🎥 Film and TV
TV / Reality TV

Teacher's notes

Age: Teenager/Adults

Level: Advanced (C1)

Time: 90+ minutes (plus 30 minutes with optional project)

Activity: In this lesson, students will:

1. practise speaking about reality TV and social media, incorporating useful new vocabulary relevant to this topic;

2. improve listening comprehension of real-life English from clips of reality TV programmes;

3. utilise new language to complete a webquest about celebrities on social media and present it orally.

Language focus: speaking, listening, vocabulary

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student, a PC or projector, an internet connection in the classroom, the optional webquest activity will require the use of smartphones

Notes:

1. WARNING: This lesson refers to two online videos taken from reality TV series. While these videos don't contain explicit material, you should watch the videos before the lesson to judge whether they are appropriate for the particular group of students. When the first video ends, a window appears on screen for a different clip in the same reality TV series which contains a reference to sex. You may wish to pause the video before this window appears (2.33). The second video includes some references to violence.

2. This lesson contains exercises which focus on listening, speaking, reading and vocabulary. If you wish to maximise class time for listening and speaking, you could ask students to complete the reading and vocabulary exercises as preparatory

homework before the lesson. It would then only be necessary to quickly correct these parts in class. The exercises which could be done as preparatory homework are marked with a symbol. 🔄

1. Speak (10 minutes)

Aims: to generate interest in the topic of reality TV and allow students to talk about TV in their own country, to allow speaking practice of describing TV shows

Procedure: Before referring to all the reality shows in this exercise, make sure that you class will be OK discussing the more risqué ones. Once you are ready, begin the activity by writing on the board the name of a reality TV show that you think the students would recognise (e.g. *The X Factor*). Elicit information about the show and write useful suggested vocabulary on the board. Words related to competition and personality will be important for this task. Ask students to discuss the task in pairs. For students who don't know a lot about reality TV, ask them to imagine the format and objective of the show just from the title. Monitor students as they speak. Then provide feedback, focusing on good descriptions the students have given.

2. Vocabulary (10 minutes)

Aims: to provide students with high-level adjectives for talking about TV shows, to focus on the pronunciation of these adjectives

Procedure: Tell the students that they are going to study some high-level adjectives which will be useful for describing TV shows. Ask them to work in pairs to complete the task. Monitor as they do so and help weaker students by providing some of the more difficult answers so that they can work by elimination. Finally, elicit the answers and drill pronunciation of the more difficult words (clichéd, insightful, shallow, contrived).

Key:

a. clichéd	e. bland
b. gripping	f. uplifting
c. shallow	g. contrived
d. insightful	h. moving

3. Listen and speak (15 minutes)

Aims: to provide listening practice of understanding a TV show, to provide spoken practice of language related to reality TV, feelings and personality

Procedure: Begin the task by telling students that you are going to show them a short, introductory clip to the show *First Dates*. Their task is simply to identify the objective of the show. Play the 40-second introductory clip and elicit the objective of *First Dates* (it is show set in a restaurant where people go on first dates, hopeful to find love). Now play the longer *First Dates* video. (Please read the warning note on the first page of the teacher's notes.) Ask students in pairs to briefly compare answers to the four questions. Play it again and let students decide their final answers. Elicit the answers.

Key:

a. The man tells the woman that her lack of hair suits her. He later tells her not to keep the wig on her head.

b. She was bullied in school. The other children used to make fun of the fact that she didn't have any eyebrows. However, she says that she didn't feel too upset by this.

c. Yes, she says that she would love to meet a man like her father because he has been very supportive. However, she would like to meet a man who is taller and has more hair than her dad.

d. The man tells her that she's beautiful, that this is his best date ever and that she is unique.

Ask students to briefly discuss the final questions in pairs. Give feedback. In this task, the students were asked, 'What do you think happened between this couple?' At the end of this episode, the man said that he liked the woman and that he would be interested in going on another date. However, the woman then said that she didn't feel anything romantic between them and so they didn't meet again.

4. Read and vocabulary (20 minutes)

Aims: for students to read a short text about a famous incident from reality TV, to provide students with vocabulary for talking about the media and fame which will be useful for later tasks, to provide background information which will aid understanding for the video in Task 5

Procedure: If possible, show a photo of Kim Kardashian on the board. Try to elicit some information about her. In particular, ask students if anybody can briefly explain the 2016 incident when Kim was robbed in Paris (they may have read about this in the newspapers). Write useful suggested vocabulary on the board. Tell students that they are going to read a short text about the robbery. Read the initial two questions aloud and tell students that this is the information they need to find from the text. Give them a few minutes to read individually and then to discuss the two questions in pairs. Finally, elicit the answers.

Key:

• *Kim posted a video on Snapchat that showed that she was alone in her hotel room because her sisters had gone out. This may have let the thieves know that it was a good time for the robbery.*

• *Sixteen robbers were arrested, there was a media frenzy, lots of people watched Kim's reality TV show, there was a debate about the authenticity and morals of reality TV.*

Give students about five minutes to complete the crossword in pairs. Monitor as they do so and help weaker pairs of students by providing some of the missing letters. Elicit the answers. Focus on pronunciation. Check understanding of the more difficult words by asking questions (e.g. Can you tell me the name of a famous tabloid from your country? Why would you describe it as a tabloid?, etc).

Key:

Across

3. hoax

5. gag

7. onlooker

8. buzz

Down

1. tabloids

2. track

3. tell (-) all

6. frenzy

5. Listen and speak (15 minutes)

Aims: to provide further listening practice of understanding a reality TV clip, to provide spoken practice of talking about the media and real-versus-fake

Procedure: Play the video. Ask students in pairs to briefly compare answers to the four questions. Play it again and let students decide their final answers. Elicit the answers. Ask students to briefly discuss the final questions in pairs. Give feedback, focusing especially on language related to the media and real-versus-fake.

Key:

a. *She began to feel tense. She says that her heart and her stomach felt nervous because she knew that something strange was happening.*

b. *They were holding a man and restricting his movement. The two men were wearing police uniforms.*

c. *In the US, the phone number for a police emergency is 911. Kim didn't know what the emergency number was in France (it's 112).*

d. *The robbers forced the concierge to open the door to Kim's hotel room because he had the key. During the robbery, he acted as the interpreter between Kim and the French-speaking thieves.*

6. Functional language (5 minutes)

Aims: to provide students with informal expressions for agreeing/disagreeing which they will be able to use in the debate in Task 7

Procedure: Ask students to complete the table in pairs. Monitor as they do so, perhaps providing spoken examples to illustrate. Make sure that students understand that these expressions are quite conversational and might not always be suitable for written English. Elicit the answers, focusing on the correct intonation.

Key:

'I agree'	*'I'm not 100% decided'*	*'I disagree'*
Undoubtedly. *That's a good point.* *I'd go along with that.*	*That's a tricky one.* *It all depends.* *I agree up to a point.*	*That's just plain wrong.* *No way!* *Come off it!*

7. Speak (15 minutes)

Aims: to consolidate vocabulary and functional language studied in the previous tasks, to provide spoken practice of debating the pros and cons of reality TV and/or social media

Procedure: Students work in groups of three. Tell them that they are going to debate either reality TV or social media. First, they need to agree which of the two topics their group will debate. Tell students that they have about ten minutes to discuss the questions for their topic. Remind them to make an effort to incorporate new language from this lesson (adjectives to describe TV shows, language for talking about the media and fame, functional language for agreeing/disagreeing). Monitor as they speak. At the end, provide feedback. If you have heard any student mentioning a particularly interesting argument, perhaps ask him/her to explain it to the whole class.

8. Webquest (30 minutes)

Aims: to consolidate language from the lesson related to fame and the media, to promote autonomous learning by asking students to research celebrities online in English, to practise giving a small-scale presentation of research/findings

Procedure: Students work in pairs. Give them about two minutes to agree on which celebrity they are going to research, as outlined in Step 1. If any pairs find it difficult to agree, perhaps they could change pairs to work with a partner with similar interests. If possible, show a photo on the board of Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson. Try to elicit some basic information about him and ask if any students follow him on social media. Allow students a minute or two to read The Rock's information in Step 2. Then ask some basic comprehension questions (e.g. Why does he have so many followers on Instagram?). Ask students to look at the Social media star worksheet. Remind them that they only have about ten minutes to research the information online and fill in the worksheet. The short time means that they only need to write some brief bullet points. It is important that both students in the pair complete their worksheet (for the same celebrity). This is because the pairs will separate in the next step. The pairs separate and each student presents their celebrity individually, as outlined in Step 4. Give each speaker about five minutes to talk about the celebrity they have researched. Encourage the use of online photos/video and promote questions from the student who is listening. Give feedback on speaking.

1. Speak

Discuss the below task in pairs.

Many reality shows are international, where each country has a slightly different format or name. From the box below, select the shows that you recognise. Talk about:

- the format of the show

- whether your country has a version of this show

- people who have become famous from this show

- your opinion on this type of show

> *Survivor / X-Factor / The Voice / Top Chef / Masterchef / Big Brother / The Apprentice / Rupaul's Drag Race / America's Next Top Model / Jersey Shore / Dancing with the Stars / Supernanny / First Dates / Keeping Up With The Kardashians / America's Got Talent / Teen Mom*

2. Vocabulary 🔄

Use the eight adjectives, which can describe TV shows, to complete the definitions below.

gripping	moving	clichéd	shallow
insightful	bland	uplifting	contrived

a. _____ = a show which is full of typical, unoriginal ideas and stereotypes

b. _____ = a show which is addictive, with a story that catches your attention

c. _____ = a show which is superficial and doesn't require us to think

d. _____ = a show which looks into a secret world, so that we can understand it better

e. _____ = a show which is boring because it doesn't contain any strong characteristics

f. _____ = a show which makes us feel inspired, optimistic and even happier

g. _____ = a show which seems artificial, like it has been written by a marketing team

h. _____ = a show which provokes feelings of sadness or sympathy, often making us cry

3. Listen and speak

You are going to watch a clip from the reality series First Dates *(Channel 4, UK). First, watch this short introduction to the programme:*

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ah36LOz_lq8

In the next scene which you are going to watch, we see a man and a woman on their first date. The woman has no hair due to a medical condition and she has decided to wear a wig. Watch the video and answer the questions.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_AtsKUAbVE

 a. How does the man react after the woman has explained her medical condition?

 b. How does she describe her experience at school?

 c. Would she like to meet a man similar to her father? Explain.

 d. How does the man react when the woman returns to the table?

Discuss with your classmate:

 Which of the adjectives from Task 2 would you use to describe this clip? Explain.

 Would you participate in a TV show like *First Dates*? Explain.

 At the end of each episode of *First Dates*, the participants need to say if they think that they will continue to see each other. What do you think happened between this couple? (In a moment, your teacher will tell you the answer.)

4a. Read

You are going to read a short text about the infamous Paris robbery of reality TV star Kim Karsdashian. Once you have finished, discuss the questions below with a classmate.

- What role did social media possibly have in the robbery?

- What were the various consequences of the robbery?

Too real?

Paris, October 3rd, 2016. The city is alive for Fashion Week with models, celebrities and onlookers. Kim Kardashian is lying on her hotel bed, about to fall asleep. Reality TV star, wife of the rapper Kanye West and possibly the world's biggest social media sensation, Kim's presence in Paris has not gone unnoticed. It's almost 3am and she has just uploaded a video to Snapchat generating the usual online buzz amongst her millions of followers. In doing so, however, she may also have unintentionally revealed that she's at the hotel alone after her sisters have gone out for some Paris nightlife. She starts to fall asleep but is suddenly awoken by a strange noise.

The rest of the story is history, the type of scandal to fill the tabloids for months. One of the world's most famous women is tied up, gagged and held at gunpoint. A team of robbers manage to escape with €9 million in jewellery and other valuables. In the following weeks and months, there's a manhunt resulting in the arrest of a team of 16 robbers. There's also a media frenzy and a highly viewed, tell-all episode of Kim's reality TV show. On top of this is a debate around several questions. Could the robbery have been a hoax to raise ratings for Kim's TV show? Does social media make it too easy to track people's physical movements these days? Are there aspects of people's private lives which are simply unsuitable for reality TV? Whatever questions have arisen, they haven't stopped the global obsession with the world's most watched woman.
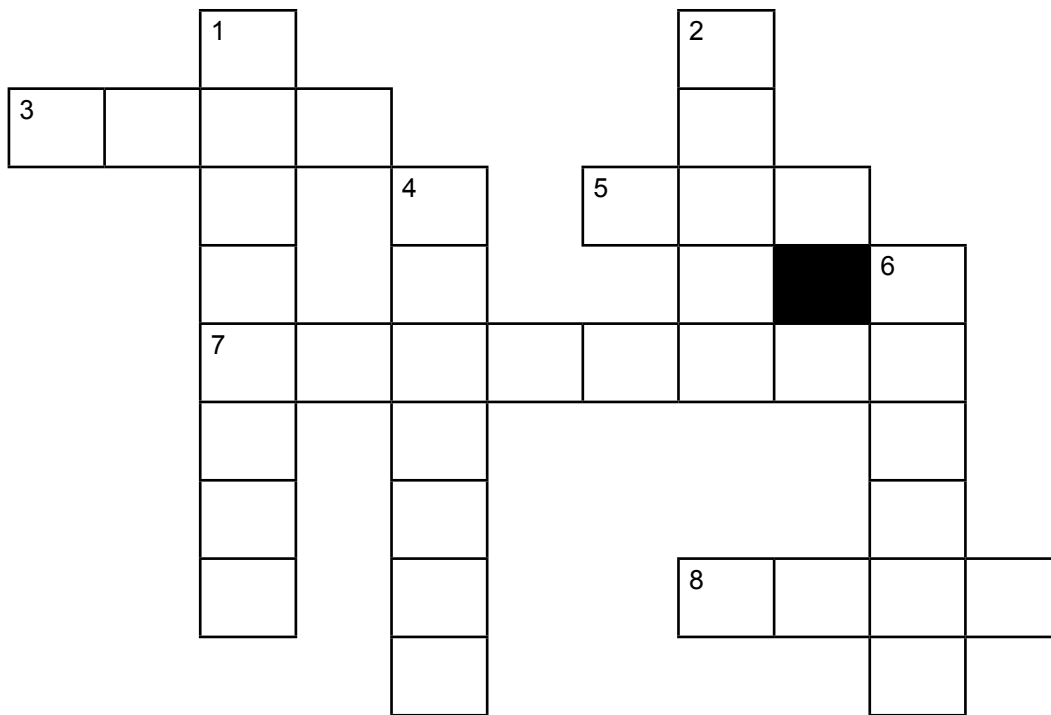

4b. Vocabulary ⟳

Complete the crossword. Each of the definitions refers to a word from the text from the previous text 'Too real?'.

Across

3. A story which is not true but which has the objective of tricking the general public

5. A verb which means to silence a person, either metaphorically by restricting their freedom of speech or literally by covering their mouth with something

7. A person who observes but who doesn't participate

8. A feeling of excitement among a group of people, often meaning that a certain topic has many mentions online

Down

1. Newspapers which focus on gossip and scandal

2. A verb which means to follow certain clues or information so that you can find a person

4. An adjective which describes a book, article, movie or TV show which reveals many secret details about a private, personal matter (2 words: 4, 3)

6. A moment of complete chaos and rapid action

5. Listen and speak

Keeping Up With The Kardashians *is a reality TV series which shows the daily lives of Kim Kardashian, her sisters and their mother. In this clip, Kim describes her memories of the Paris robbery (described in Task 3a) to her sisters. Watch the video and answer the questions. (Vocabulary note: a concierge = a hotel worker, similar to a receptionist, who assists guests.)*

www.youtube.com/watch?v=bImP-cGh8FE

a. When nobody answered Kim's 'Hello?', how did she feel?

b. Kim saw two men outside her bedroom. What were they doing and wearing?

c. What problem did she have when she started using her phone?

d. What role did the concierge have during the robbery?

Discuss with your classmate:

Which of the adjectives from Task 2 would you use to describe this clip? Explain.

Why do you think many people thought that the robbery was a hoax? What do you think?

Why do you think TV shows like *Keeping Up With The Kardashians* are so popular?

6. Functional language

In the next task, you are going to have a debate. First, look at the nine expressions below and categorise them by the level of agreement that they express. Note that most of the expressions are quite colloquial.

~~That's just plain wrong.~~	Undoubtedly.	It all depends.	Come off it!
That's a tricky one.	That's a good point.	I'd go along with that.	I agree up to a point.
No way!			

'I agree'	'I'm not 100% decided'	'I disagree'
		That's just plain wrong.

7. Speak

Work in small groups. In the tables below there are arguments for and against reality TV and social media. First, decide which of the two themes your group would prefer to debate. Then discuss whether you (personally) agree or disagree with each argument in the table.

Reality TV

For:	Against:
• It allows us to look into people's private lives and to understand people from different cultures, socio-economic status, etc. In this way, reality TV makes us more tolerant.	• It offers us bland TV with no originality. TV studios invest in these types of shows, so there is less money for thought-provoking, creative programmes.
• It reflects the real lives of viewers. This is better than if TV only showed us the clichéd lives of happy families with money.	• It is cruel. The viewer forgets that it deals with real people. It also often shows people with mental-health problems. In this way, the suffering of real people becomes a form of TV entertainment.
• If you don't like reality TV, there is no obligation to watch it. There's no harm in people watching the shows that entertain them.	• Just because something is popular doesn't mean it is right. The government needs to regulate reality TV before something terrible happens.

Social media

For:	Against:
• It makes us more sociable. It allows us to maintain old friendships while making it easier to develop new ones. It also allows us to contact people with specific interests which are similar to our own.	• It makes it too easy for criminals to communicate with each other and plan illegal activities. Terrorist attacks are proof that the risks of social media are bigger than the benefits.
• It makes it more difficult for authorities to gag protestors. Social media gives power to the people and leads to positive social changes.	• Sharing personal information online is simply dangerous. If a person wants to harm us or steal from us, they can plan this using our online information.
• If you don't like social media, there is no obligation to use it. There's no harm in people spending their free time on sites like Facebook or Instagram.	• It makes people unhappy and self-obsessed. Showing our activities online usually distracts us from the enjoyment of the activities.

8. Webquest:

You are going to research a social media star.

Step 1:

Work in pairs. The list below shows 12 celebrities who have an enormous number of followers on social media. You are going to give a short presentation on one of these celebrities. First, talk to your partner to agree on which celebrity you are going to talk about.

Cristiano Ronaldo (footballer, Portugal)	Ryan Reynolds (actor, USA)
Donald J Trump (president, USA)	Hillary Clinton (former president, USA)
Selena Gomez (singer, USA)	Mesut Ozil (footballer, Germany)
Bill Gates (businessman, USA)	Agnez Mo (singer/actress, Indonesia)
LeBron James (basketballer, USA)	James Blunt (singer, UK)
Shah Rukh Khan (actor, India)	Narendra Modi (prime minister, India)

Step 2:

Read the information below about one of the world's biggest social media stars, Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson. All of this information was available from websites like Wikipedia, Buzzfeed, Forbes and other news sites.

Social media star name: Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson

Basic information: Born in California in 1972

How this person became famous:

• brief career playing American football with Miami University

• trained as a wrestler in his early 20s (his father is a former professional wrestler)

• joined the World Wrestling Federation, became a huge star, known as 'The Rock'

• started to work as an actor around age 30

• has become one of Hollywood's biggest names

• main movie success is *The Fast and the Furious* movie series and *Baywatch*

Why this person has a lot of followers on social media:

- personal and funny posts
- once caused a frenzy by uploading an embarrassing photo of him from the 1990s (Google 'The Rock fanny pack' and you'll see why!)
- appeals to younger followers by posting many photos with cute dogs and horses
- appeals to fitness enthusiasts by posting photos of himself at the gym

Most popular social network for this person:

- Instagram 94m
- Facebook 58m
- Twitter 12m

How social media helps this person:

- creates buzz for his movies and TV shows
- he makes some references to politics, joking that he wants to become the President of the US (many people think that his political ambitions could be genuine)

Step 3:

Work in pairs to complete the Social media star worksheet for your chosen celebrity. Use your smartphones to research the information. You have about 10 minutes to do this so you don't need a lot of detail.

Step 4:

Now the pairs split and each member sits with a different classmate. In these new pairs, each student gives a brief presentation of the information which they have researched. Where appropriate, support your presentation using images or videos on your phone.

Social media star

Social media star name:

Basic information:
(Age, where from.)

How this person became famous:
(Background, main successes.)

Why this person has a lot of followers on social media:
(Try Googling '[name of celebrity] + social media' to find information about their social media habits, types of followers, etc.)

Most popular social network for this person:
(Find the numbers on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.)

How social media helps this person:
(What are the commercial, political or personal objectives?)