

Now read the whole article. Choose a, b, or c.

- 1 Foreign-language dramas nowadays are considered _____.
 - a an unusual taste
 - b normal because everyone watches them
 - c only suitable for educated people
- 2 *The Killing* was the first foreign series which _____.
 - a became really popular
 - b the BBC showed
 - c Denmark exported
- 3 One reason for the popularity of foreign-language dramas is that _____.
 - a it's much easier to watch them than it used to be
 - b everybody is talking about them
 - c UK and American series aren't as good as they used to be
- 4 Programmes with subtitles make the viewers _____.
 - a do other things while they watch
 - b want to tweet about them
 - c pay more attention to what they are watching
- 5 Walter Iuzzolino is in favour of foreign-language TV because _____.
 - a it encourages people to learn foreign languages
 - b it allows people to experience life in other countries
 - c it encourages people to visit the countries the series are set in

Why is the UK in love with foreign TV series?

A few years ago, if you'd mentioned to a British friend or colleague that you were addicted to a Danish drama series, people would have thought you were a bit strange. But in the UK today, subtitled foreign-language dramas aren't just in fashion, they're completely mainstream.

It all began when the BBC bought the French crime drama *Spiral*, though it was Denmark's *The Killing* that was the tipping point. 'I remember hearing people talking about it on the bus,' admits Sue Decks, Head of Programming at the BBC. 'It was clearly growing and growing in popularity, but the extent of it took everyone by surprise.' *The Killing* was followed by *The Bridge*, in which a crime is committed on the bridge between Denmark and Sweden, which regularly topped a million viewers. The British were hooked.

One of the reasons for the success of foreign TV is that it is more accessible than it used to be, thanks to catch-up and online services. And if you haven't watched the latest foreign series that everybody is talking about, you can binge watch the episodes that you've missed, and tweet about how much you love *The Returned*.

There may be something else in foreign TV's new popularity, too. In a world in which we're frequently distracted from our TV viewing by Twitter and WhatsApp, subtitles force us to focus. 'When you read subtitles, you have to be glued to the screen,' says Decks. 'That concentration gives a particular intensity to the viewing experience. You just can't multitask when you're watching a foreign-language drama.'

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And while foreign-language dramas are often remade for the Anglo-American market – for example, *The Bridge* became *The Tunnel* – the originals still dominate, because they transport us to a different culture. As Walter Iuzzolino, who has set up a new streaming service dedicated to foreign-language TV, says, 'You develop a love for the distant world, because while you're watching, you're in the country. If you see something amazing set in Argentina, then Argentina itself, the houses, the people, what they wear, what their voices sound like, the language, is one of the biggest appeals. There is a huge pleasure in that.'

Glossary

tipping point the point at which an idea suddenly spreads quickly among a large number of people, as a result of a number of small changes over a period of time before that

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