	'not'
usual	unusual	<i>un-</i>	'not'
complete	incomplete	<i>in-</i>	'not'
possible	impossible	<i>im-</i>	'not'



Exercise

One word is missing in each of the following sentences. The missing words are in the list. Find the best word to complete each sentence.

postindustrial	antiwar
misinforms	antisocial
misspell	unusual
incomplete	rewrite
nonfiction	prehistoric

1. Thousands of demonstrators marched to the capital city shouting "No more war!"
2. If a teacher students, they will be confused because students always expect their teachers to give them the correct information.
3. Most students use the library's collection because these books contain important information for their studies.
4. Before industrialization, this was an agricultural society, but after years of being an industrial society it is becoming a society.
5. Most birds can fly, so the ostrich is an bird because it cannot fly.
6. I made a lot of mistakes in my letter, so I will the letter before I send it.
7. My homework is because I did not have time to finish it.
8. People often her name because there are many different ways to write it.
9. We know very little about life in times because the people who lived in those times did not know how to write.
10. Some people think he is because he likes to stay alone and does not like to talk to other people.

C. Grammar

Parts of Speech

Sentences in English consist of words arranged in sequence and they are not arbitrarily arranged. There are rules to construct sentences. Before we discuss the rules in details, we have to identify word classes or families.

Every word in the English language belongs to a family. That family is called the part of speech. For example, *write*, *read*, and *listen* belong to the same family. They are all **verbs**. The words *floor*, *street*, and *tree* belong to the same family. They are all **nouns**. The words *careful*, *diligent*, and *happy* belong to the same family. They are all **adjectives**. We can still add many other examples.

The knowledge of parts of speech is important because each has a certain function in a sentence. We cannot put a word anywhere we like in a sentence. It must be placed in a particular position in a specified order.

There are nine main parts of speech in English (Some books say there are eight and some say ten). They are the **noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, article, preposition, conjunction, and interjection**. It is necessary to know the "job" of every word in a sentence because it conveys some meaning.

Nouns

A noun is a word used for a person, place or thing, for example *John*, *Mother*, *sister*, *city*, *town*, *village*, *chair*, *pencil*, and *table*. Nouns can be classified into several types, depending on the basis for the classification. We can have proper nouns, common nouns, collective nouns, abstract nouns, countable nouns and uncountable nouns.

Pronouns

A pronoun is a word used to replace a noun or noun phrase. Usually when a noun or noun phrase has been used once, a pronoun is used to avoid repetition of the same noun or noun phrase. Pronouns can be classified into personal pronouns (e.g. *he, she, they*), emphatic and reflexive pronouns (e.g. *himself, herself, themselves*), demonstrative pronouns (e.g. *this, that, these, those*), interrogative pronouns (e.g. *where, when, how*), relative pronouns (e.g. *which, who, whose*), indefinite pronouns (e.g. *someone, something, everyone*), distributive pronouns (e.g. *each, either, neither*), and reciprocal pronouns (e.g. *each other, one another*).

Verbs

A verb is a word which expresses the action carried out by the subject of a sentence (*The man eats; The man runs; The man thinks*), or connects the subject of a sentence to things about the subject (*John has become a lawyer; John will be a lawyer; The books are thick and heavy*).

Adjectives

An adjective is a word that describes a noun or a pronoun either by pointing out one of its qualities (the *red* dress, *blunt* instruments, a *long* pole) or by limiting its reference (the *only* desk, *ten* kilometres, the *first* road). Some common adjectives possessive adjectives (*my, his, her*), descriptive adjectives (*careful, excellent, happy*) and demonstrative adjectives (*this, that, these, those*).

Adverbs

An adverb is a word that gives more information about when, how, where or in what circumstances something happens (e.g. *now, quickly, there*). There are different kinds of adverb (which is discussed in a later section).

Articles

The words *a, an, and the* are articles. As a part of speech, articles are considered adjectives because they modify nouns. There are two classes of articles: indefinite and definite articles. *A* and *an* are indefinite articles and *the* is the definite article.

Prepositions

A preposition is a word that links a noun or a noun equivalent (a pronoun or gerund) to another word by expressing such relationships as location (e.g. *at, in, on, over*), direction (e.g. *to, across, towards*), time (e.g. *before, after, during*) or purpose (e.g. *to, for*).

Conjunctions

A conjunction is a word which is used to join words (*John and Mary, slowly but carefully*), phrases (the plays of Shakespeare *or* the music of Mozart) and clauses (I like him *because* he is kind). Conjunctions are classified into coordinate and subordinate conjunctions. *And, but, and or* are coordinate conjunction and *because, if, and when* are subordinate conjunctions.

Interjections

An interjection is a word or a phrase which is introduced into a sentence as an exclamation of emotion (*Ouch! Oh dear! Good heavens!*) or to attract attention (*Psst, Hey! Hi!*).

Exercise

Now complete the following sentences with your own words. The part of speech of each word is shown in brackets.

1. My two children always fight with (reciprocal pronoun)
2. Jane does not like ... sister. (possessive adjective)
3. There ... a few passengers in the bus. (verb)
4. ... books are from the university library. (demonstrative adjective)
5. The program for the computer will be recorded on the (noun)
6. The object ... running business is to make money. (preposition)
7. ... all businesses suffer from bad debts. (adverb)
8. Interest has to be paid whether the business is profitable ... not. (conjunction)
9. There is a loss at the time of sale, ... good procedures can largely eliminate. (relative pronoun)
10. ... wholesale organization needs to keep sufficient stock in all categories to be able to supply its customers. (article)

Now identify the parts of speech of all the words used in the above sentences. Look up your dictionary if necessary.

