

How to Talk About TV – Video

In this lesson, you'll learn how to talk about TV and TV shows in English.

Do you watch TV? How and where? What kind of shows do you like or dislike? You'll see how to answer these questions and more in clear, detailed English.

1. Talking About TV Habits

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/watch-netflix.webp>)

Olivier: Do you watch much TV?

Kasia: Not really. I used to, but now I'm too busy, and I don't have the time. Sometimes I put something on in the background while I'm doing other things, like cooking or cleaning. You?

O: I go through phases. Sometimes I get really into a show, and I binge-watch it over a few days, or I'll have weeks where I watch a lot of TV in the evenings. But, at some point, I get tired of it and I take a break for a few weeks.

K: So you're either watching TV all the time, or not at all?

O: I guess! I get addicted to things easily.

K: I've never really understood the whole binge-watching thing. I've never been *that* into a show. I can watch one, two episodes of something, but then I want to do something else.

O: That's a better way to do it. It's fun to watch a really good show, but sometimes I feel guilty, like I could be doing something better with my time.

Do you watch much TV? In the dialogue, you heard several phrases you can use to talk about TV and your TV-watching habits. Look at four sentences.

1. I go through phases.
2. Sometimes, I get really into a show.
3. I binge-watch a show over a few days.
4. I put something on in the background while I'm doing other things.

Do you know what these mean? Are any of them true for you? 'Go through phases' is a general phrase. You can use it to talk about many things. It means that you have times where you do something a lot, and then times when you don't do it much. So, if you say 'I go through phases', and you're talking about watching TV, you mean that there are times when you watch TV regularly, and times when you don't. Maybe one month you watch a lot of TV, but the next month, you hardly watch any.

If you 'get into' something, then you become really interested in it. If you get into a TV show, you start watching it, and then you like it and you want to watch more. You can use 'get into' for other things. You could say 'I got into photography when I was a teenager', meaning that you developed a strong interest in photography at that time.

‘Binge-watch’ means that you watch a lot of episodes of a TV show in a very short time. Maybe you watch a whole season of a show in one or two days. A ‘binge’ has the idea of something unhealthy.

Finally, if you put something on in the background, you aren’t really watching it. Maybe you’re half-watching, or you’re listening but not watching. What about you? Look at four questions:

1. How much TV do you watch?
2. What was the last show you really got into?
3. Have you ever binge-watched a show?
4. Do you like to put TV on in the background when you’re doing housework?

Could you answer these questions? Try it now! Make sure you answer with a full sentence. Try to use the language from the dialogue and this section. Pause the video and make your answers. How was that? Could you answer fluently? If not, remember that you can always review the dialogue and the section again.

Let’s look at our next topic from Oxford Online English to help you learn how to talk about TV in English.

2. Different Ways to Watch TV

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/new-computer.webp>)

Kasia: Are you watching anything good at the moment? I’m looking for a new show to watch.

Olivier: There’s this medical drama I’ve been watching. It’s on Wednesdays at nine o’clock. You should check it out!

K: ‘On Wednesdays’? You mean on actual TV?

O: Yeah...

K: Wow! You still watch broadcast TV? I haven’t connected my TV aerial for years.

O: So, you just stream everything?

K: Yeah. That’s weird. I mean, no one I know watches broadcast TV these days.

O: I guess I’m a bit old-fashioned. I like having a choice of channels. Mainly, I’m a big sports fan, so I get a cable package. That way, I can watch football and basketball games live.

K: That makes sense. Still, having to watch something at a specific time seems so inconvenient. I like being able to watch what I want when I want.

O: I have a set-top recorder, so I can record things and watch them later. Plus, you can skip the ad breaks.

K: Ad breaks! I had forgotten about those. Most streaming services don’t have any ads. So, you never stream things? You’ve never used Hulu or Netflix or anything like that?

O: No, never. I just don’t have much interest.

How do you generally watch TV? In the dialogue, we talked about two different ways to watch. Do you remember? You can watch broadcast TV (<https://www.quora.com/What-is-broadcast-television>), meaning traditional TV where you choose a channel and watch programs on a schedule, or you can watch

TV on a streaming service, like Netflix or Hulu. You also heard some different advantages of these two ways to watch TV.

Here's a question: can you think of two advantages of watching broadcast TV, and two advantages of streaming? In the dialogue, you heard these:

I like having a choice of channels.

I can watch football and basketball games live.

I like being able to watch what I want when I want.

Most streaming services don't have any ads.

If you watch something live, you watch it as it's happening, in real time. 'Ad' is short for 'advertisement' or 'advert'. 'Ad', 'advert' and 'advertisement' all have the same meaning. Also, they're all countable nouns. Be careful not to mix these up with 'advertising' which is the abstract noun, and is uncountable.

Can you think of any other advantages of broadcast TV or streaming services which weren't mentioned in the dialogue? Try to think of one more advantage for each. Pause the video if you want some thinking time! What did you think of? Of course, there are many possibilities! Here are four ideas.

Broadcast TV is usually free, because it's supported by advertising.

Broadcast TV has more news and current affairs programs.

Streaming services produce their own exclusive shows and films, which you can't watch anywhere else.

Many streaming services let you watch TV shows from other countries and in other languages.

Did you get similar ideas? Do you agree with these points, or not? What about you? Do you watch broadcast TV, streaming services, or both? Which is better for you, and why? Practice these phrases to talk about TV in English. Pause the video and try to answer these questions with at least three full sentences. Take your time, and practise your answer several times, until you can speak fluently. Could you do it? Great! Let's move on.

3. How to Describe a TV Show

Olivier: What kind of thing do you watch?

Kasia: It depends. Sometimes, if I'm tired at the end of the day, I'll just put on a sitcom, or a cookery show or something. If I want something more serious, I like drama series, and some documentaries.

O: I like comedy a lot, too. Do you ever watch stand-up?

K: No, mostly just sitcoms, and a few cartoons like Bojack Horseman and things like that.

O: Bojack Horseman? What's that?

K: It's a really dark animated comedy.

O: What's it about?

K: It's about a horse who used to be a famous TV star, and it's set in a world where animals live together with people, and... You know what? It's a little hard to explain. But, it's really good. You should check it out.

O: Who's in it?

K: Lots of people. Will Arnett, who was in Arrested Development, and Alison Brie. A lot of other big-name actors, too.

O: Is it funny?

K: Yeah, it is, but it's dark. It's quite sad sometimes.

O: Hmm... Maybe I'll take a look. Where's it on?

K: It's a Netflix production, so I think you can only watch it there.

In the dialogue, you heard several questions you could use to ask someone about TV shows they watch. Look at the questions. Can you complete the missing words?

1. What _____ of _____ do you watch?
2. What's it _____?
3. Who's _____ it?
4. _____ it funny?
5. Where's it _____?

Can you remember the answers, or can you work them out? Let's look together.

1. What kind of thing do you watch?
2. What's it about?
3. Who's in it?
4. Is it funny?
5. Where's it on?

Could you answer these questions for yourself? We'll look at how to answer in a minute; first, let's check the meaning of the questions. What does 'who's in it?' mean? And what about 'where's it on?' 'Who's in it' is asking about the actors. You're probably asking whether the show has famous actors. You can use the preposition 'in' to talk about acting in a show or film. For example, you can say: 'He was in Arrested Development,' or 'Robert de Niro was in Heat.'

'Where's it on' is asking about where you can see something. You can use the preposition 'on' to talk about where or when a show is happening. You can use it for other things, too, like films at the cinema, plays at the theatre, or concerts. Now, think about the first question: what kind of thing do you watch? You could answer this by saying:

I mostly watch crime series.

I watch a mix of documentaries and medical drama.

I watch a bit of everything.

What about you? How would you answer this question? Next, think of a show you really like. Look at the questions from the dialogue.

What's it about?

Who's in it?

Is it funny/exciting/original?

Where's it on?

We added some adjectives to the third question, because you'll need different ideas depending on the show. Can you make four sentences, answering these questions, to talk about a show which you like? Let's see a sample answer:

I'm watching a sci-fi show called The Expanse. It's about human society in the future, when people live all over the solar system, and the tensions between different factions. The main story is about the discovery of alien life on one of Saturn's moons. It doesn't have any big-name actors in it; I haven't seen most of the cast anywhere else. I think it's quite original, although the story takes some time to get really interesting. I watched it on Netflix, but I think now it's only on Amazon video.

What about you? Try to make an answer like this, talking about a TV show you like. Use the questions to give your answer structure. Either write your answer down, or say it out loud. Or, do both!

Could you do it? Try as many times as you like. For now, let's look at our last section to talk about TV in English.

4. Talking About a TV Show You Dislike

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/gross-out-1.webp>)

Kasia: Are you watching the new Game of Thrones season?

Olivier: No, actually. I gave up on it a while ago. Why, is it good?

K: Yeah, I think so. Where did you stop?

O: About two seasons ago. I liked it at the beginning, but I felt like it went downhill in later seasons. Some storylines just made no sense, and there was a lot of padding.

K: Really? I think it's just got better with time. The season they're making now is the last one, and I think it's the best yet. The plot has so many great twists. Normally, I can guess where a story is going, but with this, it's full of surprises.

O: Personally, I thought it was quite predictable. One problem was that it got too melodramatic. Every episode finished with a huge cliffhanger, like a bad soap opera.

K: Well, they had a lot of plot threads to resolve from earlier. I think they're doing a good job with it. I hate it when shows leave storylines hanging and don't explain things properly.

O: I am a little curious to see what happens with some things, but probably not enough to watch it again.

K: I can tell you if you...

O: No—no spoilers. I might change my mind.

K: You should! If you don't like a TV show, what reasons could you give?

You heard several points in the dialogue. Do you remember them? Look at some phrases you heard:

It went downhill in later seasons.

Some storylines made no sense.

There was a lot of padding.

Could you explain the meaning of these? 'Go downhill' is a conversational phrase meaning 'get worse'. If you say 'I liked it at the start, but it went downhill later', you're saying that the quality of the show got worse with time. If something makes no sense, it isn't clear or understandable. If you say 'some storylines made no sense', maybe you mean that the characters made unrealistic decisions, or problems were solved in a very unrealistic, fantastical way. 'Padding' means something which is added just to fill time. If a TV show has a lot of padding, there's a lot of empty content, which doesn't add to the story or the characters. Of course, you could use these sentences in different ways. For example:

It went downhill after the end of season one.

Some storylines didn't go anywhere.

There was a lot of boring dialogue.

Finally, let's look at three more useful words you saw in the dialogue. Look at three sentences. Can you explain the highlighted words?

Every episode finished with a cliffhanger.

They had a lot of plot threads to resolve.

No spoilers!

A 'cliffhanger' is a dramatic ending to an episode, where you really want to know what happens next. Often, a cliffhanger means that the episode ends right in the middle of a key story moment. 'Plot threads' are like storylines. Many TV shows have many characters and plot threads, which go in parallel to each other. Generally, you want a show to resolve all its plot threads, meaning that every storyline has an ending. Otherwise, a bad show might leave storylines hanging, meaning you never find out what happened.

Finally, a 'spoiler' is when someone tells you about the story of a film or TV show before you watch it. Sometimes, TV reviews or articles will include the words 'spoiler alert' at the beginning. This is warning you that you shouldn't read it if you don't want to find out the story for yourself!

Here's a final task for you. Can you describe a TV show you really like? Say what kind of show it is, what it's about, and why you like it. Put your answer in the comments on YouTube, and you can get some feedback and corrections on what you learned to talk about TV in English!

Thanks for watching!

How to Talk About Movies in English – Video

In this lesson, you can see how to talk about movies in English.

What was the last film you saw? What kind of film was it? Did you like it or not? In this lesson, you'll learn how to describe movies and films and give your opinion about different films that you've watched.

Let's start with a question: what kind of films do you like?

1. Talking About Kinds of Film

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/film-movie-cinema.webp>)

Daniel: Have you seen 'No Country for Old Men'?

Kasia: No. I've never even heard of it. What kind of film is it?

D: I guess you'd call it a thriller, but it's also kind of a modern western, because a lot of it takes place in the desert, or small-town America.

K: Is it scary? I can't do scary.

D: You might not like it, then.

K: I can't watch anything violent, horror films, anything like that.

D: So what kind of thing are you into?

K: I like dramas, historical films, things like that. I like stories that focus more on real people. I also have a weakness for cheesy rom-coms occasionally. What about you?

D: Yeah, I guess we have somewhat opposite tastes! I'm a big fan of horror films, thrillers, and so on.

In the dialogue, you heard a lot of words for different kinds of films. Do you remember any of the words we mentioned? We'll give you a few seconds; try to remember three. You heard:

thrillers

horror films

westerns

dramas

historical films

rom-coms

A western is a film set in 19th century America, often featuring cowboys. 'Rom-com' is a short form of 'romantic comedy'. Can you think of any other kinds of film which we haven't mentioned? Try to think of three more! Any ideas? Maybe you said:

action

comedy

cartoon

fantasy

musical

sci-fi

'Sci-fi' is a short form of 'science fiction'. Sci-fi films are set in the future, often in space, and usually feature very advanced technology, like time travel. The *Star Wars* films are probably some of the most famous sci-fi films.

Fantasy films often feature magic, dragons, monsters, and things like that. The *Lord of the Rings* films are good examples of fantasy films. Does your language have different words for 'fantasy' and 'sci-fi'? Some languages don't; if this is true in your language, be careful with the difference! If someone's talking about a film, and you want to know what kind of film it is, you can ask: 'What kind of film is it?' You could also say: 'What sort of film is it?' To answer, you can just say: 'It's an action film'; 'It's a thriller'; 'It's a comedy', and so on. With some words, you need to say 'film' afterwards, like:

action film

horror film

historical film

sci-fi film

With other words, you don't say 'film' afterwards, like:

drama

thriller

musical

western

So, don't say: 'It's a thriller film'; just say, 'It's a thriller.' If you want to ask someone about their taste in films, you can ask: 'What kind of films do you like?' Or: 'What kind of films are you into?' Asking 'are you into' is a more conversational way to ask 'do you like'.

So, what kind of films are you into? Can you answer this question with two to three sentences? Pause the video and try it now!

Next in learning how to talk about movies in English, let's look at how you can introduce one film which you've seen, and tell someone else about it.

2. How to Introduce a Film

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/english-conversation.webp>)
Kasia: I saw a great film last night! I can't believe I didn't see it when it was on in the cinema.

Daniel: Oh really? What was it?

K: Blue Jasmine. Do you know it?

D: Hmm... Sounds familiar. Is that the Steven Spielberg film?

K: No, it was directed by Woody Allen.

D: No, I don't know it. What kind of film is it?

K: I guess I'd call it a drama, but it's a bit of a black comedy, too.

D: Who's in it?

K: Cate Blanchett plays the main character.

D: I'm guessing that if it's a Woody Allen film, it's probably set in New York?

K: No, although the main character is a New Yorker.

D: Is it based on a book or anything? I might be mistaken, but I think I read a book with a title like that.

K: No, I don't think so.

If you want to know more about a film which someone saw, what questions could you ask? You might ask things like:

Who was the director?

Who's in it?

Where's it set?

Is it based on a book?

Do you know what the question 'Who's in it?' means? This is asking about the actors. It's a short way to ask 'Which actors are in the film?' Think about a film which you know. It could be something you saw recently, or maybe a film which you particularly like. How would you answer these questions? You could say: 'It was directed by Stanley Kubrick.'

In conversational English, you can also use the name as an adjective, like this: 'It's a Stanley Kubrick film.' To talk about actors, you might say 'It stars Samuel L. Jackson and Kurt Russell.' This sounds quite formal, so if you want to sound more informal, you can say 'Samuel L. Jackson and Kurt Russell are in it.'

To say where and when the story takes place, you could say:

It's set in Paris in the 1920s.

It's set in the near future, in an imaginary country which is ruled by corporations.

Finally, if a film is an adaptation of something else, like a book or maybe a video game, you can use the verb 'based on'. For example: 'It's based on the book by Stephen King.' OK, now it's your turn to talk! Think about a film you know. Use the language from this section to make two to three sentences to introduce the film and give some basic information about it. Pause the video and do it now.

How was that? Remember that you can always review a section if you need more time to practise. Let's look at our next point in how to talk about movies in English.

3. Talking About a Film You Like

Kasia: What are you watching?

Daniel: Kung Fu Hustle. Do you know it?

K: No... Haven't you watched this before?

D: Yes, many times! It's one of my favourites.

K: It looks weird, almost like a cartoon.

D: Yeah, you could say that. It's really original, but mostly it's just good fun. You're not meant to take it too seriously.

K: Is it violent? I can't watch violent films.

D: Kind of, but the violence is also quite cartoonish (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/ish-and-y>). It has quite a touching storyline, too. It's silly, but sweet at the same time.

K: Was it popular when it came out?

D: Yeah, I think so. It got really good reviews, and I think it won some awards, too. Want to sit and watch it together?

K: Sure!

If you enjoyed a film, you could use positive adjectives (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/adjective-order-in-english>) to describe it, like:

original

good fun

touching

sweet

'Sweet' describes a film which makes you feel happy and warm. Often, romantic films are sweet. 'Touching' describes something which makes you feel strong emotions. You can also say 'moving', which has a similar meaning. If a film is 'touching' or 'moving', you'll probably be thinking about it for some time after it finishes.

Can you think of any other positive adjectives you could use to describe a film which you liked? Try to think of three, and write them down. Pause the video if you want more time.

Ready? What did you get? Of course, there are many possibilities, but here are some suggestions. If a film really makes you think, or if it makes you see things in a new way, you could describe it as 'thought-provoking.' A film which has a realistic story and good acting could be described as 'believable.' If a film is believable, you feel like you could be watching real people in a real situation. A good comedy film could be 'hilarious.' 'Hilarious' describes something which is extremely funny.

Get more practice with this adjective order (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/adjective-order-in-english>) Oxford Online English lesson.

What else could you say about a film which you liked? You might give some details or reasons as to why you liked it. For example:

The story was really interesting and original.

The acting was amazing—really believable.

It had great special effects and incredible action scenes.

You could also mention what kind of reviews the film got, and whether it won any awards. For example:

It got really good reviews.

It was nominated for eight Oscars.

It won several awards at the Cannes festival.

OK, now it's your turn. Your job is to talk about a film you like. Try to make three to four sentences describing the film and why you like it. If the film won any awards (<https://www.therichest.com/rich-list/most-popular/top-10-most-prestigious-movie-awards-in-the-world/>) or prizes, you could mention that, too! Pause the video and make your answer now. Here's a tip: it's always better to practise as much as possible.

So, if you really want to improve your English, don't just practise once, make several answers to talk about movies in English. Say each answer out loud several times, to practise your pronunciation and fluency. Ready? Let's look at one more point.

4. Talking About a Film You Dislike

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/gross-out-1.webp>) Daniel: How was the film?

Kasia: Urggh... Awful! I wanted to walk out.

D: Why? What was so bad about it?

K: Everything! It was so slow and boring. Plus, it was so predictable that I could even guess what they were going to say next.

D: That's surprising. It got quite good reviews.

K: They must have seen a different film than I did. Also, it was dubbed, and they only used two voice actors: one for the males, and one for the females.

D: I never understand why they dub films like that. Why not just use subtitles?

K: Yeah, I agree, but I guess people don't like reading.

D: Was it scary?

K: Not at all! It was quite gory, but it was all done so badly that it wasn't believable at all. The special effects looked like they were made on a laptop in twenty minutes.

D: That's a shame. So, why did you stay to the end?

K: My friends didn't want to leave.

In the dialogue, you heard several adjectives to describe a film you don't like. Can you remember any of them? You heard:

awful

slow

boring

predictable

'Slow' means that the story doesn't develop quickly, or that scenes in the film go on for too long. What other adjectives could you use to describe a film which you don't like? You can also take positive adjectives and make them negative (<https://www.enchantedlearning.com/wordlist/negativewords.shtml>); for example: 'unoriginal' or 'unbelievable'.

Can you think of a film which you didn't like? Why didn't you like it? As before, you should try to give reasons to explain why you didn't like something. You could say something like:

The lead actor was really bad; he was completely emotionless.

The plot was stupid. Nothing made any sense.

It was completely unfunny. No one in the whole cinema laughed once.

Now, it's your chance to practise! Think of a film which you saw which you didn't like. Make two to three sentences to describe the film and say why you didn't like it. Pause the video and say your sentences aloud now.